

DIGITAL THEATRE+

LESSON PLAN



FRANKENSTEIN

BY MARY SHELLEY

LESSON PLAN LENGTH: 60 MINUTES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the tension between the two central characters and therefore enhance their personal response to the novel (AO1)
- Talk and eventually write fluently about the central relationship dynamic (AO4)
- Feel confident to begin early stage analysis of the text having an awareness of its central narrative and themes. Students at both GCSE and A-Level will begin to access information about context (AO3)

For GCSE or A-Level Assessment Objectives that this lesson links to, please refer to the end of the lesson plan.

To teach this lesson, you will need:

- Large sheets of paper
- Pens
- Access to Digital Theatre+

EXERCISE 1

A MONSTER IS...?: PRACTICAL AND DISCURSIVE

- Divide your class into small groups and give each group a large sheet of paper and pen.
- Give them 2 minutes to write down what comes to mind when they hear the word 'Monster'.
- Get each group to read out what's on their page and discuss. Identify common themes and ideas that emerge between the groups. Guide students to explicit links with the novel where appropriate.



ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to get the group to begin to build a picture in their mind of what this really means from a physical, emotional, spiritual point of view to support individual responses (AO1) and contextual understanding (AO3).

EXERCISE 2

THE 'OTHER': PRACTICAL AND DISCURSIVE

- Keeping your students in the same groups, now ask them to think about all the differences that make a 'monster' that they have previously identified.
- Give them 2 minutes to write down what comes to mind when they think about being 'the other'. Modern examples, personal experiences and societal attitudes are all valid responses here.
- Get each group to read out what's on their page and discuss. A key question will be how this might then link to a story about a creature who is rejected.



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to encourage the group to begin to think at a deeper level about the feelings that can surface when rejected by individual, groups, society.

This is an excellent opportunity to introduce brief contextual information about the period in which the novel was written. Introduction of AO3 as early as possible will assist students in reading the novel from the perspective of a modern reader, but understanding the way in which reader attitudes have changed, or indeed remained the same.

EXERCISE 3

FRANKENSTEIN: FACT FILE

- Either gather your group in a circle or go around the class and get each person to say what they think, know or feel in response to the phrase '*Frankenstein is...?*'

For students of both GCSE and A-Level Standard, this is an ideal opportunity to introduce contextual information about the early 19th century, the Gothic novel and the circumstances in which Mary Shelley wrote the novel. Depending on the knowledge, experience and exam level of your students, you may wish to highlight the moral, mythical and religious aspects of the novel. This can then be a helpful reference tool during the prolonged study of the text.



ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to surface central characters and key themes from the text with the group learning from each other as well as being teacher led. This is also a good way to deal with misconceptions as many students will think that the creature is called *Frankenstein*.

EXERCISE 4

LEADING AND FOLLOWING: PRACTICAL (SILENT WORK)

Get your students into pairs, asking one to be called A and one to be called B. Invite all the A people to begin a simple movement sequence that their B partner has to follow. The objective for A is to keep control and the objective for B is to try and take the control over. Get each group to then swap over taking the lead.



ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to practically experience the pull and push between the two central characters.

EXERCISE 5

CONTROL: PRACTICAL

- Now get all the A people lined up at one end of the room and ask the B group to walk around the space.
- A commands what B does in the space using the following words – STOP/GO/CLAP/STRETCH/JUMP. A can experiment with the speed and intensity of these instructions (within reason!)
- It may also be useful to invite each participant to do the opposite to what is being instructed, to get a sense of the tension and ongoing conflict between the two characters.
- Then get the groups to swap over. At the end, get each pair to feed-back what it felt like to be controlled.



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to get the group to discuss the effect that one individual can have over another and the feelings that are solicited when an individual feels robbed of choice.

EXERCISE 6

INTRODUCING THE PLOT: READING ALOUD

Either read the following out to your students or get the group to read it aloud – each person taking small sections between punctuation marks.

Victor Frankenstein creates the Creature. He is repulsed by what he has made and rejects him. The Creature goes off into the world alone and is treated unkindly by all he meets. The Creature comes across a poor family. Observing the family in secret, he becomes educated. He eventually approaches the family and is initially befriended by the blind father, but the man's son and daughter in law throw him out when they see him. Distraught, the Creature goes to find his maker Victor Frankenstein to ask for a wife. He tracks him down by killing Frankenstein's brother. A pact is made. Victor says that he will create a wife for the Creature if he promises to hide from the world with her. Victor creates a female, but when the Creature comes to see her, he plays a trick on him and destroys the female for fear that they will reproduce. The Creature takes his revenge by killing Frankenstein's wife. The Creature and Frankenstein live out the rest of their days locked together in a battle to the death.



ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise to give the students a basic framework of the story but experience it through the prism of the previous exercises.

EXERCISE 7

GETTING UNDER THE SKIN: PRACTICAL AND DISCURSIVE

- Write the following words on individual pieces of paper:

Fear, Love, Regret, Betrayal, Longing, Solitude, Rejection, Hate, Pride, Hope.

- Place two chairs either at the front of the class or in the middle of a circle.
- Invite two students at a time to pick a piece of paper, then sit on a chair as either Victor or the Creature. Ask them to talk about what the word on the paper makes them feel/ think about, as the character.

For example:

Regret (as Victor): “I’m so, so annoyed with myself. Why did I create such a monstrosity? It was madness. I’m disgusted by it and wish I could turn back the clock...”



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

This task prepares students for the demands of AO1. The aim of this exercise is for the students to develop a capacity for 360 thinking about the central characters and begin to consider the central themes of the text in advance of reading it. This is a task which could be repeated later on in the unit of work, this time asking students to include brief quotations or references to key moments in the text, to prepare for the closed book nature of the exam.

EXERCISE 8

IT'S A MATTER OF OPINION: PRACTICAL AND DISCURSIVE

- Write the following statements on separate pieces of paper or a whiteboard:

We are born pure and evil is the product of social forces.

We are born imperfect and require assistance from a higher source to overcome the sin of being born.

- Divide the students into small groups and get them to discuss each of the statements above.
- Having examined both sides of the argument, students should reach an agreed viewpoint and feedback to the rest of the group about their discussion and decision.

Having to justify their views provides students with the oral opportunity to access AO4 which requires clarity of argument, purposeful use of vocabulary and awareness of intended effect on their audience.

Further activities to enhance your lessons can be found in your toolkit or in the *Frankenstein Practical Workshop Guide*. You can find more resources to help you teach *Frankenstein* and other texts at www.digitaltheatreplus.com.



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is for the students to participate in a robust debate and build confidence to discuss the central issues of the text and context. This can inform intentions and allow students to continue developing creative ideas. Dramatic intentions for an audience may also be clarified as a result of this activity.

GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:

- Maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations

AO2: Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

AO4: Use a range vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

A-LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

AO4: Explore connections across literary texts.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

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