

Frankenstein: (a) Narrative viewpoints

☞ refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** The narrative structure of the novel is an obvious aspect of its effect. Are there really three distinct voices? The teacher should refer to ☞ [Texts in detail > *Frankenstein* > The Text of *Frankenstein* > Narrative](#), which provides a number of very useful discussion points. If possible, students should look through this part of the site www.crossref-it.info during or before the lesson, too.
 - Some of this plan assumes a full knowledge of the novel, but parts could be used once Ch.11 has been reached.

- ❖ **Opening exercise:** The teacher gives the first line of a story (e.g. 'When Charley first met Chris, it was a dark, rainy night...'), and each student in turn takes the story a little further (30 seconds each, perhaps). They must follow on reasonably logically and cannot simply contradict anything that has already been said.
 - The purpose is to demonstrate that each teller has their own approach but it is all part of the same story (rather like *Frankenstein!*).

- ❖ **Textual examination:** Look at how each teller in the novel begins their storytelling:
 - The three passages are: Letter 1 (Walton), Ch. 1 (Victor), and Volume 2, Ch. 3 (the creature; Ch.11 in some editions). Refer to ☞ [Texts in detail > *Frankenstein* > synopses](#).

- Students should read these sections, preferably aloud by three different voices.
- List, in pairs, thoughts about each passage, especially any similarities or differences in approach, purpose, language, imagery.
- Compare and discuss these lists.

- ❖ **Recreative task:** Imagine that you are going to interview the three characters for a TV or radio programme:
 - Make a list of four or five questions which you would like to ask each character.
 - These could be used to role play the interview later, though simply discussion of the questions themselves would be valuable.

- ❖ **Critical task:** Discuss the suggestion that the novel would lose none of its effect if Walton and his contributions to the narrative were removed, leaving Victor and the Creature to tell the tale.

- ❖ **Extension ideas:**
 - Students could look at each narrator's final contributions to the narrative, too.
 - Students could write a reply letter from Walton's sister, either after Letter 4, or at the end of the novel.