

Year 8 Booklet

Spring 1

The Gothic



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The Gothic



This term, you will be learning about the Gothic genre. In Spring 1, we will focus on acquiring knowledge of the genre, including its history and conventions. You will be introduced to important writers and famous literary texts. We will develop our ability to analyse language and focus on exploring how writers use language for effect. We will review language devices and practise analysing literary texts using subject terminology and academic expression. We will also be developing our knowledge and application of sophisticated vocabulary.

By the end of this term, you will know:

- The history of the Gothic genre
- Influential Gothic writers and text.
- Conventions of the Gothic genre (including setting, characters, themes and conventional plots)
- Key vocabulary related to the genre
- Language and literary devices
- Analytical vocabulary and structures

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOTHIC

LE: What are the origins of the Gothic genre?

This term we will be studying 'the Gothic'. Gothic is a literary genre. In year 7 we studied the concept of **genre** and explored **conventions** of different genres. Let's review what we might already know about genre.

Knowledge Review

1. What do we mean by the '**genre**' of a novel or film?
2. What do we mean by the '**conventions**' of a genre?
3. Which genre did the novel 'Coraline' conform to?
4. What were some of the conventions of that genre?
5. Which genre were 'The Short Stories of Sherlock Holmes'?
6. What were some of the conventions of that genre?
7. What do you already know about the genre of the Gothic? Think about: characters, settings, plot devices

Task 1: Take a look at these Gothic names. Create your own Gothic name by combining any of the first names with any of the surnames: _____

Male	Surname		Female
Edmund	Ashwood	Van Helgan	Rebecca
Heathcliff	De Ville	Montague	Aurora
Frederick	Wildblood	Darkside	Desdemona
Ivan	Tempest	De Ville	Serenity
Edgar	De Winter	Darkside	Lucretia
Vladimir	Loveless	Strangeway	Bella
Auguste	Graves	Darcy	Pandora
Vincent	Hemlock	Baskerville	Cassandra
Manfred	Doomraven	Bloodhart	Cornelia

Task 2: There is something very "Gothic" about these names.

- Write down your first impressions of these names.
- What might they tell you about the Gothic as a genre?

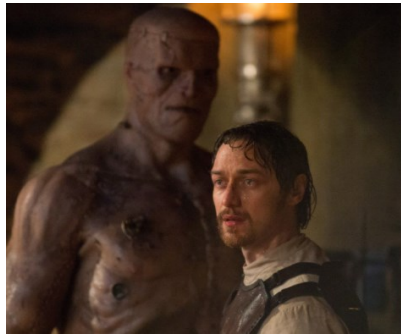
Task 3: Here are some characters with very Gothic names. All of them are characters from Gothic novels (all of which have been made in to films). Discuss the following

- Do you recognise any of these characters or the stories that they are from?
- Does this knowledge tell you anything more about the Gothic as a **genre**? Think about **characters**, **settings**, **plot lines**.

Lucius Malfoy



Victor Frankenstein



Bellatrix Lestrange



Abraham Van Helsing and Anna Valerious



Bella Swan



Count Dracula



Flora, Miles and the Governess



Heathcliff



Alice Drablow



Task 4: We now have an idea of some Gothic characters and perhaps the types of stories they might be found in. Read the article below to find out more about the origins of the Gothic. Highlight and annotate any information about **characters**, **setting** or **plot**.

What is the Gothic genre?

The very word Gothic conjures up images of crumbling castles, things that go bump in the night and unexplained happenings. Whilst the genre is all of these things, it's also a lot more complex and sophisticated than it might seem on the surface. Gothic fiction has maintained an enduring appeal, as appetites for being scared witless from the comfort and safety of our own armchair have grown over time.

But where did this desire to be unnerved come from? Where did the genre come from?

Horace Walpole (1717-1797)

The youngest son of the former Prime Minister Robert Walpole, Horace Walpole was a man of leisure. There was nothing about him to suggest that he would become the father of one of the most popular fiction genres for the next two hundred years.

His father had ensured that Horace was set up financially, arranging him several sinecures (salaried positions requiring very little work). Horace and his friend Thomas Gray embarked on a grand tour of Europe together, travelling France, Italy and Switzerland – far off lands which would later feature in his writing.

On his return, Walpole was elected to Parliament for a rotten borough in Cornwall and maintained a somewhat dubious parliamentary career for the rest of his life.

*Walpole was a collector, an aesthete with a particular interest in antiquarianism. In **1749**, he set about creating Strawberry Hill House – a fanciful neo-Gothic house in Twickenham. Ramshackle, with towers, battlements and deliberately gloomy interiors, Walpole built Strawberry Hill to house his collections, and it remains a tribute to his eccentric and theatrical style today.*



Strawberry Hill House. Image credit: Andy Scott / CC

The style is not considered full Gothic, and is often known as Strawberry Hill Gothic or Georgian Gothic to differentiate it from later examples. Walpole's masterpiece inspired various other similar buildings of the time, and it was certainly unusual compared to contemporary Georgian architecture.

The first Gothic novel?

In 1764, Walpole published 'The Castle of Otranto – A Gothic Story' which is widely accepted as the first novel in the Gothic movement.

The story follows Manfred, lord of the Castle of Otranto, as he attempts to avoid a prophecy.

Unsurprisingly, the story contains murder, supernatural elements, mistaken identity, beautiful young maidens, castles, and things that go bump in the night.

At the time, Walpole viewed his novel as a 'romance' and it met mixed reviews from critics at the time.

Today, however, Otranto is perceived by many to be the start of Gothic fiction, and many of the ideas in it can be seen as tropes occurring throughout later work.

Later Gothic fiction

Gothic and Romanticism are closely linked – both inspire emotions of awe and often terror, and Gothic novels frequently feature romantic subplots and beautiful unmarried young women. Gothic has often been rubbished as sensationalism or simply too fantastical to be considered 'good' literature, yet its appeal has endured.

The late 18th and most of the 19th centuries saw Gothic literature remain a permanent and popular genre. But why did its audience have such an appetite for the unsettling, dramatic and supernatural? Many consider it – not unreasonably – to be a way of coping with a fast-changing world around them.

Rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, new social structures and technological advancements were a cause for concern for many. Gothic frequently pushes our limits, the bounds of what we think is possible: in context, it allows us to realise our fears safely, in the pages of a book rather than seeing them acted out in real life.

Often the Gothic juxtaposes the ancient and the modern, letting two worlds collide dramatically. As readers saw extreme examples of their fears materialising (for example, a centuries-old Transylvanian vampire arriving in Victorian Whitby in Bram Stoker's Dracula), what was going on around them proved slightly less terrifying.

The Castle of Otranto may have been the start of the Gothic fiction genre, but it was far from the last. From the overtly supernatural to the subtly sinister, Gothic explores the full spectrum of human emotions, and gives us a thrill of unease that is rarely found in the mundanity of every day life – it allows us to escape.

Henry James said 'the most mysterious of mysteries, [are] the mysteries which are at our own doors', and it is often fear of the supernatural rather than the supernatural itself which terrifies readers: the horrors of our own imagination are incredibly potent.

Key Vocabulary:

Task 5: Answer the following questions based on the article:

1. What does the writer say that the word 'Gothic' conjures up images of?
2. What do you think the writer means when she says, "Gothic fiction has maintained an enduring appeal"?
3. When was Horace Walpole born and when did he die?
4. What were some of Walpole's interests?
5. What building did Walpole build? What were some of its features?
6. When did Horace Walpole publish his novel, which is considered to be the first Gothic novel?
7. What was the name of this novel?
8. What kind of things does this story feature? These are sometimes called **conventions** or **tropes**.
9. How did Walpole view his own novel?
10. In what ways are the Gothic and Romanticism similar?
11. Why have some people dismissed Gothic literature and not taken it seriously?
12. Why does the writer think that people in the 18th and 19th centuries enjoyed Gothic stories?
13. What rapid changes took place in Europe when the Gothic was emerging as a popular genre?
14. What does the Gothic often juxtapose?
15. Re-read these lines: *Henry James said 'the most mysterious of mysteries, [are] the mysteries which are at our own doors', and it is often fear of the supernatural rather than the supernatural itself which terrifies readers: the horrors of our own imagination are incredibly potent.* Can you explain what you think they mean in your own words?

Task 6: True or False Knowledge Review

- A. The first Gothic novel was Frankenstein
- B. The Gothic genre first emerged in the 19th century.
- C. The Castle of Otranto was written by Horace Walpole in 1764.
- D. Gothic novels usually contain supernatural elements.
- E. You might expect to a Gothic novel to be set on a spaceship.
- F. The Gothic might have been so popular because it provided a way for people to cope with the changing world around them.
- G. Horace Walpole initially said his novel 'The Castle of Otranto' was a horror story.
- H. Gothic novels often contain romantic subplots.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOTHIC

LE: What are the conventions of the Gothic genre?

Knowledge Retrieval

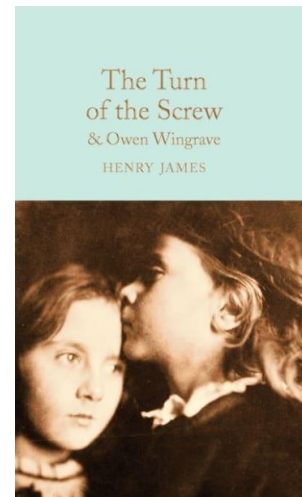
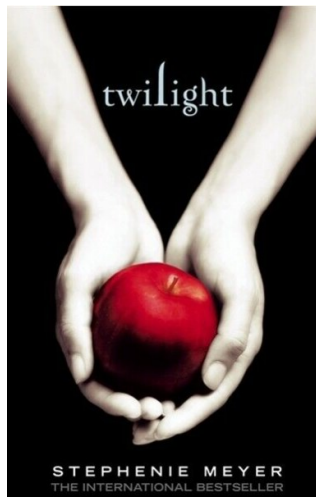
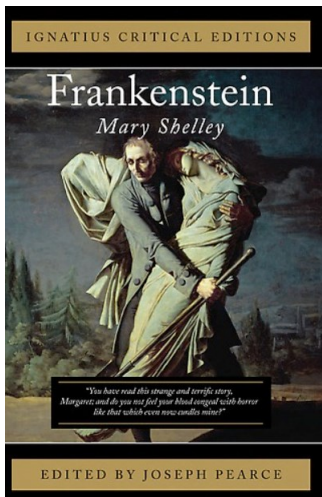
1. What is a 'genre'?
2. What does the word 'trope' mean?
3. What was the name of the first Gothic novel?
4. Who wrote the first Gothic novel?
5. Which century was the first Gothic novel written in?
6. What are the names of some Gothic characters from films or novels?

Task 1: Watch the following trailers of famous Gothic novels which have been turned into films. Make notes about the characters, settings and themes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQF2d0gqPDI>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDRLSqm_WVg

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0B_4rWxF48



Characters:

Settings:

Plot/themes:

Settings

The settings are often dark, gloomy and full of secret chambers, hallways and dungeons. Wild, dark and dangerous locations, such as abandoned graveyards, forests and other untamed places, are also common. In more contemporary Gothic literature, such as Henry James's "Turn of the Screw," older houses and manors replaced castles, though the sense of mystery and gloominess remained a strong element.

Conventions of Characters

The Gothic hero is often an isolated or "marked" figure who must restore himself to society. A figure of evil -- sometimes with a relationship to the supernatural -- is often in opposition to the hero. Women play significant roles in Gothic novels; they are often depicted as victims of tyrannical and evil men. Doppelgangers -- "doubles" that are similar in appearance, history and character to main characters in the novel -- are common in Gothic novels.

Conventions of Plot

Gothic plots often surround a family mystery, ancient prophecies or revenge. Concepts of "inherited" curses or terrible family mysteries are common; sometimes, the protagonist must overcome an ancestral curse to restore the world to order. The Gothic novel sometimes depicts a fallen society -- one that has succumbed to some kind of evil or temptation -- that must be brought back to the light.

Task 2: Answer the questions below

1. What are some typical settings from the Gothic genre?
2. What might we expect from a Gothic hero?
3. Who is often presented in opposition/contrast to the hero?
4. What role do women often play in Gothic stories?
5. What is a Doppelganger?
6. What do Gothic plots often centre around?
7. What might the protagonist have to overcome in a typical Gothic novel?

Task 3: During the 18th century, the Gothic became so popular, that some believed that it had become a predictable genre with predictable tropes or "ingredients". One writer published a "recipe" for a Gothic novel in a popular literary journal. Read it below

*Take — An old castle, half of it ruinous.
A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.
Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.
As many skeletons, in chests and presses.
An old woman hanging by the neck; with her throat cut.
Assassins and desperadoes quaint stuff.
Noise, whispers, and groans, threescore at least.*

Mix them together in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of the watering places before going to bed.

What point do you think the person who wrote this "recipe" was trying to make?

Task 4: Think about all of the conventions or “ingredients” of the Gothic genre. Use your knowledge of Gothic conventions to write your own recipe for the Gothic. Use the ideas below to help you plan.

Ingredients (Character, settings, plot devices)

- A beautiful young maiden
- An obsessive young scientist
- A vengeful monk
- A bleak mansion
- A _____
- A _____
- A _____
- A _____
- A _____
- A _____

Imperative verbs

Take, pour, mix, shake, add,

A list of Gothic objects

A _____, _____, _____
 _____, _____, _____

Task 5: There are some similarities between the Gothic genre and the horror genre, but there are also many differences. Discuss the differences as a class and make notes in your exercise book.

Task 6: True or False Knowledge Review

1. Gothic plots often involve a family mystery, ancient prophecies or revenge.
2. The first Gothic novel was ‘Frankenstein’.
3. The first Gothic novel was written in 1764 by Sir Horace Walpole.
4. The Gothic literary genre originated in the 20th century.
5. Women never feature in Gothic novels.
6. A typical setting for a Gothic novel would be a castle.
7. ‘The Castle of Otranto’ was written in 1784.
8. ‘The Turn of the Screw’ is a Gothic story written by Mary Shelley.
9. Talking animals often feature in Gothic stories.
10. Gothic stories often take place in busy, urban settings.

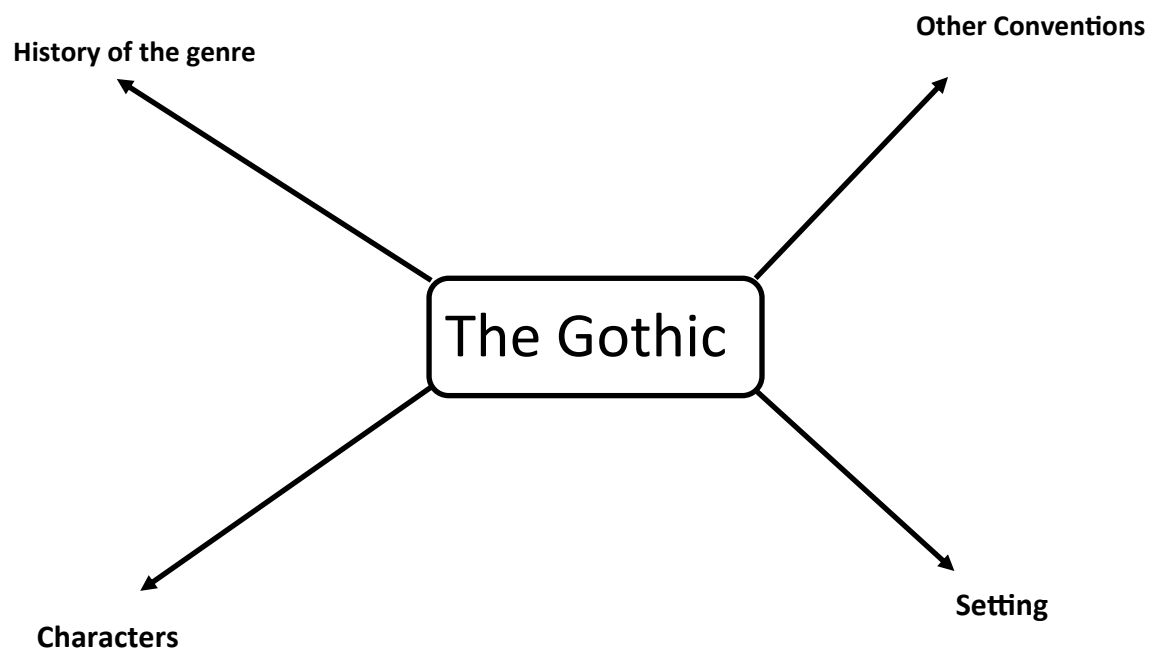
INTRODUCTION TO THE GOTHIC

LE: What are some of the most influential Gothic stories ?

Knowledge Retrieval:

1. When was the first Gothic novel written?
2. Who wrote the first Gothic novel?
3. What was the name of the writer who wrote the first Gothic novel?
4. List some characters you might expect to find in a Gothic novel
5. List some places you might expect a Gothic novel to be set.

Task 1: Recap some of the conventions of the Gothic as a mind map

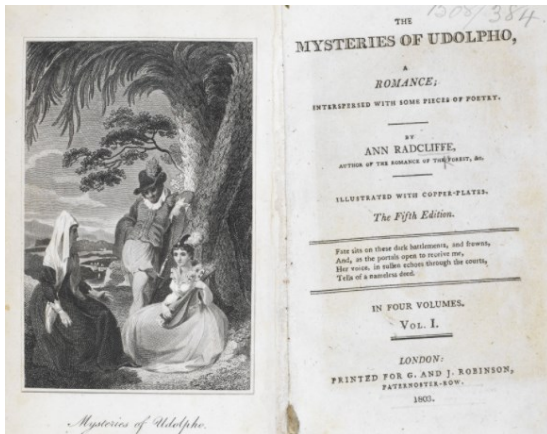


Task 2: Gothic Literary Timeline. Read the timeline below

Gothic novels have been scaring us for 250 years.

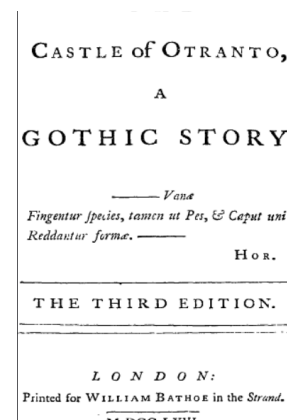
The mid-18th Century - an era of dark, satanic mills at home and nightmarish social upheaval abroad - saw public taste shift from traditional tales of romance and adventure to an appetite for terror.

It is a wide-ranging genre which includes Frankenstein, Dracula and Wuthering Heights. The success of recent novels such as Twilight continue its popularity. This timeline spotlights key moments in the evolution of spine-tingling Gothic stories.



1764: 'The Castle of Otranto': the first Gothic novel

English aristocrat Horace Walpole combines the supernatural and horrific to create the first Gothic novel. The Castle of Otranto introduces what have become classic Gothic devices, such as a foreign location, a dark and ominous castle and a naïve young woman fleeing from an evil, lustful man.

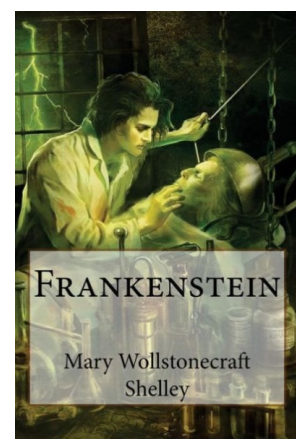


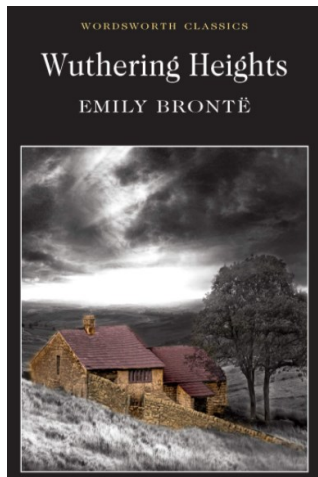
1794: 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' The dawn of female Gothic

Ann Radcliffe helps to define what makes a Gothic novel and enjoys massive commercial success. In her best-known novel, The Mysteries of Udolpho, Radcliffe introduces 'the explained supernatural', a technique by which terrifying, apparently supernatural incidents have a logical explanation.

1816: 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley

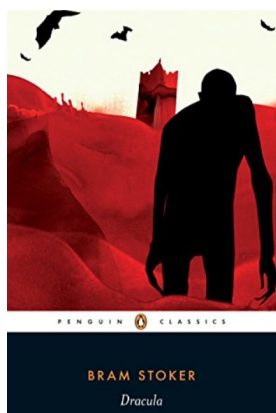
Shelley's story features many Gothic spine-tingling elements, including the macabre horror of raising the dead. However, the novel in which a creature created from disparate body parts is brought to life is often considered to be the first in the science fiction genre. Many believe it to be a warning about the dangers of contemporary science.





1847: 'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Bronte

In the late winter months of 1801, a man named Lockwood rents a manor house called Thrushcross Grange in the isolated moor country of England. Here, he meets his dour landlord, Heathcliff, a wealthy man who lives in the ancient manor of Wuthering Heights, four miles away from the Grange.

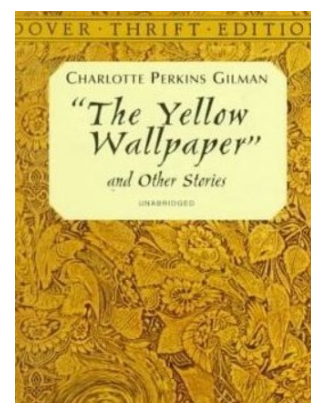
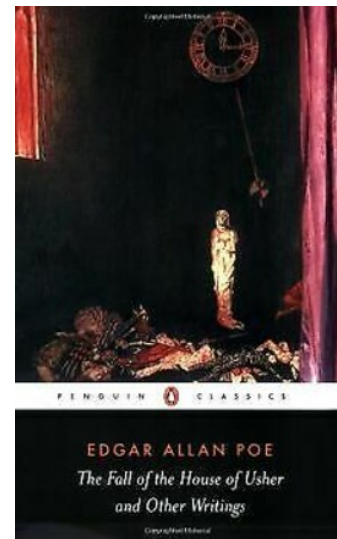


1897: 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker

A Gothic horror novel by Irish author Bram Stoker. It introduced the character of Count Dracula and established many conventions of subsequent vampire fantasy.

1839: 'The Fall of the House of Usher' by Edgar Allan Poe

One of Poe's many short stories, 'The Fall of the House of Usher' is a slow-burning Gothic horror, describing the final hours of a family tormented by tragedy and the legacy of the past.

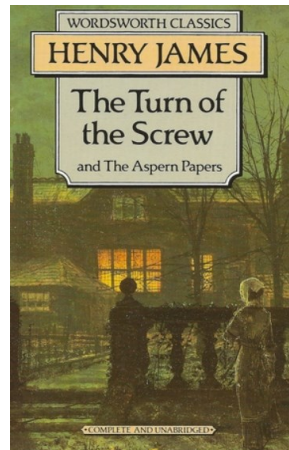


1892: 'The Yellow Wallpaper' by Charlotte Gilman Perkins

"The Yellow Wallpaper" details the deterioration of a woman's mental health while she is on a "rest cure" on a rented summer country estate with her family.

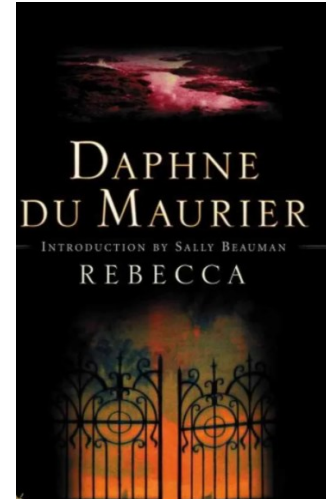
1898: 'The Turn of the Screw' by Henry James

This novella follows a governess who, caring for two children at a remote estate, becomes convinced that the grounds are haunted.



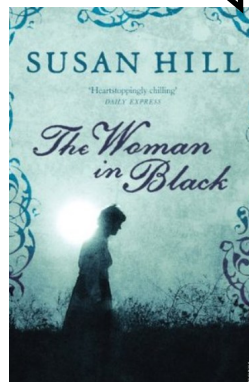
1938: 'Rebecca' by Daphne Du Maurier

This novel concerns an unnamed young woman who impetuously marries a wealthy widower, only to discover that he and his household are haunted by the memory of his late first wife, the title character.



1983: 'The Woman in Black' by Susan Hill

A ghost story by Susan Hill, in which Arthur Kipps relates his haunting experiences at the remote Eel Marsh House.



The tale begins on Christmas Eve, when Arthur's step-children invite him to tell a ghost story. Arthur is too disturbed by his memories to share his story aloud, so he writes it down.

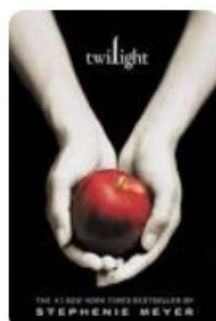
2002: 'Coraline' by Neil Gaiman

This fantasy novel, in which a young girl battles against the evil 'Other mother', also employs many features of the Gothic.



2005: 'Twilight' by Stephanie Meyer

The first book in the Twilight series, which introduces seventeen-year-old Isabella "Bella" Swan, who moves from Phoenix, Arizona to Forks, Washington. She is endangered after falling in love with Edward Cullen, a 103-year-old vampire frozen in his 17-year-old body.



Task 3: Use the timeline to answer the following questions.

1. What was the name of the first Gothic novel written in 1764?
2. Who wrote 'The Mysteries of Udolpho' in 1764?
3. What is the technique of 'the explained supernatural', introduced by Ann Radcliff?
4. Who wrote 'Frankenstein'?
5. When was 'Frankenstein' written?
6. What is the novel 'Frankenstein' about?
7. What was 'Frankenstein' thought to be warning its readers about?
8. Who wrote 'The Fall of the House of Usher'?
9. What is 'The Fall of the House of Usher' about?
10. Who wrote 'Wuthering Heights' in 1847?
11. When was 'The Yellow Wallpaper' written and what was it about?
12. Which Gothic character was introduced by Bram Stoker in 1897?
13. What is the story, 'The Turn of the Screw' by Henry James about?
14. What makes 'Rebecca' by Daphne DuMaurier a Gothic novel?
15. Who wrote 'The Woman in Black'?
16. When was 'The Woman in Black' published?
17. Where is 'The Woman in Black' set and what suggests this a Gothic story?
18. When was 'Coraline' written?
19. Think back to your study of 'Coraline' - what might make it a Gothic story?
20. When was the novel 'Twilight' published?
21. Re-read the synopsis of 'Twilight'. What makes it seem like a Gothic story? Is there anything about it which might not fit in to our idea of the Gothic?
22. Which of these Gothic novels include characters who are vampires?
23. Which of these Gothic novels include ghosts?
24. Which of these Gothic novels have female protagonists?
25. Which of the Gothic novels are set in remote, isolated locations?
26. Which of these Gothic novels might be interpreted as a criticism of rapid scientific progress?
27. Look at the dates of when these novels were published. What might the publication dates tell you about the Gothic genre?

GOTHIC EXTRACTS: FRANKENSTEIN

LE: Who was Mary Shelley and what were the origins of 'Frankenstein'?

Knowledge Retrieval:

1. What is the name of the first Gothic novel and when was it published?
2. Which Gothic novel was written by Mary Shelley in 1816?
3. Who wrote 'The Fall of the House of Usher'? This was one of many short stories he wrote.
4. Which novel is set on isolated moors in England and was written by Emily Bronte?
5. Who wrote a Gothic tale of female madness called 'The Yellow Wallpaper'?
6. Which writer invented the character of Count Dracula in 1897?
7. What is similar about the Gothic stories: 'The Turn of the Screw' and 'Rebecca'?
8. Which Gothic novel is set in an isolated haunted house called 'Eel Marsh House'.
9. Which fantasy novel, written in 2002, uses lots of Gothic conventions?
10. What is the name of a modern Gothic novel, with a teenage vampire as a main character?

Task 1: Context Comprehension. Read the information about Mary Shelley and the origins of 'Frankenstein'. Highlight key dates, names and significant events



In the summer of 1816, a young, well-educated woman from England travelled with her lover to the Swiss Alps. Unseasonable rain kept them trapped inside their lodgings, where they entertained themselves by reading ghost stories. At the urging of renowned poet Lord Byron, a friend and neighbour, they set their own pens to paper, competing to see who could write the best ghost story.

The young woman, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, took the prize, having composed a story creepy enough not only to take its place alongside the old German tales that she and her Alpine companions had been reading, but also to become a bestseller in her time and a Gothic classic that still resonates with readers almost two centuries later.

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was born on August 30, 1797, in London, of prime literary stock. Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was the author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, a feminist tract encouraging women to think and act for themselves. Wollstonecraft died giving birth to Mary, leaving her daughter in the care of her husband, William Godwin, a member of a circle of radical thinkers in England that counted Thomas Paine and William Blake among its ranks. Mary's upbringing in this atmosphere exposed her at an early age to cutting-edge ideas, and it forged useful connections for her to such notables as Lord Byron.

Another of the literary types that Mary met as a teenager was Percy Bysshe Shelley, a dashing young poet. Sparks flew, and, in 1814, they ran away together for a tour of France, Switzerland, and Germany—Mary escaping her family and Percy escaping his wife. At first blissful, their affair soon came under strain. Percy's relationship with Mary waxed and waned with the demands of his wife, Harriet; meanwhile, Mary busied herself with another relationship. Despite these distractions, the relationship endured and was eventually formalised under scandalous circumstances: Harriet, pregnant with Percy's child, drowned herself in London in November of 1816; Mary and Percy were married weeks later.

The union between Mary and Percy was not only romantic but also literary. Percy edited Mary's manuscript for Frankenstein and he is commonly supposed to have written the preface under her name. Frankenstein was published on January 1, 1818, and became an immediate bestseller. Unfortunately for Mary, this success was a single bright spot amid a series of tragedies. From 1815 to 1819, three of her four children died in infancy; in 1822, Percy drowned off the shore of Tuscany, leaving Mary a widow and single mother. Mary turned to her husband's poetry and prose, editing and publishing his Posthumous Poems in 1824 and his Poetical Works and Letters in 1839. She spent the rest of her time on her own writing, publishing Valperga in 1823, The Last Man in 1826, The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck in 1830, Lodore in 1835, and Falkner in 1837. Serious illness plagued Mary, and she died in London in February 1851.

Task 3: Answer the following questions in full sentences

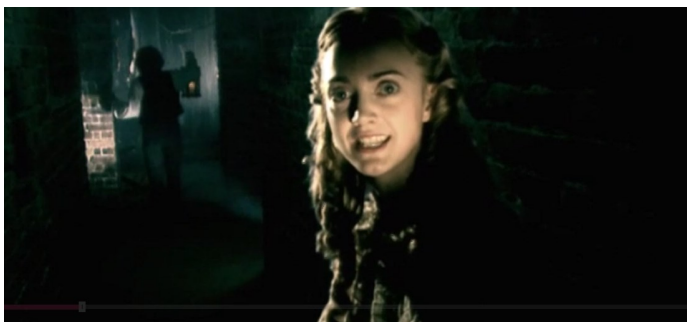
1. During what year, did Mary Shelley travel from London to the Swiss Alps with her lover Percy?
2. When it was raining, what did the group of friends do to pass the time?
3. What competition did Lord Byron propose to the group?
4. Who won the prize for the best ghost story?
5. When was Mary born?
6. What was Mary's upbringing like?
7. What was Mary's relationship with the young poet Percy Bysshe Shelley like?
8. Why was their relationship thought to be 'scandalous'?
9. When was 'Frankenstein' published?
10. Find evidence from the article that 'Frankenstein' was a success?
11. What was the rest of Mary Shelley's life like? Give reasons for your response.

Task 4: Complete these sentences

- A. Mary Shelley experienced literary success because...
- B. Mary Shelley experienced literary success, but...
- C. Mary Shelley experienced literary success, so...

Task 5: Watch the two videos about Mary Shelley and the origins of 'Frankenstein' and write down 10 new things that you learn

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFTB8unXvd8>
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00x4nnp>



GOTHIC EXTRACTS: FRANKENSTEIN

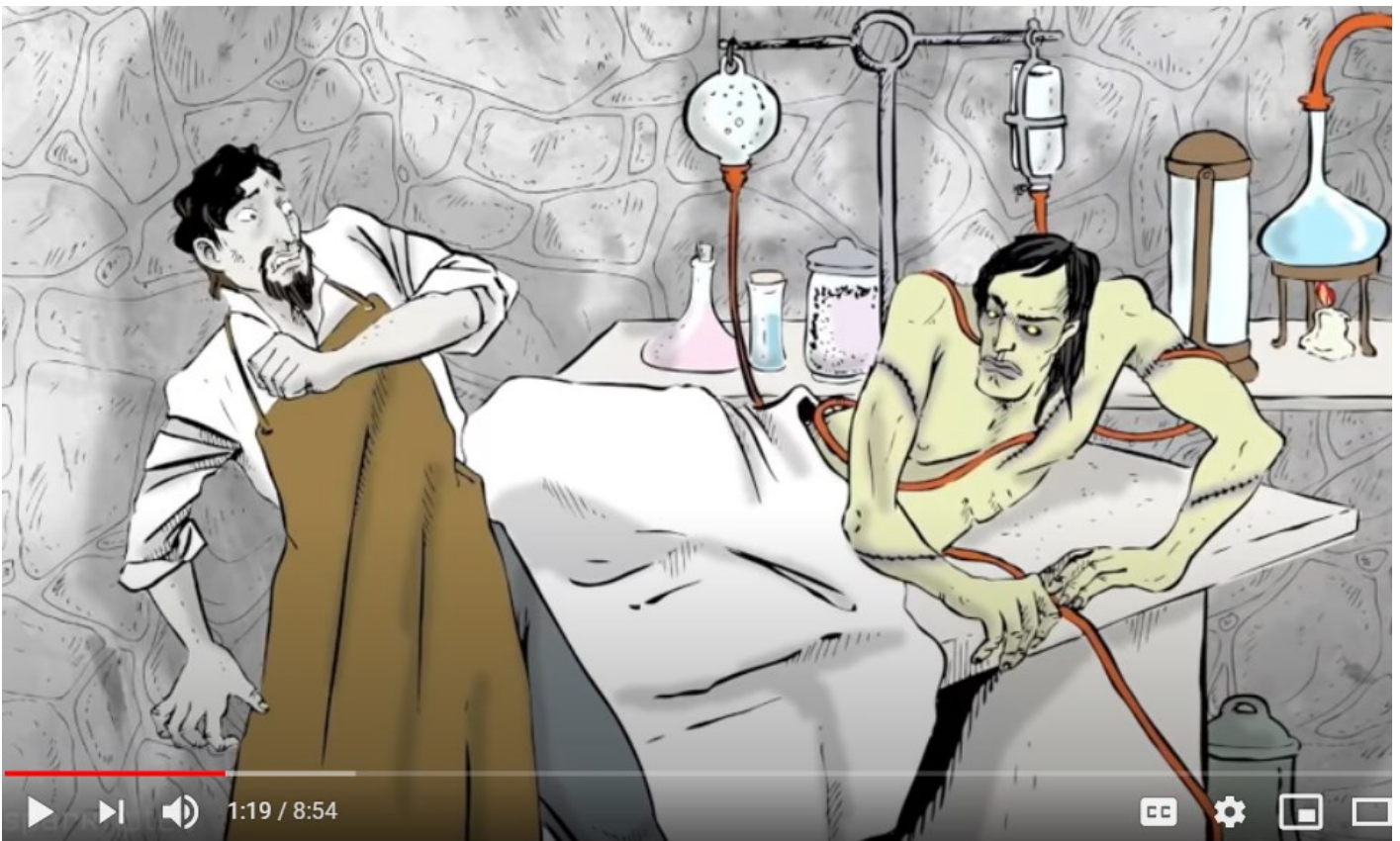
LE: What happens in 'Frankenstein'?

Knowledge Retrieval True or False:

1. 'Frankenstein' was the first Gothic novel.
2. Mary Shelley wrote 'Frankenstein'.
3. The novel 'Frankenstein' was first published in 1918.
4. Mary Shelley's family and friends were writers— she had a literary upbringing.
5. Mary Shelley travelled to the Lake District with a group of friends in 1816.
6. Percy Bysshe Shelley (who Mary married later that year) suggested a writing competition.
7. Mary lost the ghost story competition.
8. 'Frankenstein' was a success when it was published.
9. The rest of Mary Shelley's life was marred by tragedy.
10. Mary died in 1951.

Task 1: Watch the summary video of the story of Frankenstein

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRppXdKDY_c



Task 2: Read the summary of 'Frankenstein' and answer the comprehension questions

Our story begins when Robert Walton, an English adventurer, undertakes an expedition to the North Pole. This expedition was a lifelong dream of his and he would recount everything in the letters he wrote to his sister. One day, amid the ice floes, Walton and his crew discover an extremely weary man traveling by dogsled. The man is so exhausted and starved, that he is nearly dead when they find him. Walton decides to take the man aboard and to help him recover. The mysterious traveller soon begins to recover from his weakness and the man decides to tell Walton his long-concealed story.

The man reveals that his name is Victor Frankenstein and that he was born into a wealthy Swiss family. Victor enjoyed an idyllic, peaceful childhood. His parents were kind people, his mother Caroline was extremely altruistic, she frequently visited the poor and she eventually decided to adopt a child. The child's name was Elizabeth and she was close in age to Victor. Elizabeth soon became Victor's most cherished companion.

Victor also had two brothers William and Ernest and after his family settled in Geneva he made a dear friend, Henry Clerval, from whom he became inseparable. The two had utterly different ambitions; Victor had developed a passion for science, while Henry longed to study the history of human struggle and endeavour. When Victor was ready to begin his university studies at Ingolstadt his mother passed away. On her deathbed, she told Victor and Elizabeth that it was her greatest desire to see the two of them married. After the loss of his mother Victor left for university.

At Ingolstadt, Victor's passion for science increased exponentially. His chemistry professor excited in him ambition and the desire to achieve great distinction in the field of natural philosophy. Soon Victor began to obsess over achieving fame, he spent day and night in his laboratory studying the force which gifts life to a human being. In his frenzy, Victor came up with the idea of creating a human being out of body parts of the deceased.

He started savaging cemeteries and charnel houses. He also kept his work secret, he would tell no one of this work, and soon he started visiting his home less and less often. Eventually, years would pass without him visiting his beloved Elizabeth. After years of studies and trial and error, Victor managed to complete his work. One night, with the help of a lightning; his beastly creation had its first heartbeat! When the yellow eyes of the creature opened to stare at Victor, he was soon overwhelmed with horror. The sight of his "new-born" creation was so grotesque that Victor fled his laboratory in the middle of the night. When Victor returned to his rooms, the creature had disappeared.

After that nightmarish night Victor and Henry started studying languages and poetry together. Victor would feel utter remorse and repulsion whenever he would think of the monster he had created. Two years later, Victor received a letter from Elizabeth that his younger brother, William, was murdered in the countryside near the Frankenstein estate. Victor rushed home.

Upon arriving at his village, Victor decided to take a walk in the countryside when suddenly he found himself in the middle of a lightning storm. As he was staggering around, struck with grief over the loss of his brother, Victor saw a figure, far too colossal to be that of a man. The mysterious being was suddenly illuminated in a flash of lightning and Victor instantly recognized it as his grotesque creation. At that moment, he realized that his monster was his brother's murderer.

When Victor spoke to his family the next morning, Victor discovered that Justine, his family's trusted maidservant and friend, had been accused of William's murder. Victor knew that Justine had been framed, but he could not bring himself to say so. He knew all too well that his tale would have been dismissed as the ranting of a madman. The family also refused to believe that Justine was guilty but even though Elizabeth spoke eloquently of Justine's goodness at her trial, she was eventually found guilty and condemned to death. Justine gracefully accepted her fate and the Frankenstein family went through a state of deep grief.

One day Victor decided to go on a solitary hike in the mountains. There, he came face to face with the creature again. After overcoming his fear, Victor confronted the monster who started narrating what had become of him since he fled Victor's laboratory. Victor discovers that after wandering great distances and suffering immense cold and hunger, the monster sought shelter in an abandoned hovel. His refuge adjoined the cottage of an exiled French family: by observing them, the monster acquired language, as well as an extensive knowledge of the ways of humanity.

He soon developed a deep love for the noble French family. As he already knew that his appearance inspired fear and disgust, he spoke first to the family's elderly patriarch who was blind. The old man appreciated the monster's sincerity and refinement, irrespective of his appearance but when his family returned unexpectedly, they drove the creature away from the cottage with stones.

After that traumatic incident, the monster was full of sorrow, and cursed his creator and his own hideousness. He therefore decided to take revenge on Victor Frankenstein, whose whereabouts he had discovered from the laboratory notebooks. Upon his arrival in Geneva, the creature encountered William, and since he was longing for companionship, the monster asked William to come away with him, hoping that the boy's youthful innocence would cause him to forgive his ugliness. Instead, William struggled and called the monster a number of cruel names; upon learning that the boy was related to Victor, the monster strangled him in a vengeful fury.

When the monster concluded his tale he demanded that Victor construct a female mate for him, so that he may no longer be so utterly alone. He also promised to leave human society forever. Victor agreed to his demands and journeyed back to Scotland to work on a new mistress for his monster. Victor was halfway through the work of creation when he was suddenly seized by fear. He wondered if the creature and his mistress would spawn yet more monsters in the future and thus destroy humanity. After his realisation, Victor tore the new woman to bits before the monster's very eyes. The monster fled screaming and promised Victor that he would be with him on his wedding night.

Victor was alarmed by the monster's promise but he knew he had to get rid of the remains of the female monster's body. He got into a rowboat and threw her remains in the lake, when he got back however the police was waiting to arrest him. They accused him of killing his beloved friend Henry. Victor immediately realized that it was the monster that had killed his friend so he became delusional until he was finally found innocent. When Victor got out of prison he decided to leave the past behind and marry his childhood sweetheart Elizabeth. But Victor's misfortunes did not end there. On their wedding night Elizabeth was found strangled to death in the conjugal bed. Upon hearing the news, Victor's father also died of grief.

Victor spent the rest of his life pursuing the creature, which is precisely what the creature himself wanted. Frankenstein soon became as wretched and bereft as he was. Victor had chased the monster as far as the Arctic Circle when he was eventually rescued by Walton.

While at sea, Victor is overwhelmed and is no longer able to struggle against his illness, eventually he dies peacefully in his sleep. At the moment of his death, the creature appears and mourns everything he has done. The monster then leaves, vowing that he will build a funeral pyre and throw himself amidst the flames.

1. Who was Robert Walton?
2. What kind of childhood did Victor Frankenstein have?
3. What did Victor first study at Ingolstadt?
4. What crazy idea did Victor have while he was studying the life giving force?
5. What did Victor do when he first saw his creation come to life?
6. Who was erroneously blamed for the murder of Victor's younger brother William?
7. How did the monster come to acquire language?
8. What did the monster demand that Victor do for him?
9. Why did Victor decide not to make a bride for the monster?
10. Who was Victor accused of killing?
11. Who did the monster murder on Victor's wedding night?
12. Why did the monster want Victor to hunt him ?



GOTHIC EXTRACTS: FRANKENSTEIN

LE: How does Shelley use conventions of the Gothic?

Knowledge Retrieval

1. When was 'Frankenstein' first published?
2. What is the name of the English explorer who meets Victor Frankenstein?
3. As a young man, what did Victor develop a passion for?
4. How did Victor Frankenstein create his 'monster'?
5. How did Frankenstein feel once he brought his creation to life?
6. What happened to Victor Frankenstein's younger brother?
7. Who is blamed for William's murder?
8. How did the monster acquire language?
9. How did the younger members of the French family react to the monster?
10. Why did the monster strangle William?
11. What does the monster ask Frankenstein to make for him?
12. Why does Frankenstein abandon his plans to make the monster a wife?
13. Who else does the monster kill?
14. What does Victor Frankenstein spend the rest of his life doing?
15. What happens at the moment of Frankenstein's death?

Task 1: Consider the themes and the plot of 'Frankenstein'. What do you think makes it a Gothic story? Make a list of your ideas.



Task 2: Read the article below and then answer the questions and complete the sentences to explore why Frankenstein is considered to be a Gothic novel.

Gothic novels focus on the mysterious and supernatural. In Frankenstein, Shelley uses rather mysterious circumstances to have Victor Frankenstein create the monster: the cloudy circumstances under which Victor gathers body parts for his experiments and the use of little known modern technologies for unnatural purposes. Shelley employs the supernatural elements of raising the dead and macabre research into unexplored fields of science unknown by most readers. She also causes us to question our views on Victor's use of the dead for scientific experimentation. Upon hearing the story for the first time, Lord Byron is said to have run screaming from the room, so the desired effect was achieved by Mary Shelley.

Gothic novels also take place in gloomy places like old buildings (particularly castles or rooms with secret passageways), dungeons, or towers that serve as a backdrop for the mysterious circumstances. A familiar type of Gothic story is, of course, the ghost story. Also, far away places that seem mysterious to the readers function as part of the Gothic novel's setting. Frankenstein is set in continental Europe, specifically Switzerland and Germany, where many of Shelley's readers had not been. Further, the incorporation of the chase scenes through the Arctic regions takes us even further from England into regions unexplored by most readers. Likewise, Dracula is set in Transylvania, a region in Romania near the Hungarian border. Victor's laboratory is the perfect place to create a new type of human being. Laboratories and scientific experiments were not known to the average reader, thus this was an added element of mystery and gloom.

Just the thought of raising the dead is gruesome enough. Shelley takes full advantage of this literary device to enhance the strange feelings that Frankenstein generates in its readers. The thought of raising the dead would have made the average reader wince in disbelief and terror. Imagining Victor wandering the streets of Ingolstadt or the Orkney Islands after dark on a search for body parts adds to the sense of revulsion purposefully designed to evoke from the reader a feeling of dread for the characters involved in the story.

In the Gothic novel, the characters seem to bridge the mortal world and the supernatural world. Dracula lives as both a normal person and as the undead, moving easily between both worlds to accomplish his aims. Likewise, the Frankenstein monster seems to have some sort of communication between himself and his creator, because the monster appears wherever Victor goes. The monster also moves with amazing superhuman speed with Victor matching him in the chase towards the North Pole. Thus, Mary Shelley combines several ingredients to create a memorable novel in the Gothic tradition.

1. Which of the novel's themes might be considered 'Gothic'?
 2. How does Shelley use the Gothic concepts of the supernatural and early scientific experimentation in this novel?
 3. List some of the settings in the novel. How do they conform to our expectations of a Gothic novel?
 4. How do the characters in the novel seem to bridge the world of the living and the world of the dead?
 5. How might the character of Victor Frankenstein conform to the idea of a Gothic hero?
 6. Think about the character of the monster. How might he create a sense of terror in the reader? Think about the context in which Shelley wrote the novel.
 7. What happens to Elizabeth? How might her character conform to our expectations of women in Gothic literature?
-
- A. 'Frankenstein' is considered a Gothic novel because...
 - B. 'Frankenstein' is considered a Gothic novel, but...
 - C. 'Frankenstein' incorporates supernatural elements, so...

Task 3: What questions might you have after reading and watching a summary of the plot of 'Frankenstein'? Write a list in your exercise book. You could use the sentence stems below

I wonder why...

What if...

How could..

Where was...

How did...

Who was...

Why did...

When did...

GOTHIC EXTRACTS: FRANKENSTEIN

LE: How does Shelley use language for effect?

Knowledge Retrieval

1. 'Frankenstein' was written by _____.
2. 'Frankenstein' was first published in _____.
3. The scientist in the novel is named _____.
4. He makes his creature out of _____.
5. Victor Frankenstein _____ his creation.
6. The monster seeks _____ on his creator.
7. The monster learnt language from _____.
8. The monster kills _____ and _____.
9. The monster asks Victor Frankenstein to create him a _____, but Frankenstein does not finish this task because _____.
10. Victor Frankenstein pursued the monster to _____ and dies at the end of the novel.

Task 1: Watch the clip of the monster being brought to life. What atmosphere is created? Make some brief notes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7EnOwKXyHc>

Task 2: Now read the extract from the original novel. We are going to explore how the writer uses language for effect. Be ready to annotate.

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!--Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.



Task 3: Answer the comprehension questions

1. What time of day is it when Victor brings the monster to life?
2. What is the weather like?
3. How was Victor Frankenstein feeling just before he brought his monster to life? Find a quote to support your response.
4. How is the room lit when Victor brings the monster to life? What atmosphere does this create?
5. What is the first sign that the creature has been brought to life?
6. How else does Victor know the monster is alive?
7. How does Victor Frankenstein feel once the monster is brought to life? Use quotes to support your answer.
8. What colour is the monster's skin?
9. What colour is the monster's hair?
10. What colour are the monster's lips?

Task 4: Language Analysis. Reread the description and answer the questions below:

1. Which **adjective** does the writer use to describe the night in November? What atmosphere does this **convey**?
2. Which **nouns** does the writer use to describe the feelings of Victor Frankenstein in the moments before he brought his monster to life? How **might** this make the reader feel?
3. The narrator, Frankenstein, describes the monster as a "lifeless thing". What **might** this **suggest** about his perception and feeling towards him? CLUE: How **might** this foreshadow how he treats him later in the novel?
4. How does Shelley continue to set the scene as one which is sinister and ominous? Find quotes to describe the weather and the lighting.
5. Re-read this line: "**I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.**"
 - A. What **adjectives** does Shelley use to describe the eye of the monster. What **might** this **suggest** about him?
 - B. Why **might** Shelley have her narrator Victor Frankenstein refer to the monster as a "creature" - what does this **emphasise** about his feelings towards him.
 - C. How does the **pronoun** "it" further **emphasises** Victor Frankenstein's feelings towards the monster?
 - D. Think about the **image**: "a convulsive motion agitated its limbs". What effect might this have. Clue: Think about the **adjective**: "convulsive". What kind of movement is this? What **might** it make the reader think or feel?
 - E. Look at the structure of this sentence. How might Shelley have structured the sentence to build tension?

6. How does Frankenstein feel when he says: “How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe..”? How **might** his response to the monster affect the reader?
7. Shelley uses the **voice** of her narrator, Frankenstein to give the reader an insight in to his response the monster. What **tone** does Shelley create through the line: “**Beautiful!--Great God!**”
8. Re-read the extract describing the monster’s appearance below:

His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

- A. Why might Shelley have described the monster’s skin as “yellow”? What does this **suggest** about him?
- B. Consider the **image** of the monster’s skin, which “scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath.” How does this create an inhuman and grotesque image of the monster?
- C. What **adjectives** are used to describe the monster’s hair? Why **might** this seem strange?
- D. Shelley describes the monster’s hair and teeth as a “**horrid contrast with his watery eyes.**” What effect do these contrasting images create?
- E. Which **adjective** is used to describe the monster’s eyes? What might this **suggest** about him?
- F. Which **adjective** is used to describe the monster’s complexion? What might this **emphasise** about him?
- G. What **adjectives** are used to describe the monster’s lips? What might this **imply** about him?
- H. Overall, how does Shelley portray the appearance of the monster in this extract.

Task 5: Complete the sentences below

- Shelley portrays the monster as grotesque because...
- Shelley creates the monster as inhuman because...
- Shelley focuses on the appearance of the monster’s eyes by...
- Shelley’s description of the monster’s skin and lips might emphasise..

GOTHIC EXTRACTS: FRANKENSTEIN

LE: How does Shelley use language to portray the monster in 'Frankenstein'?

Knowledge Retrieval

1. Identify the **adjectives** in the following quote: "I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs."
2. Identify the **verbs** in the following quote: "I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs."
3. What does the **adjective**: "convulsive" mean?
4. Identify the **adjectives** in the following quote:

His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

5. How does Shelley use **juxtaposition** to create a grotesque image of the monster?
6. What other words or phrases might you use to describe the monster based on this description?

Task 1: You are going to write an analysis of Shelley's description of the monster. Can you remember the success criteria for language analysis?



- _____ statement
- _____ terminology
- Short, embedded _____
- Tentative _____
- Language of _____
- Detailed _____
 - ⇒ Connotations of words
 - ⇒ Effect on reader

Task 2: Use the scaffold to label the example paragraph below

Opening statement

The writer presents the monster as....

Subject terminology

Word/phrase

Adjective/verb/adverb/noun/pronoun

*Image/metaphor/simile/
personification*

Contrast/juxtaposition

Language of Interpretation

Conveys/portrays/presents

Suggests/implies

Emphasises/reiterates/highlights

Tentative language

Might/could/perhaps

The writer uses the image: “the dull yellow eye of the creature” to present the creature as grotesque and abnormal. The use of the adjectives, “dull” and “yellow” emphasise the idea of their being something lifeless and disturbing about the monster’s eyes. Furthermore, Shelley’s use of the noun, “creature” reiterates the notion that Frankenstein’s creation is not human; it is monstrous in its form and appearance.

Task 4: How can you improve the example below? Re-write your improved version and label it with the success criteria

The writer uses the quote: “his yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath” to portray the monster. The use of the word “yellow” shows that there is something horrible about his skin. Furthermore the image of his skin which “scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath” emphasises something strange about the monster’s looks.

Task 5 Bookmark: Write 3 paragraphs in your book. Use the scaffold to help you.

How does Shelley use language to present the monster in this extract?

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!--Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

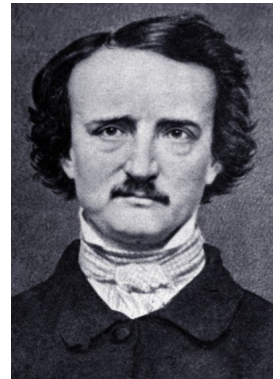
GOTHIC EXTRACTS: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

LE: Who was Edgar Allan Poe?

Knowledge Retrieval

1. During which century was the first Gothic novel written?
2. Who wrote 'Frankenstein'?
3. Which year was 'Frankenstein' published in?
4. Name three characters from 'Frankenstein'.
5. What Gothic conventions did Shelley use in 'Frankenstein'.
6. Look back at the Gothic timeline. Name one Gothic story written by Edgar Allan Poe.
7. List three characters you might expect to find in a Gothic story.
8. List three settings you might expect a Gothic story to be located in.

Task 1: The Gothic genre was not only popular in Europe, but also in America. Edgar Allan Poe was an American writer. Born in 1809, he was a short-story writer, poet, critic, and editor who remains famous for his stories of mystery and the **macabre**. Much of his work uses conventions of the Gothic, but he also is credited with inventing the genre of detective fiction.



Key word: macabre

(məˈkɑːbrə 🔊)

ADJECTIVE [usually ADJECTIVE noun]

You describe something such as an event or story as **macabre** when it is strange and horrible or upsetting, usually because it involves death or injury.

Police have made a macabre discovery. 📄

Mr Dahl was well-known for his macabre adult stories called 'Tales of the Unexpected'. 📄

Synonyms: gruesome, grim, ghastly, frightening [More Synonyms of macabre](#)

Watch this video to learn more about Edgar Allan Poe. Organise your ideas under the following headings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-387NMCR6w>

- Early life and family
- Education
- Work
- Death
- Legacy

Task 2: Read the biography below. Can you add any more to your notes about Edgar Allan Poe?

Introduction

(1809–49). Edgar Allan Poe is considered one of America's greatest writers. He is said to have invented the modern detective story. His works are full of suspense, as his most famous poem, The Raven (1845), shows. He was a very successful writer, yet in his personal life he struggled greatly.

Early Life

Edgar Poe was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 19, 1809. His mother died when he was 2, and he went to live with John Allan, a successful merchant in Richmond, Virginia. Allan's wife, who had no children of her own, raised the boy. Poe later took Allan as his middle name.

At age 17 Poe enrolled at the University of Virginia. However, he did not do well there. He gambled so much that he was soon in debt. Allan became angry and withdrew Poe from the school. Poe returned to Richmond, but when he found the woman he loved engaged to another man, he left.

By 1827 Poe was living in Boston. There he wrote some poems, which were published in a booklet as Tamerlane and Other Poems. Without a source of steady income, he joined the Army. Poe remained in the service until 1829, when Allan helped him win entrance to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. Once again Poe did not do well in school. He disliked the strict discipline of the school and paid no attention to his classes. Poe was soon expelled.

Career

After West Point, Poe struggled to make a living as a writer. His first success came in 1833 when he entered a short-story contest and won a prize for his "MS. Found in a Bottle." He also sold several stories.

As he moved from one job to the next, Poe wrote the tales he became famous for, including "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." This last story is considered the first modern detective story because it inspired a whole new kind of fiction. By 1844 Poe was a well-known writer, but he was still having a hard time making money. In 1845, Poe wrote his most famous poem, "The Raven."

Mysterious Death

In 1849 Poe was traveling from Richmond to New York City. He only made it as far as Baltimore, Maryland. There he died mysteriously on October 7. There are many theories about the cause of his death, but the answer is still unclear.

Task 3: Answer the following comprehension questions:

1. When and where was Edgar Allan Poe born?
2. What happened to Poe's mother when he was very small?
3. Who did Poe go to live with?
4. Why did Poe have to leave the University of Virginia?
5. Why did Poe leave Richmond, Virginia?
6. What was Poe doing in Boston in 1827?
7. Why did Poe join the army?
8. Why did Poe not enjoy the Military Academy?
9. Did Poe find it easy to make a living as a writer?
10. List some of the stories that made Poe famous.
11. Poe wrote stories that used lots of Gothic conventions. However, he is also credited for inventing which other genre?
12. When did Poe write his famous poem 'The Raven'?
13. When did Poe die and what was strange about his death?

Task 4: Complete the following sentences

- A. Poe had a difficult personal life because...
- B. Poe had a difficult personal life, but..
- C. Poe had a difficult personal life, so...
- D. Poe eventually became a famous writer because...
- E. Poe eventually became a famous writer, but...
- F. Poe eventually became a famous writer, so...
- G. Poe's stories are considered to be Gothic because...
- H. Poe's stories are considered to be Gothic, but...
- I. Poe's stories are considered to be Gothic, so...

GOTHIC EXTRACTS: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

LE: What happens in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'?

Knowledge Retrieval True or False

1. Edgar Allan Poe was born in London in 1809.
2. Poe had an easy life.
3. Poe's mother died when he was two years old.
4. Poe never got on well at school.
5. By 1844, Poe was a well-known writer.
6. Poe's famous poem is called 'The Crow'.
7. Poe is also credited with inventing the science-fiction genre.
8. Poe died in 1949.
9. Poe's death was mysterious.
10. The word 'macabre' means ancient.

Task 1: 'The Fall of the House of Usher' is a Gothic horror, describing the final hours of a family tormented by mysterious tragedy and the legacy of the past. Read the brief introductory summary to the story below and then watch the video. The video is an animation based on the short story and uses lots of Poe's original text.

At the beginning of this short story, an unnamed narrator arrives at the House of Usher, a sinister looking mansion owned and inhabited by his childhood friend Roderick Usher and his sister, Madeline. Our narrator and Roderick Usher have not seen one another since childhood, but Usher is unwell (he seems to be suffering from a mysterious mental illness) and has written to his friend to request his company. The narrator is struck by the ominous appearance of the house itself and once inside, he wonders what unnatural power the family's ancestral home holds over Roderick and Madeline Usher?

Watch this animation of the short story here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkXzGDcT46g>

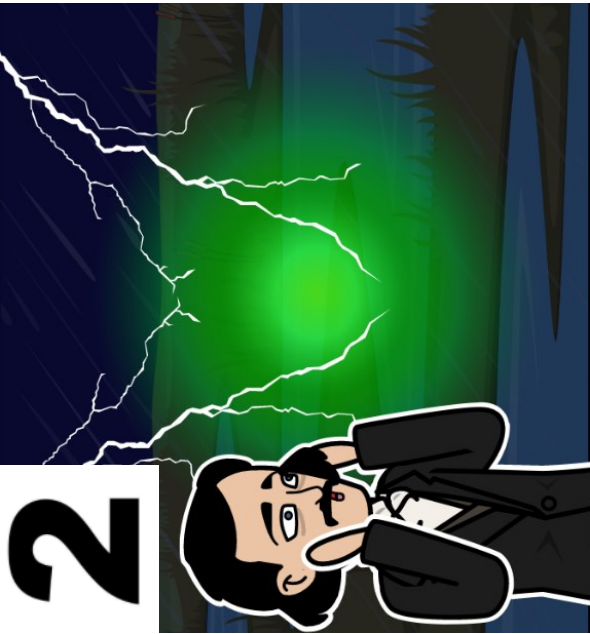


Task 2: Read the story board and work out the correct order of the plot.



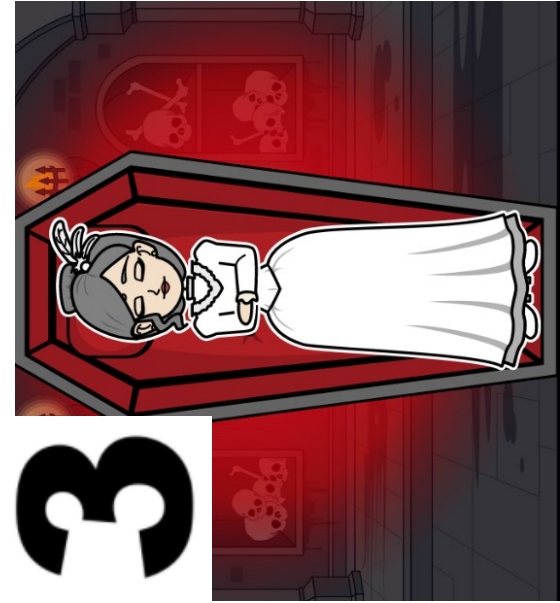
1

Shortly after Madeline was placed in the vault, the narrator begins to hear strange noises in the house. One night, in the middle of a storm, Usher comes to the narrator's bed chamber and they open the window to a terrifying atmosphere with low-hanging clouds and fog. The narrator begins to read to Usher to calm him down.



2

As the narrator watches, he sees the house collapse and disappear into the ethereal fog and waters. Eventually, the house is completely gone.



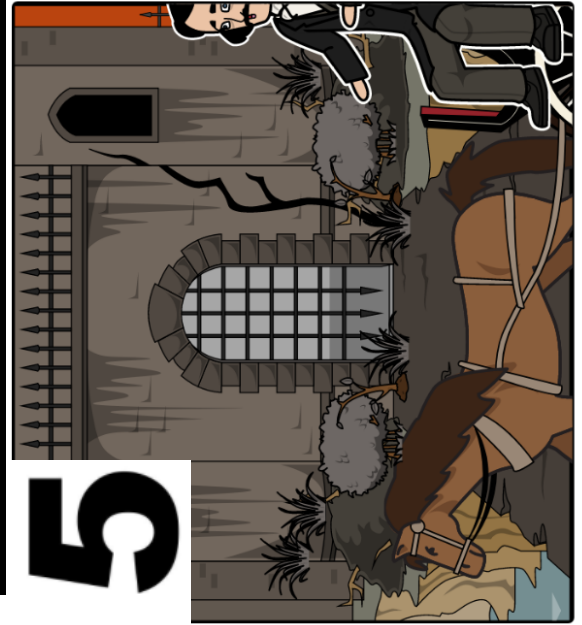
3

Usher reveals that his twin sister Madeline is dying. She passes, and Usher decides to keep her body in a vault in one of the walls while he makes plans for her burial. The narrator notices that Madeline's cheeks and chest are still flushed. Usher's appearance and demeanor worsen after her death.



4

As the narrator reads, the sounds he describes begin to echo in the house. When he reaches the climax, they hear a scream. Usher tips over his chair and begins rocking back and forth. Usher whispers that he's been hearing sounds from his sister's coffin and he fears he buried her alive. The door flies open, and there is Madeline, covered in blood.



5

Roderick Usher wrote a letter to the narrator to come and visit him for a short time to help him overcome an agitation of his soul that he has been experiencing. The narrator observes that the house seems sickly, and Usher himself is pale and sickly. The state of the house seems to be coinciding with the state of Roderick Usher.



6

Madeline leaps upon Roderick and dies. Roderick also dies, likely from shock and fear. The narrator flees the house.

Task 3: Answer the following questions to check your understanding of the plot.

1. What are the names of the siblings who live in the House of Usher?
2. Why has the narrator gone to stay at the house?
3. What are the narrator's first impressions of the house?
4. What psychological state does Roderick Usher appear to be in? Why does he say he suffers?
5. What does Usher reveal to the narrator about his sister?
6. What does the narrator notice about Madeline when she is dead?
7. Where does Usher put his sister's dead body?
8. What happens to Usher's mental and emotional state after his sister's death?
9. What does the narrator begin to hear after Madeleine's body has been placed in the vault?
10. Why does Usher come to the narrator in the middle of the night?
11. What happens when the narrator and Usher open the windows of the house?
12. What happens whilst the narrator is reading to Usher to calm him down?
13. What does the narrator fear that he has done?
14. What happens when Madeleine re-appears? How is this possible?
15. What happens once the narrator has fled the house?

Task 3: What conventions of the Gothic does Poe use in this short story? Think about setting, characters, themes and other Gothic tropes. Discuss as a class and make a list in your book.

Task 4: Gothic stories often leave us with lots of questions. Make a list of question you have after reading the story.



GOTHIC EXTRACTS: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

LE: How does Poe use conventions of the Gothic?

Knowledge Retrieval True or False

1. Women are often portrayed as victims in Gothic literature.
2. Most Gothic stories are set in cities.
3. 'The Fall of the House of Usher' is written by Mary Shelley.
4. The narrator has gone to visit his friend Roderick Usher to celebrate his birthday.
5. From the moment he lays eyes on the house, the narrator feels that there is something very sinister and disturbing about it.
6. Usher's sister is dying from a mysterious hereditary illness.
7. The narrator has no concerns about Usher's state of mind.
8. Usher buries his sister in a churchyard.
9. The narrator begins to hear strange noises in the house.
10. Usher worries that he has buried his sister alive.
11. Madeline Usher reappears
12. Usher dies from falling down the stairs.
13. The narrator flees the house and the house bursts in to flames.

Task 1: Complete the sentences

- A. The setting of the 'The Fall of the House of Usher' conforms to the idea of the Gothic because...
- B. Both Madeline and Roderick appear to the narrator as looking as if they are barely alive; both appear 'other-worldly'. This is significant because...
- C. Roderick feels that his suffering could be traced to a mysterious illness which has long afflicted the Ushers. This conforms to the idea of the Gothic because...
- D. The character of Roderick Usher meets our expectations of a Gothic character because...
- E. The character of Madeline Usher meets our expectations of a Gothic character because...
- F. Madeline's return as a 'living corpse' conforms to the conventions of the Gothic because...
- G. There are several mysteries surrounding the family, the house and the circumstances, including:
- H. The fact that Madeline and Roderick are twins might be particularly significant in a Gothic short story, because...
- I. The house seems to take on a life of its own when...
- J. In keeping with the Gothic tradition, a sense of psychological terror is created when...
- K. The fact that the house collapses as soon as Madeline and Roderick die might suggest....

Task 2: Choose **two** of the following Gothic tropes and explain how Poe uses them in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'

- A. The character of the female victim
- B. Characters who bridge the mortal world and the supernatural world
- C. An isolated, rural setting
- D. Psychological terror
- E. An ancestral/family curse

GOTHIC EXTRACTS: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

LE: How does Poe use language for effect?

Knowledge Retrieval

1. How did the narrator of 'The Fall of the House of Usher' feel when he first saw the house?
2. Why has the narrator gone to stay with his friend?
3. Why does Roderick Usher think he and his sister are ill?
4. Think back to the extract from Frankenstein. What time of day was it in the extract and what was the weather like?
5. How did Shelley describe Frankenstein's feelings just before he brought the monster to life?
6. How did Shelley describe Frankenstein's feelings once the monster was alive?
7. Shelley described the monster's appearance in lots of detail. Can you remember any of these details?

Task 2: Gothic writers like Shelley and Poe tend to use highly **emotive language**; their prose style is often rich in **detailed imagery** and **appeals to the senses**. They often employ **personification** to create **atmospheric settings** and spend time describing the setting, including the weather, often to reflect the mood of their characters or to create a specific atmosphere around the events taking place.

If we think about the themes that Gothic writers tend to write about, it makes sense that they would use lots of **sensory language**, **evocative detail** and **emotive language**. The Gothic is all about characters who experience intense feelings, who undergo emotional and psychological experiences often in dramatic and isolated settings. A Gothic writer needs to use language to recreate this atmosphere and heightened sense of emotion.

On the next page, you will find a list of techniques that are often used by Gothic writers (and writers of other genres, of course)

Match the technique with the definition. We'll then think about how and why some of these devices are used in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'. This will lead to you writing an analysis of Poe's setting.

Alliteration	Something inanimate (non-human) is given human features e.g. 'The windows winked at the street.'
Short sentences	Exaggerating language for effect (often to suggest emotion) e.g. 'Her heart felt like it was about to burst from her chest.'
Evocative verbs	One thing is described as another in order to suggest similarity without the use of 'like' or 'as' e.g. 'The silver ball in the sky.'
Pathetic fallacy	Verbs which are well-chosen to have an impact on the mood or atmosphere e.g. 'crept', 'captured', 'vanquished'.
Simile	The weather is used to reflect the mood of the situation or characters e.g. rain to suggest sadness or depression.
Metaphor	Often used to create pace, e.g. 'The door slammed'.
Appealing to the senses	Two things are compared through linking words such as 'like' or 'as' e.g. 'The moon was like a silver ball in the sky.'
Hyperbolic language	The use of sound, taste, touch, sight or smell to bring a situation to life for readers.
Personification	Two or more words begin with the same letter or sound close to one another e.g. 'The <u>b</u> right, <u>b</u> eautiful and <u>b</u> usy city.'

Task 3: Read this extract from the opening of 'The Fall of the House of Usher'. Remember that the narrator arrives at the house of his friend for the first time and senses something sinister and unsettling about the house. Firstly, we will just try to understand what the narrator sees and feels. Then we'll begin to explore the language Poe uses to describe this.

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was--but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me--upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain--upon the bleak walls--upon the vacant eye-like windows--upon a few rank sedges--and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees--with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium--the bitter lapse into everyday life--the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart--an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it--I paused to think--what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down--but with a shudder even more thrilling than before--upon the remodelled and inverted images of the grey sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Before you answer the questions, make a glossary of the new key words in your exercise book. Ensure you have the definitions of: **oppressively, melancholy, pervaded, bleak, vacant, decayed, fancies, pondered, lurid, tarn**

1. During what season does the narrator go to visit his friend?
2. What was the weather like on the day he arrived at the house?
3. Did the narrator travel with anyone?
4. What time of day is it when the narrator first comes into view of the house?
5. What does the narrator mean when he says that, "a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit" on first seeing the house?
6. Can you find any other quotations which convey how the narrator felt when he first saw the house?
7. Does the narrator know why he feels such a sense of dread when he sees the house?
8. Where does the narrator tie up his horse?
9. When the narrator, looks in to the tarn (lake), what does he see and how does this

GOTHIC EXTRACTS: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

LE: How does Poe use language to present the setting in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'?

Knowledge Review:

1. What season is it when the narrator arrives at the house?
2. What time of day is it when the narrator arrives at the house?
3. What is the weather like when the narrator arrives at the house?
4. How does the narrator feel when he first sees the house?
5. Can the narrator explain why he feels this way?
6. Where does the narrator tie up his horse and what does he look into? How does this make him feel?
7. What might we expect from Gothic prose? Complete the blanks:
 - A. When a writer use language to describe the feelings of a character: _____ language
 - B. When something inanimate (non-human) is given human features: _____.
 - C. A writer might use detailed _____ to describe a setting or character.
 - D. A writer might use language which appeals to the _____ to evoke a mood or atmosphere.

Task 1: Re-read the extract describing the setting. It has been edited slightly, so it is a little shorter. Then answer the questions to begin exploring Poe's use of language.

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was--but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I looked upon the scene before me--upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain--upon the bleak walls--upon the vacant eye-like windows--upon a few rank sedges--and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees--with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart--an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it--I paused to think--what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down--but with a shudder even more thrilling than before--upon the remodelled and inverted images of the grey sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

1. Identify the three **adjectives** Poe uses to describe the autumn day that the narrator arrived at the house? What atmosphere does this create?
2. Can you identify the **image** that Poe uses to show what time of day it is. Why might this be significant? How does it contribute to the mood of the setting?
3. Which adjective does Poe use to first **describe** the House of Usher?
4. “Melancholy” means sad and sorrowful. Why **might** Poe use this **adjective** to describe the house?
5. Poe uses the phrase: “a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit” to **describe** the narrator’s feelings when he first saw the house. What literary technique is this?
6. What does the use of the **adjective** “insufferable” **emphasise** about how the narrator feels?
7. Why might Poe use the **noun** “gloom”? What does it **suggest** about how the house made the narrator feel?
8. Why might Poe use the **verb**, “pervaded”? What does it **suggest** about the intensity of the narrator’s feelings?
9. Why might Poe use the **adjective**, “bleak” to describe the walls? Where has Poe used similar words to this? What atmosphere is Poe building?
10. What does Poe compare the windows of the house to? What technique is? Why **might** Poe use this **image**?
11. Identify the quote used to **describe** the trees.
12. Why **might** the trees be **described** as “decayed”?
13. Do the “white trunks” remind you of anything? Why **might** Poe **describe** them in this way?
14. Find TWO quotes which **emphasise** the feelings of fear and misery that the sight of the house **evokes** in the narrator.
15. Why might Poe use the **noun**, “iciness” to **describe** how he felt? What are the connotations of ice? What feelings does the house **evoke**? What physical and emotional response does the house seem to trigger?
16. The narrator says he felt, “unnerved”. What does this **verb** mean and what does it **suggest** about how he felt?
17. What **adjectives** does Poe use to describe the tarn (the lake)? Why might he do this?
18. When the narrator sees the reflection of the house and the trees in the lake, how does he respond? Identify the **verb**.
19. Why might Poe **repeat** the **imagery** of the “ghastly tree stems” and the “vacant, eye-like windows.”?
20. Overall, how would you describe the setting? Come up with 3 words or phrases.

How does Poe use language to present the setting in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'?



- _____ statement
- _____ terminology
- Short, embedded _____
- Tentative _____
- Language of _____
- Detailed _____
 - ⇒ Connotations of words
 - ⇒ Effect on reader

Poe uses the *image* of a, “dull, dark, and soundless day” to present the setting as sinister and unsettling. The use of the adjective, “dark” emphasises the shadowy and ominous atmosphere in which the narrator first comes across the house. Furthermore, the use of the adjective, “soundless” creates an eerie and tense atmosphere, which gives the reader an impression of the narrator’s sense of isolation.

Opening statement

The writer presents the monster as....

Language of Interpretation

Conveys/portrays/presents

Suggests/implies

Emphasises/reiterates/highlights

Subject terminology

Word/phrase

Adjective/verb/adverb/noun/pronoun

Image/metaphor/simile/
personification

Contrast/juxtaposition

Tentative language

Might/could/perhaps

Spring Term

The Gothic

The Gothic is a literary genre which originated in the 18th century, but has remained popular to this day. Famous Gothic novels include, 'Frankenstein' and 'Dracula'.



Section 1: The origins of the Gothic and Gothic literature

- The Gothic genre originated in the 18th century.
- The first Gothic novel was 'The Castle of Otranto'. It was written by Horace Walpole and published in 1764.
- Conventions of the Gothic include: isolated settings, supernatural events and evil characters.
- The famous Gothic novel, 'Frankenstein' was written by Mary Shelley and published in 1816.
- Edgar Allan Poe was an American writer who wrote in the mid-1800s and is famous for his Gothic short stories.
- Bram Stoker introduced the character of Count Dracula in 1897.
- 'The Turn of the Screw' is a Gothic ghost story written by Henry James in 1898.
- Susan Hill wrote 'The Woman in Black' in 1983.
- The Gothic remains a popular genre. Stephanie Meyer wrote the first novel in the Twilight series in 2005.

Section 2: Keywords

Genre (n): a type or category of literature

Convention (n): typical feature, trope

Setting (n): location of a story

Character (n): person in a novel (or play, film etc)

Theme (n): important ideas that occur throughout a story

Plot (n): main events of a novel (or play, film etc)

Narrator (n): Person who recounts the events of a story

Atmosphere (n): the tone or mood of a setting or situation

Isolated (adj): far away from other places, buildings, or people; remote

Macabre (adj): strange, horrible and gruesome because it relates to death

Ominous (adj): giving the worrying impression that something bad is going to happen

Supernatural (adj and n): events or things that cannot be explained by nature or science

Psychological (adj): related to the mental and emotional state of a person

Emotive (adj): related to feelings and emotions

Evocative (adj): bringing strong images, memories, or feelings to mind.

Sensory (adj): relating to sensation or the physical senses (touch, sight, hearing, taste, smell)

Section 3: Analysing Language

Success Criteria

- Opening statement
- Subject terminology
- Short, embedded quotes
- Language of interpretation
- Tentative Language
- Detailed Analysis

Language devices

- Imagery
- Personification
- Metaphor
- Simile
- Emotive language
- Sensory Language
- Pathetic fallacy
- Hyperbolic language
- Adjective, Verb, Noun, Adverb

Tasks

Section 1: Origins of the Gothic

Task 1: Look/cover/write/check the [facts](#).

Section 2: Keywords

Task 4: Look/cover/write/check the spellings of the keywords above.

Task 3: Learn/cover/write/check the definitions of the keywords in Section 2.

Task 4: Use each of the keywords in a sentence correctly.

Section 3: Analysing Language

Task 5: Look/cover/write/check the success criteria analysing language

Task 6: Look/cover/write/check the language devices