Pygmalion Themes

Group 2
Classes in the Victorian Era

- There were three main classes
  - Upper
  - Middle
  - Working

- Separated by opportunity and amount of work they had to do.
  - Upper having the most opportunities and least work
  - Working class having the most work with no real chance of climbing the class ladder

- Women in the Victorian Era
  - Upper class would rent shops while lower class had to sell products on the street
    - Like Eliza the flower girl.
Language and Speech

- The play displays the connections between a person’s speech and their **identity**
  - Act II pg. 31: Doolittle: “Morning, Governor. I come to talk about a serious matter, Governor. Higgins: Brought up in Hounslow. Mother Welsh, I should think.”
  - Act II pg. 24: “but not to the present point. Miss Doolittle-”

- Also displays connections between speech and **social class**
  - Act II pg. 41: Higgins: “And that is the sort of ordeal poor Eliza has to go through for months before we meet her again on her first appearance in London society of the professional class.”
  - Eliza began speaking like a higher class individual and fooled people into believing she was one.

- The middle class had more opportunity for education and in turn spoke more properly than the lower class who didn’t thus proving the significance of speech and education in Victorian society
Education and Intelligence

Characters exemplify different forms of intelligence

Higgins - An educated and intelligent character but approaches others with a kind of academic detachment

Eliza - A low-class flower girl; however, a quick learner and pupil who seeks an education in hopes to change herself as a person

Mr. Doolittle - Lacks the education that Higgins and Pickering have, but is the only character to criticise the middle-class morality and the hierarchy in England

Schools were funded by the local rates taxation system and were run by Boards but were not free. Parents were required to pay a fee.
“This unfortunate animal has been locked up for nine years in school at our expense to teach her to speak and read the language of Shakespeare and Milton” Act II, pg. 40

“Ahyee, bəyee cəyee, dəyee-” Act II, pg 40

“What is middle class morality? Just an excuse for never giving me anything.” Act II, pg 35

“Well, the matter is, sir, that you can't take a girl up like that as if you were picking up a pebble on the beach.” Act II, pg 21
A playwright has many tools at hand for developing themes. In the development of a theme in Pygmalion, show how one of these conventions has been used to develop a theme in the play. Explore this question for each theme you are assigned.

George Bernard Shaw uses stereotypes of the Victorian era to represent the structure of British culture and then has characters break from those...
Scene 2
Act II. Pgs. 17-21

Setting

- Higgin’s Laboratory

Characters

- Mrs. Pearce - Diego
- Flower Girl - Alec
- Higgins - Adrel
- Pickering - Sam
Development of Language and Speech

- “Oh, something dreadful, sir, really. I don’t know how you can take an interest in it.” Act 11, pg 17 (Mrs Pearce)
- “I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won’t take me unless I can talk more genteel.” Act 11, pg 18 (Liza)
- “It’s almost irresistible. She’s so deliciously low - so horribly dirty -” - Higgins
  ○ “Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo-oo!!! I ain’t dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did” - Eliza
- “Yes: in six months - in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue - I’ll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything” - Higgins
Development of Education and Intelligence

- “I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won’t take me unless I can talk more genteel.” Act 11, pg 18 (Liza)

- “She offers me two - fifths of her day’s income for a lesson. Two fifths of a millionaire’s for a day would be somewhere about £60. It’s handsome. By George, it’s enormous! It’s the biggest offer I ever had.” - Higgins
  - “Sixty pounds! What are you talking about?” - Eliza
