



Rainford High School English Department – Year 7 Gothic Literature Knowledge Organiser

<p>Social and Historical Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Victorian period saw many major developments that made travel, communications and trade easier for many people. • Many of the things we take for granted today, such as photography, telephones, electric light bulbs and cars were invented during Queen Victoria's reign. • Steam was used to power factory machinery, ships and trains. Great iron steamships were built made crossing the ocean faster than ever before. • The very first electric train was invented in 1879. Electric trains were quieter than and not as dirty as steam trains, but it was many years before they were used for passengers. • The spread of education and affluence in the Victorian era encouraged innovation, experimentation and scientific ideas. • Many people saw science and a belief in religion and the supernatural as being at odds with each other. A lot felt they had to choose between the two. And many believed that science had become dangerous and was meddling in matters which only God had control over. 	<p>Gothic Conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated, bleak settings; abandoned houses, which are supposedly uninhabited. • Majority of the story takes place at night/ in darkness. • Supernatural entity that wants revenge. • Death of a character or those close to a character. • Frequent use of the colour black. • Rational protagonist who doesn't believe in the supernatural. • Inhuman or monstrous antagonist. • Use of tension and suspense to create fear. <p>Origins of Gothic Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term 'Gothic' was first coined in 1764 by English author Horace Walpole in his novel, <i>The Castle of Otranto</i>, which he subtitled 'A Gothic Story'. The novel was set in a haunted castle where the protagonist is plagued by supernatural occurrences. • Walpole used the word 'Gothic' because it refers to medieval buildings like castles and churches, where a lot of Gothic fiction is set. • Gothic Literature became immensely popular in England and Germany during the 18th and 19th century. Gothic fiction is all about creating terror in the reader and using fear to create suspense. 	<p>Key texts:</p> <p><u>The Raven</u> A narrative poem by Edgar Allan Poe, noted for its musicality, stylised language, and supernatural atmosphere. It tells of a talking raven's mysterious visit to a distraught lover, tracing the man's slow descent into madness.</p> <p><u>The Monkey's Paw</u> A short story by W. W. Jacobs, the tale tells of Mr. and Mrs. White and their adult son, Herbert. Sergeant-Major Morris, a friend who served with the British Army in India, introduces them to a mummified monkey's paw. An old fakir placed a spell on the paw, so that it would grant three wishes. The wishes are granted but always with hellish consequences.</p> <p><u>The Signalman</u> In Charles Dickens' short story, the railway signalman tells the narrator of an apparition that has been haunting him. Each spectral appearance precedes a tragic event on the railway on which the signalman works, which is at a signal-box in a deep cutting near a tunnel entrance on a lonely stretch of the railway line.</p> <p><u>The Old Nurse's Story</u> A short story by Elizabeth Gaskell is narrated by the old nurse, Hesther. Her tale is about a recently orphaned Miss Rosamond who is now to live at Furnivall Manor house, an impressive but run-down mansion, where strange and sinister events occur.</p>
<p>Literary Devices:</p> <p>Simile: a comparison using like or as.</p> <p>Metaphor: is a figure of speech that describes an object or action in a way that isn't literally true.</p> <p>Pathetic fallacy: The weather reflects the mood of a character.</p> <p>Imagery: visually descriptive or figurative language.</p> <p>Personification: giving human feelings or actions to an inanimate object.</p> <p>Foreshadowing: giving hints to what may come later in the story.</p>	<p>Authors:</p> <p><u>Edgar Allan Poe (1809 – 1849)</u> An American writer, editor, and literary critic. He was the first well-known American writer to try to earn a living through writing alone, resulting in a financially difficult life and career. Poe's best-known fiction works are Gothic, simply because it was very popular at the time.</p> <p><u>W.W. Jacobs (1863-1943)</u> William Wymark Jacobs was an English author of short stories and novels. During his career, he was best known for his farcical comedies involving dockside and rural Essex characters. He occasionally wrote horror stories and is best remembered today for <i>The Monkey's Paw</i>.</p> <p><u>Charles Dickens (1812-1870)</u> Charles Dickens was an English writer and social critic. He created some of the world's best-known fictional characters and is regarded by many as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. His novels and short stories are still widely read today, which include <i>A Christmas Carol</i> and <i>Oliver Twist</i>.</p> <p><u>Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865)</u> Elizabeth Gaskell was an English novelist, biographer and short story writer. Her novels offer a detailed portrait of the lives of many strata of Victorian society, including the very poor. Her work is of interest to social historians as well as readers of literature.</p>	
<p>Words to describe the atmosphere:</p> <p><u>Evil (to describe the atmosphere)</u> – cruel, supernatural, sinister, foreboding, eerie, unearthly, menacing, frightening, unnerving, unsettling, discomfoting, weird, ominous, repellent, spooky, repugnant, uneasy, uncomfortable.</p> <p><u>Scary (to describe the story)</u> – horrific, horrifying, frightening, disturbing, terrifying, petrifying.</p> <p><u>Scared (to describe the effect on the reader)</u> - afraid, alarmed, anxious, concerned, frightened, horrified, nervous, panic-stricken, petrified, terrified, worried.</p>		