

WORKSHEET

Edna's Voice and Style

What linguistic strategies does Orton use to create Edna's distinctive voice and style?

What is the effect of Edna's frequent use of the exclamation mark? 'And really!'; 'the idea is absurd!'

Why does Edna favour the rhetorical question: 'Surely this is wrong?' What's its impact on the reader?

Edna's letters are polite: 'May I...?'; 'Please, please...'; 'Please let me say...' What impression of Edna and her views is conveyed by her good manners?

How does Edna seek to communicate her elevated class status in terms of her vocabulary and style as well as through content? For example, in one letter she refers to Joe Orton as 'Mr Joe Horton'. Why does she add the 'h' to his surname?

Is Edna as grand as she would like to appear? What aspects of language suggest that Edna's airs and graces are a pretence?

What do Edna's references to her MP and the Lord Chamberlain (a member of the royal household responsible for theatre censorship until 1968) suggest about her character and social attitudes?

Why does Edna invoke her status as a wife and mother in some letters? How does this support the point of view expressed in her letter?

Edna always signs off 'Yours faithfully', 'Yours sincerely' or 'Yours truly'. What does the formal tone of her letters convey about her character and outlook?

What is the effect of adding 'Mrs' after her name in brackets in her signature?