



Frankenstein

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Introduction

This GCSE pack is designed as a route through the text, with teaching ideas, accompanying resources and suggestions for differentiation. The pack is based on core assessment objectives for GCSE English Literature (2015) and is designed to be flexible, creative and engaging. It contains all of the Teachit resources you need for teaching this unit of work, all of which were specifically commissioned for this pack. Due to the length of this text, we have advised which chapters need to be read before beginning certain activities.

The pack has been devised for use with the GCSE Eng Lit AQA and Edexcel specifications. There are specific resources and exam practice questions for both of these specifications included within the pack. The activities and ideas will help students to develop a close understanding of the text, explore its social, cultural and historical contexts, consider Shelley's ideas and perspectives, and analyse her use of language and structure.

The pack has a total of 20 lessons and 51 resources, with a selection of starter, main and plenary activities (that you can mix and match). Exam practice questions specific to each board are also included.

Throughout the pack, you'll find activities which directly address the various GCSE English Literature exam assessment objectives. To help you select activities relevant to the outcomes for which you're teaching, we have included specification grids and have matched the activities to the appropriate assessment objectives.

Our thanks go to contributor Annabel Wall who has written this pack and the accompanying resources.

A note on editions

We've used the Penguin Classics 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* and where page numbers are included they refer to this version.

If you have any questions about the pack, please get in touch: email support@teachit.co.uk or call us on 01225 788850. Alternatively, you might like to give some feedback for other Teachit English members – you can do this by adding a comment on the [Frankenstein teaching pack page](#) on Teachit English.

The letters, Chapters 1-4

Lesson 1 – Robert Walton's letters

Starter activities

- **Letters as a dying form.** Ask the students when they last received a handwritten letter. Have they ever written a letter to someone else? What has replaced letter writing in our culture? Do they think handwritten letters will still exist in the future? (A03)
- **Reading the letters.** Play the class an audio recording of the letters at the start of the novel (stop before Victor's account starts in Chapter 1) www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvtCLJ-1N34. Letter 1 starts at 18 mins 45 seconds into the recording. (A01)

Main activities

- **Letters as structural device.** Explain to the students that this novel begins and ends with a series of letters (this is called a **framing device** or a **frame narrative**). The writer of the letters, Robert Walton, also sometimes refers to his letters as journals.
Ask the students to read the first section of letters (four letters which stop at Chapter 1). Explain that Mary Shelley made a conscious decision to use letters in her narrative (she could have told the whole story from the perspective of Victor Frankenstein or using a third person narrative). Students can work in pairs to discuss the following question, then rank the possible answers (see **Resource 1**):

Why might Mary Shelley use letters as a narrative device? (A02)

After allowing the students to think and discuss, bring the class together and lead a brief discussion of each of the possible answers presented on **Resource 1**. Point out that all of these statements might be relevant – it would be useful to return to these ideas at the end of the novel.

- **Thinking about Robert Walton.** Ask students to work in pairs and find quotations to support and explain the descriptions of Walton's character (see **Resource 2**).

Complete the other tasks in **Resource 2**, focusing on the reader's response to Walton. (A01 and A03)

Plenary activities

- **What are the questions?** Ask students to think of possible questions for the following answers: (A01)
 - he is 28 years old
 - Mrs Margaret Saville, England
 - from December until August
 - British
 - Russia
 - 18th century.

- **Save the dying art.** In pairs, ask the students to write a short persuasive advert using no more than 25 words, campaigning for the return of handwritten letters as a form of communication. (A03)

They can use the following starters if they wish:

- Writing a letter is special ...
- When you've got something important to say, ...
- **Debate Robert Walton's character.** Ask students to take turns in giving their views about Walton based on the evidence they've gleaned so far. Encourage them to challenge one another and to present different aspects and opinions, so that they deepen their understanding through sharing their ideas.

Resource 1 – The letters

The novel begins and ends with a series of letters - this is called a **framing device** or a **frame narrative**.

Why might Mary Shelley use letters as a narrative device? (A02)

Discuss the following answers to the above question and then rank them (1= most convincing answer, 4 = least convincing answer):

The letters could make an unbelievable story seem more realistic/authentic/ believable.	
The letters introduce another narrative voice, to give the reader another perspective on events.	
The letters focus the reader on the idea of storytelling – which fits with the oral tradition of telling ghost stories.	
The extra narrative of the letters makes the reader aware of other listeners within the story.	

Other discussion points:

Have you read any other novels which use letters as part of the narrative?

Are there any other reasons why Mary Shelley has avoided telling the story just from Victor Frankenstein's perspective?

Resource 2 – Thinking about Robert Walton

Using the first four letters in the novel, find quotations to support and explain the following descriptions of Walton. The first one has been done as an example.

Adjective to describe Walton	Quotation	Explanation of evidence
romantic	<p>'... it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight'. (p.15, Letter I)</p>	<p>This suggests that Walton shares the Romantics' wonder and respect for the beauty of nature. Romanticism was an influential movement towards the end of the 18th century and both Mary Shelley and her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley are considered key figures of the movement.</p>
idealistic		
lonely		

intelligent		
sensitive		
ambitious		
determined		

passionate		
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How does the reader feel about Walton's character? Do we feel a sense of ...? (Circle three choices.)

admiration	envy	respect
pity	anger	fear
indifference	irritation	understanding

Does the reader think positively or negatively of Walton? Make a mark on the line below and then compare with a partner.

Positively _____ Negatively