

Frankenstein Lesson Plans

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Frankenstein Pre-reading: Nobody Says, “It’s Alive!”

Lesson: Nobody Says, “It’s Alive!” (anticipation guide)

Key standard: SL1 Comprehension and Collaboration (discussion)

SL9-10.1 “Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.”

Info: What do you know or think about Dr. Frankenstein and his monster? Think about everything from Halloween costumes to movies to books.

[“It’s Alive! - Frankenstein Movie Clip”](#) (4 minutes) from Universal

While films like these are fun and often ingenious, we should probably forget all about them when we read the original novel by Mary Shelley.

Through:

Frankenstein’s monster is a cultural icon, but the original novel is a thought-provoking and influential piece of Romantic literature. The novel highlights the themes of the Romantic movement by opposing the inhumanity of reason, science, and industrial society. For many, *Frankenstein* is the first example of science fiction as we know it.

Key theme subjects in *Frankenstein*

Rebellion	Nature	Guilt
Compassion	Science / industry	Isolation
Appearances	Justice	Companionship
Playing God	Knowledge / discovery	Parenthood
Personality development	Revenge	Ambition
Hubris / excessive pride	Fate	Evil

If your unit will end with a culminating task, introduce the task now. Let students know what they can do as they study the novel to prepare for success. Encourage students to “cheat” by taking notes on symbolism, a specific theme, characterization, or whatever final task will address.

Group discussion:

- 1) Complete the [Frankenstein Anticipation Guide](#) on your own.
- 2) Share and discuss your responses.
- 3) Choose one of your discussions to share with the class.

Anticipation guide discussion topics:

Science fiction, ambition, nature vs. nurture, the value of science and industry, emotions, appearances, spending time in nature, revenge, parenthood, narrative effects, and prior knowledge of Frankenstein’s monster.

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Frankenstein Anticipation Guide

Name: _____

"Science fiction is purely for entertainment. You cannot learn or think about anything important through reading science fiction."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"The most important thing in life is to be an important person. Achieving greatness is even more important than enjoying life, having friends, or acting morally."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"People are shaped by their experiences. The way a person thinks and acts is mainly a result of how life has treated them."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"Science and industry lead to disaster. Humankind would be happier if we lived simpler lives in harmony with nature."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"It is important to feel emotions powerfully. Whether you are feeling guilt, love, sadness, horror, or joy, you should go big."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"The way someone looks is not really important."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"I enjoy spending time in nature. Spending time in nature is good for my mental health."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"Revenge is completely pointless. Nothing can be gained through it."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"Parents have a duty to love their children no matter what."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"I enjoy stories that include mystery, suspense, tension, and surprise."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

"I can already describe the monster of Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> ."	Agree / disagree / qualify
Respond:	

[Frankenstein Anticipation Guide \(PDF\)](#)

Connected reading: ["How a Teenage Girl Became the Mother of Horror"](#) (3 pages) from National Geographic

Connected reading: ["How Romanticism rebelled against cold-hearted rationality"](#) (4 page) from The Conversation

Helpful clip: ["Everything you need to know to read *Frankenstein*"](#) (6 minutes) from TED-Ed Clip previews the plot and gives historical context.

Beyond:

Based on today's discussion, make some wild guesses about how the original *Frankenstein* will be different from what is shown in popular culture.

Which of the discussion prompts is most interesting to you? Explain.

Which theme subject will you address in your culminating task? Why did you select this theme subject?

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Lesson: Getting Romantic with Art

Key standard: SL4 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL9-10.4 “Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.”

Into: What do you think of when you hear the word Romantic? (Let’s keep it PG, people.)

Explain that we are not talking about romance novels but Romantic novels. Romanticism is more about death, horror, and sublime joy than candle-lit dinners.

Through: “Romanticism can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization, and rationality that typified Classicism in general and late 18th-century Neoclassicism in particular. It was also to some extent a reaction against the Enlightenment and against 18th-century rationalism and physical materialism in general. Romanticism emphasized the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary, and the transcendental.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

What does Romanticism look like? We will analyze art from the Romantic movement.



[Romanticism in Fine Art \(PDF\)](#)

- Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, 1818
- Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830
- Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781 (precursor to the Romantic movement)
- Francisco de Goya, *Saturn Devouring his Son*, 1823
- J.M.W. Turner, *The Fighting Temeraire*, 1839
- Théodore Géricault, “*The Raft of the Medusa*,” 1819
- Thomas Cole, *Youth (The Ages of Life series)*, 1842
- Henry Wallis, *The Death of Chatterton*, 1856

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Group Task:

- 1) Choose [one piece of art](#) to analyze.
- 2) Write your analysis. (Don't get frustrated, have fun with it.)
 - a) Purpose and audience
 - b) Subject (what is being portrayed)
 - c) Emphasis (What aspects are the main foci? How do you know?)
 - d) Tone (the artist's attitudes toward the subjects)
 - e) Feeling or theme
 - f) Style (the techniques the artist uses to communicate)
- 3) Research the work (if time allows).
- 4) Present your expertise. Connect the artwork to the ideas of Romanticism.

Connected reading: "[Summary of Romanticism](#)" (4 pages) from The Art Story

Helpful clip: "[Introduction to the Romantic Movement](#)" (10 minutes) by Martin Travasse
Explains the roots of the movement and its central ideas.

Beyond:

Why do you think the Romantics wanted to reject reason, science, industry, and order?
What were they seeking?

Does the art of Romanticism appeal to you? Choose one of the examples shown in class to help illustrate your answer.

Lesson: Giving Sci-fi a Try

Key standard: RL3 Key Ideas and Details (interacting elements)

RL11-12.3 “Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).”

*Also, RL2 Key Ideas and Details (theme development)

Into: What are your thoughts on science fiction? (Do you like it? What makes something science fiction? Can it be important, or is it just for fun?)

Through:

Class chart: What are some of the common features of sci-fi?

Science fiction has often struggled to be taken seriously. While some examples of sci-fi are pure entertainment, other examples explore important themes about technology, reality, humanity, and the future. In fact, there are many examples where real scientists use the hypothetical elements of sci-fi to guide their pursuits.

We will start by analyzing a sci-fi narrative. Then we will create our own original examples.

GIVING SCI-FI A TRY

Name: _____

Part I: Analyzing Sci-fi

Title:

Sci-fi premise or setting (E.g., The setting is a space station that orbits Earth. The space station is like a giant, in-door city. The inhabitants never visit Earth because...)

Literary elements

Mood:

Conflict:

Plot:

Main character(s):

Symbolic elements (symbol, motif, or allegory):

Sci-fi elements (anything to do with science, technology, or the future)		

Questions posed (E.g. What would happen if Earth was unlivable?)

Theme (What is the message? How do the science fiction elements help develop the theme?)

[Giving Sci-fi a Try Handout \(PDF\)](#)

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You can choose any science fiction short story for this task, but [“Super-Toys Last All Summer Long”](#) works well as it poses questions about humanity and parental responsibility.

Group task:

- Read [“Super-Toys Last All Summer Long”](#) (8 pages) by Brian Aldiss.
- Discuss the story in order to complete the analysis page.
- Share your response to the last section with the class.

Creative writing:

- Brainstorm a list of ideas to inspire an original sci-fi story.
- Choose an idea and create a plan for the narrative.
 - Science fiction premise
 - Literary elements
 - Mood
 - Conflict
 - Plot
 - Main character(s)
 - Symbolic elements (symbol, motif, or allegory)
 - Theme development

If you prefer students approach the topic through nonfiction articles, have them argue the value of science fiction as a genre.

[“Why Science Fiction Authors Can’t Win”](#) (5 pages) from Galactic Brain

[“Why Science Fiction Matters”](#) (4 pages) from New America Foundation

[“Science fiction triggers 'poorer reading', study finds”](#) (3 pages) by Alison Flood

[“Why Science Fiction is the Most Important Genre”](#) (3 pages) from WIRED

Beyond:

Complete your sci-fi story idea (Part II of the handout) and be prepared to share your idea with the class.

Following your concept from the handout, draft your original sci-fi story.