



# Frankenstein: (b) Gothic features

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 refers to links on [www.crossref-it.info](http://www.crossref-it.info)

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To look at how far *Frankenstein* follows the Gothic tradition, and what effect this has on the reader's response.
  - This lesson could be used quite early in studying the novel, though the tasks would need to be held back.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Students write a mini-saga (exactly 50 words):
  - They must try to include two of the following elements: gloom, supernatural, grotesque.
  - Read some out.
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Read the chapter in which the Creature is created. This is Vol.1 Ch.4 on the site (refer to  Texts in detail > *Frankenstein* > Synopses > Vol.1 > Ch.4), but Ch.5 in some editions.
  - Ask students to list phrases which they regard as 'Gothic' in the chapter. A quick skim-read will probably do.
  - Discuss the findings, and agree on typical elements of Gothic literature.
  - Your list might be something like this: gloomy settings; oppressed female characters; supernatural events; physical or psychological violence; exploration of the nightmares under the surface of the 'civilized' mind; sinister buildings; many events in darkness/night; extreme landscapes and/or weather; a character driven by passion/obsession.
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Discuss how the style affects our response to the above chapter.
  - What would change if the chapter had been written in a factual, scientific style?
  - What other passages of the novel gain their power from a Gothic style?
  - Students could be given time to find suitable passages and report back on their thoughts about the sections they have found.
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Imagine that *Frankenstein* has just been published:
  - Write a review for a quality Sunday paper (ignore the 'old-fashioned' language of the novel!).
  - How acceptable would its style, content and themes be?
  - Look for ideas at  Texts in detail > *Frankenstein* > The Study Of *Frankenstein* > Critical Approaches.
- ❖ **Critical task:** Compared to modern horror stories in print and on film, *Frankenstein* is very tame and therefore not worth reading.
  - Discuss your response to this view.
- ❖ **Extension task:** Write an extra incident in which the monster meets characters who are not in the original novel.