

# A LEVEL

*Delivery Guide*

H472

Accredited

# ENGLISH LITERATURE

Theme: Gothic

June 2015



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# Introduction

Delivery guides are designed to represent a body of knowledge about teaching a particular topic and contain:

- Content: a clear outline of the content covered by the delivery guide;
- Thinking Conceptually: expert guidance on the key concepts involved, common difficulties students may have, approaches to teaching that can help students understand these concepts and how this topic links conceptually to other areas of the subject;
- Thinking Contextually: a range of suggested teaching activities using a variety of themes so that different activities can be selected that best suit particular classes, learning styles or teaching approaches.

If you have any feedback on this Delivery Guide or suggestions for other resources you would like OCR to develop, please email [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk).

## KEY



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# Curriculum Content

This guide will focus upon Task 2 of 'The Gothic' topic area listed for study as part of the A Level Component 02: Comparative and Contextual Study. This Component is assessed externally by written examination and carries a total of 60 marks (40% of the marks for A level). The examination is closed text.

For Task 2, the Comparative essay, there will be a choice of **three** questions, one related to each of the two core set texts for the topic area and one general question which will not name a specific set text. Students choose **one** question worth 30 marks and write an essay comparing two whole texts, at least one of which must come from the core set text list for the component. The other text may come from the list of suggested set texts. Students will be expected to range across the texts in their responses. In addition to AO1, Task 2 requires students to establish connections between their chosen texts (AO4); demonstrate their appreciation of the significance of cultural and contextual influences on writers and readers (AO3); and read texts in a variety of ways, responding critically and creatively (AO5).

AO2 is not assessed in Task 2 of this component. Setting aside AO2 gives students greater opportunity to build and sustain a comparative discussion focusing on the contexts, connections and interpretations of their chosen set texts, without having to interrupt the continuity of their comparison in order to 'step aside' and demonstrate AO2 in a single text. However, where students discuss, for example, the use of symbolism or the presentation of persona or character in their chosen texts, such discussion can be rewarded under AO1 ('informed' responses to literary texts), AO4 ('connections' across literary texts) or AO5 ('different interpretations'). Opportunity to satisfy AO2 is afforded by Task 1 of the component where students undertake a 'Close Reading' of one unseen prose extract. In this way Task 1 ensures students have an opportunity to address AO2 more directly than the weighting of the Task 2 response requires.

The core and suggested set texts for the 'The Gothic' topic area are as follows:

## Core set texts

Bram Stoker, *Dracula*

Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*

## Suggested set texts

William Beckford, *Vathek*

Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

William Faulkner, *Light in August*

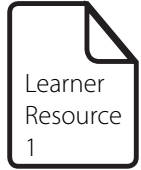
Cormac McCarthy, *Outer Dark*

Iain Banks, *The Wasp Factory*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*



# Curriculum Content

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Activity 1: Horace Walpole, <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> (1764)</b></p> <p>The extract in Learner Resource 1 is taken from chapter 1 of <i>The Castle of Otranto</i>, a novel that has come to be seen as the originator of later Gothic texts.</p> <p>Students should <b>read and annotate</b> the extract and then complete the activity that follows, either individually or as a pair/group exercise. Students should refer to Walpole's language use in responding to questions. Responses should be shared in whole class discussion. Teachers should encourage students to consider the extract in the light of their set texts.</p>	 <p>Learner Resource 1</p>
<p><b>Activity 2: Some critical responses to early Gothic novels</b></p> <p><b>Passage 1</b></p> <p>"Lust, murder, incest, and every atrocity that can disgrace human nature, brought together, without the apology of probability, or even possibility for their introduction. To make amends, the moral is generally <i>very practical</i>; it is, 'not to deal in witchcraft and magic because the devil will have you at last!!' We are sorry to <i>observe</i> that good talents have been misapplied in the production of this monster."</p> <p>– Review of M.G. Lewis' <i>The Monk</i> published in <i>The British Critic</i> 7, June 1796, p.677. Quoted from <i>Gothic</i>, Fred Botting, p.21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is this reviewer's main objection to Lewis' novel?</li> <li>• What does the reviewer mean when they complain that 'lust, murder [and] incest' are presented in 'improbable' and 'impossible' ways?</li> <li>• What does the reviewer suggest might be the only legitimate justification for the presentation of taboos such as lust, murder and incest? In what ways might a Gothic novel have been thought of as a 'monster'?</li> </ul>	

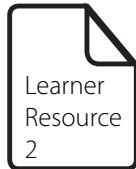
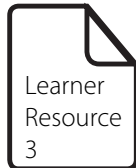


# Curriculum Content

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Activity 2: <i>continued...</i></b></p> <p><b>Passage 2</b></p> <p>"Take – An old castle, half of it ruinous.</p> <p>A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.</p> <p>Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.</p> <p>As many skeletons, in chests and presses...</p> <p>Mix them together, in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of the watering-places before going to bed."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Anon., <i>Terrorist Novel Writing</i>, 1797. p.229 quoted from <i>Gothic</i>, Fred Botting, p.44.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this simple 'recipe' for a Gothic narrative do justice to the content of the novels you are studying?</li> <li>• Do you think this recipe applies more accurately to a Gothic novel like <i>Dracula</i>?</li> <li>• What other 'ingredients' that you have identified in reading your Gothic novels does this list omit?</li> <li>• In what ways do the novels you are reading present ideas and raise questions that go beyond the sinister settings, criminal activity and confined spaces listed here?</li> </ul> <p><b>Passage 3</b></p> <p>"Rather than discussing sex in an open and possibly dangerous way, the possibilities of sexual experience could be coded into these exotic [Gothic] narratives, disguised by time and space into a culture that was understood to be transgressive by definition. The possibilities for expression were therefore endless. Catholicism is not a vague feature of the background in most gothic novels; it is, rather, an active element in the romance of personal relations."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– <i>The Horrors of Catholicism: Religion and Sexuality in Gothic Fiction</i>, George Haggerty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do contemporary writers need to 'disguise' their discussion of sex by displacing it in 'time and space'?</li> <li>• When and why would Catholicism have been seen as part of a culture that was 'transgressive by definition'?</li> <li>• If the primary virtue of the Gothic in the 18th and 19th centuries was that it allowed the discussion of taboos like sex in a disguised and therefore 'safe' way, what is it that continues to make this genre so enduringly popular today?</li> <li>• Is Catholicism an 'active element' of 20th century Gothic texts?</li> </ul>	



# Curriculum Content

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Activity 3</b></p> <p>For this activity students can use the internet to research the Coleridge text as homework and then read and consider the <i>Otranto</i> (please see Learner Resource 1) and <i>Frankenstein</i> (please see Learner Resource 2) extracts in class. Class discussion should relate responses to the extracts to the set texts studied.</p> <p>In chapter 14 of <i>Biographia Literaria</i> Samuel Taylor Coleridge writes of the necessity for readers to exercise a 'willing suspension of disbelief' in order to engage with supernatural characters and plot lines.</p> <p>Coleridge's thoughts about the 'willing suspension of disbelief' are central to the Gothic which consistently demands that readers put aside their 'disbelief' in order to engage with texts that would otherwise be seen as too irrational to be credible.</p> <p>First, students should look back to the extract from <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> (Activity 1) and consider where and to what degree Walpole's text demands a 'willing suspension of disbelief' of its readers.</p> <p>Then, students should compare the extract from <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> alongside the passage in <i>Frankenstein</i> where Mary Shelley presents the creature's awakening to life.</p> <p>Students should consider which of these extracts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) involves the greater 'suspension of disbelief'?</li> <li>2) is the more frightening?</li> </ol> <p>Students should then consider what it is about the two texts that determines their responses to these two questions.</p> <p>Students should then consider the set texts they are studying. To what extent (and at what points in their narrative) do they demand that the reader suspend disbelief?</p> <p>Students should address the following questions:</p> <p>Would you say that 20th century Gothic demands less in terms of the suspension of disbelief than do earlier Gothic narratives?</p> <p>Why might this be the case/not be the case for some 20th century texts but not for others?</p>	 <p>Learner Resource 2</p>
<p><b>Activity 4: Research activity – a Gothic vocabulary</b></p> <p>See Learner Resource 3. Students should research the terms/concepts and their origins and relate them to their study of Gothic.</p>	 <p>Learner Resource 3</p>



# Curriculum Content

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Activity 5: Write your own Gothic tale</b></p> <p>Having completed the preceding activities and begun to read and think about their set texts, students should have a fair idea of the characteristics of Gothic narratives – and be ready for some light relief! This fun activity asks students to draw upon the knowledge they have gained so far, in writing their own Gothic tale. The ‘tale’ need be no longer than a page of A4 (it might be shorter) and should draw on the Gothic motifs and conventions to which they have been introduced. Students can play around with Gothic clichés and stereotypes and present incredible plots to make their tales amusing and entertaining.</p> <p>These can be individually written or students can collaborate to produce a group effort. Having written their Gothic tales, students can read these aloud to the class as a whole. Subsequent class discussion should consider which Gothic conventions students have employed and consider the effects they intended. Students should be encouraged to consider how their versions compare (e.g. in terms of their complexity/simplicity of characterisation, presentation of themes, creation of atmosphere) to set texts they are studying.</p> <p>Though the emphasis in setting this activity will be that students find it fun, in assembling their tales they will be obliged to have considered (and employed) some of the motifs and conventions of the Gothic genre.</p> <p>Some hints to set the tales in motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about setting: how will you create a fearful atmosphere? Where will the action take place?</li><li>• Present your characters – what relationships connect them, what status and power relations distinguish them? What gender attributes do they display?</li><li>• Introduce a ‘Gothic’ motive to give your tale momentum – what drives your Gothic hero/villain (power, lust, desire, jealousy, greed, the preservation of dynastic interests)?</li><li>• How do your victims respond?</li><li>• Think about resolutions: who is to triumph – villain or hero? Will your tale resist closure and leave the reader as uncertain as the characters?</li></ul>	



# Thinking Conceptually

## Approaches to teaching the content

One approach to the Gothic is to think in terms of a family of texts. Though each Gothic text is narratively distinct and may be the product of a different literary generation, all Gothic texts exhibit inherited family characteristics. Family traits include a fascination with strange and exotic settings as a means of displacing and disorientating readers and characters (think of Jonathan Harker in *Dracula*). Preoccupation with time, especially the influence of a fearfully 'uncivilised' past upon an 'enlightened' present, or the imposition of 'ancient' values and practices upon the 'modern' characterises Gothic narratives (e.g. the Catholic threat to Protestantism as presented in Ann Radcliffe's novels). The violent and illicit sexual passion that dramatises many Gothic texts, though undoubtedly employed to excite and disgust, also demands (if only implicitly) that readers exercise moral judgements about 'good' and 'evil.'

Teachers should point to the blurring of boundaries between the real and unreal, the natural and supernatural, to show how Gothic texts deprive readers of the interpretive satisfaction that realistic narratives afford. Gothic action and characterisation often preclude closure, leaving open uncomfortable questions and possibilities: Morrison's *Beloved* cannot reasonably be a ghost but must be a (psychologically credible) projection of Sethe's guilt and grief. Yet, paradoxically, *Beloved's* presentation is sufficiently 'realistic' to cause readers to respond to her as a character rather than a psychological projection or manifestation of the supernatural.

Identity provides fertile ground for Gothic narratives. The idea that the 'self' is neither singular nor unified underpins narratives like *Dorian Gray* and *Jekyll and Hyde*, whose protagonists' duplicity licences forbidden passions whilst

maintaining social respectability. Identity is often rendered problematic as is the case when racial and familial blood ties are withheld. In texts like *Light in August* and *Frankenstein* Joe Christmas and Frankenstein's creature are condemned to act out the psychological torment and moral depravation resulting from self-alienation. Gothic texts benefit from freedoms not available to realist fiction. Such freedom is demonstrated in the sexualisation of female characters as in *Dracula* and in the narratives of Angela Carter which reverse conventional gender assumptions in allowing women to exhibit sexuality as voracious and predatory as men's. At heart, all Gothic texts depend upon power relations and exploitation of the potential for characters and readers to experience fear. The Gothic has endured through time because of its ability to adapt, encapsulate and respond to successive historical social, sexual and political anxieties.

## Common misconceptions or difficulties students may have

- Often students are so caught up in the excitement that reading Gothic narratives generates, that they find it difficult to appreciate that the elements they find so engaging (e.g. sinister locations, evil characters and supernatural events) are not merely ends in themselves, nor is entertainment their only function. Teachers should ensure that students are aware that Gothic tropes are vehicles that convey complex ideas. An awareness of what Gothic texts leave *implicit* is essential if students are to understand the genre. For example, the idea of the vampire as a blood-sucking demon existing somewhere between life and death, undoubtedly fulfils the requirement that a Gothic narrative should generate fear



# Thinking Conceptually

and loathing. However, in studying a text like *Dracula*, students should be aware that Stoker's vampire can be read as a metaphor for genuine contemporaneous anxieties about immigration (and miscegenation), sexual promiscuity and moral degeneration.


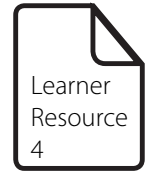
- Students might view the Gothic as a homogenous genre whose conventions are slavishly repeated over time. Teachers should ensure that students read with an informed sense of the changing social, sexual, psychological and political contexts which generate their chosen texts. Paying such attention will ensure that students appreciate that, whilst the texts they are studying belong to a distinct literary genre, each generation of Gothic manifests the conventions in unique ways.
- The Gothic is a genre that has been widely embraced by popular and youth cultures. Given the many re-workings of Gothic in cinema, comic books and video games there is a danger that students may view the Gothic characters and texts they study through the filter of the non-literary forms with which they are familiar. It is important that students understand that their focus must be upon the texts themselves and that their analysis should be literary. They should approach each set text as a unique and historically embedded narrative *not* as early version of narratives and characters that may well be familiar to them from contemporary popular culture.

## **Conceptual links to other areas of the specification**

The close reading skills fostered by the activities appended to this guide will not only assist students in reading and analysing the set texts they choose to study for this component, they will establish skills that will contribute to the development of reading strategies that will enable students to formulate, test and articulate informed and personal responses to any and all of the texts they encounter as part of their A Level English Literature course and beyond. It is important that students are made aware that, although the focus of this topic area is Gothic Literature, the fundamental questions they will ask when they read the set texts for this Component (who is writing? who narrates? what are the contexts? who is reading? how can this be interpreted?) should be asked of all literature, regardless of period or genre.



# Thinking Conceptually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Activities 1 to 5</b></p> <p>The following activities will require students, either individually or as a group/class exercise, to access the British Library's 'Romantics and Victorians' website which can be found at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles">http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles</a></p> <p>They should read the articles and make notes and refer to these in class discussion. Students should be encouraged to make connections between ideas expressed in the articles and the set texts they are studying.</p> <p>Following the link above, students will find (amongst others) the following articles:</p> <p><b>Activity 1:</b> 'Gothic motifs'. Professor John Bowen Read article, watch video clips, make notes.</p> <p><b>Activity 2:</b> 'Mary Shelley, Frankenstein and the Villa Diadoti'. Greg Buzwell Read article, watch video clips, make notes.</p> <p><b>Activity 3:</b> 'The Picture of Dorian Gray: art, aesthetics and the artist'. Greg Buzwell Read article, watch video clips, make notes.</p> <p><b>Activity 4:</b> 'Dracula: vampires, perversity and Victorian anxieties'. Greg Buzwell Read article, watch video clips, make notes.</p> <p><b>Activity 5:</b> 'Aestheticism and decadence'. Carolyn Burdett Read article, watch video clips, make notes.</p>	<div data-bbox="1736 515 1892 608">  </div>
<p><b>Activity 6</b></p> <p>Use the grid in Learner Resource 4 to allow students to log comparisons between their set texts.</p>	<div data-bbox="1736 1236 1881 1406">  </div>

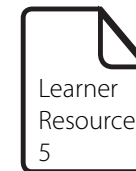
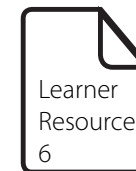
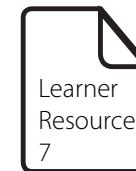


# Thinking Contextually

Throughout the period to which the set texts belong, fear and mistrust of power, of the 'unknown', of sexuality, the supernatural and whatever else might be designated in any particular period as 'other', has continued to dominate the Gothic. Although it is important to contextualise the set texts according to the periods that give rise to them, the degree to which later Gothic narratives owe literary, thematic and affective debts to those that precede them should inform analysis. It is no coincidence that the decade that gave rise to the French Revolution not only produced the Gothic novel but saw it reach the apogee of its popularity. For texts that emerge in the 19th century, informed as they are by advances in scientific knowledge and psychology, the 'human' mind becomes both the site and generator of terror: neither God nor religion can limit the transgressive ambition of a mind like Frankenstein's. *Fin de siècle* changes in society and demography oblige writers like Oscar Wilde and R.L. Stevenson to relocate their protagonists to the city, a place where vice is easily hidden by 'respectability'. The Gothic generated by the 20th century must acknowledge its readers' familiarity with a genre that has infiltrated popular culture to the point of ubiquity. The 'monsters' of this period are revealed in systems and perpetrators that foster racism and objectify women, in the perversion of innocence that results from neglect and abuse and the normalising of violence.



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<b>Activity 1: Research – the literary development of Gothic</b> Students should consider the questions in Learner Resource 5 and share their responses in a class discussion.	
<b>Activity 2: Research – contextualising the Gothic</b> This activity can be set as homework and then later discussed during whole class discussion. Students can work in pairs or groups to complete the research activities and might then combine their findings to compile a Gothic resource (e.g. a Gothic origins study guide). See Learner Resource 6.	
<b>Activity 3: Research – the intellectual and philosophical contexts of Gothic</b> This activity can be set as homework or as a class activity. After researching the topics outlined in Learner Resource 7, students should share their responses in whole class discussion.	
<b>Activity 4: The Female Gothic</b> Since Ellen Moers coined the term in 1975 there has been much discussion about whether the 'Female Gothic' can be considered as a Gothic sub-genre. Some critics suggest that the difference between the genders is that 'male' Gothic concerns itself largely with social taboos (such as those dealt with in Lewis' <i>The Monk</i> ) whilst 'female' Gothic is manifested in the fear of domestic entrapment (Angela Carter's narratives come to mind here). Students should be encouraged to consider this gender divide in terms of the texts they are studying. The following links will be of help in researching the Female Gothic. <a href="http://www4.ncsu.edu/~leila/documents/TheFemaleGothic-ThenNow.pdf">http://www4.ncsu.edu/~leila/documents/TheFemaleGothic-ThenNow.pdf</a> <a href="http://mural.uv.es/maseja/The%20Female%20Gothic.htm">http://mural.uv.es/maseja/The%20Female%20Gothic.htm</a> <a href="https://lynseynguyen.wordpress.com/short-essays/gothic-genre-a-20th-century-gothic-story-expressing-fear-forbidden-love-and-the-evolution-of-women-characters/">https://lynseynguyen.wordpress.com/short-essays/gothic-genre-a-20th-century-gothic-story-expressing-fear-forbidden-love-and-the-evolution-of-women-characters/</a>	<div>▶ Click here</div> <div>▶ Click here</div> <div>▶ Click here</div>



# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>Activity 5</b></p> <p>As a sub-genre of Gothic, Southern Gothic literature owes much to the conventions and tropes inherited from its literary ancestor. Southern Gothic established itself in the mid-20th century in response to the growing threats that racism and segregation presented to the 'stability' of Southern American society. Many of the most notable American authors of the 20th century write in this tradition. Though Southern Gothic does not entirely exclude the supernatural, it concerns itself more with disturbed personalities, racism, poverty, violence, moral corruption and ambiguity. Southern Gothic literature often deals with the plight of those who are ostracized or oppressed by traditional Southern culture including black people, women, and gay people.</p> <p>Southern Gothic encompasses a diverse group of writings. In order to understand how Southern Gothic both draws upon and distinguishes itself from its generic ancestor, students should be encouraged to research and consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Look up summaries of works by Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960), Mary Flannery O'Connor (1925–1964), Eudora Welty (1909–2001) and Richard Wright (1908–1960).</li><li>• What do you notice about the way race, class and gender are presented in the writing of these authors?</li><li>• Can you make connections between the work of the authors mentioned and the texts you are studying?</li><li>• In what ways do Southern Gothic texts present the legacies of slavery and economic poverty?</li><li>• To what extent do the Southern Gothic texts that you have researched draw upon the conventions and tropes of earlier Gothic narratives?</li></ul>	



# Learner Resource 1 Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*

See  
page 6

## Extract from Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)

Manfred, prince of Otranto, had one son and one daughter: the latter, a most beautiful virgin, aged eighteen, was called Matilda. Conrad, the son, was three years younger, a homely youth, sickly, and of no promising disposition; yet he was the darling of his father, who never showed any symptoms of affection to Matilda. Manfred had contracted a marriage for his son with the Marquis of Vincenza's daughter, Isabella; and she had already been delivered by her guardians into the hands of Manfred, that he might celebrate the wedding as soon as Conrad's infirm state of health would permit. Manfred's impatience for this ceremonial was remarked by his family and neighbours. The former, indeed, apprehending the severity of their prince's disposition, did not dare to utter their surmises on his precipitation. Hippolita, his wife, an amiable lady, did sometimes venture to represent the danger of marrying their only son so early, considering his great youth, and greater infirmities; but she never received any other answer than reflections on her own sterility, who had given him but one heir. His tenants and subjects were less cautious in their discourses: they attributed this hasty wedding to the prince's dread of seeing accomplished and ancient prophecy, which was said to have pronounced, *That the castle and Lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it.* It was difficult to make any sense of this prophesy; and still less easy to conceive what it had to do with the marriage in question. Yet these mysteries, or contradictions, did not make the populace adhere the less to their opinion.

Young Conrad's birth-day was fixed for his espousals. The company was assembled in the chapel of the castle, and everything ready for beginning of the divine office, when Conrad himself was missing. Manfred, impatient of the least delay, and who had not observed his son retire, dispatched one of his attendants to summon the young prince. The servant, who had not staid long enough to have crossed to Conrad's apartment, came running back breathless, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring, and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing, but pointed to the court. The company was struck with terror and amazement. The princess Hippolita, without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her son, swooned away. Manfred, less apprehensive than enraged at the procrastination of the nuptials, and at the folly of his domestic, asked imperiously, what was the matter? The fellow made no answer, but continued pointing towards the courtyard; and, at last, after repeated questions put to him, cried out, Oh the helmet! the helmet! In the mean time some of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confused noise of shrieks, horror, and surprise. Manfred, who began to be alarmed at not seeing his son, went himself to get information of what occasioned this strange confusion, Matilda remained endeavouring to assist her mother, and Isabella staid for the same purpose, and to avoid showing any impatience for the bridegroom, for whom, in truth, she had conceived little affection.

The first thing that struck Manfred's eyes was a group of his servants endeavouring to raise something that appeared to him a mountain of sable plumes. He gazed without believing his sight. What are ye doing? cried Manfred wrathfully: Where is my son? A volley of voices replied, Oh my Lord! the prince! the prince! the helmet! the helmet! Shocked with these lamentable sounds, and dreading he knew not what, he advanced hastily – But what a sight for a father's eyes! – He beheld his child dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.

### Questions: *The Castle of Otranto*

1. In his Preface to the first edition of *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole tells readers that the narrative he presents to them was first discovered in the library of an ancient Catholic family. He claims the manuscript's 'original' place and date of publication was Naples in 1529. This fiction about the novel's origin was accepted as true by many contemporaneous readers and caused annoyance amongst those who were taken in when Walpole later admitted (in the preface to the second edition) that *he* was the author and that, far from being 'antique', the work had been written in the six months leading up to its publication in December 1764. What might have been Walpole's reasons for misleading readers about the apparent 'antique' date of composition and the exotic place of publication?





# Learner Resource 1

2. Think carefully about Walpole's characterisation of Manfred at the opening of the novel:
  - What is his status?
  - What is his main motivation?
  - What is Manfred's primary characteristic as Walpole presents him here?
  - In characterising Manfred does Walpole draw upon any stereotypes that you recognise?
3. Think about the presentation of Matilda and Hippolita:
  - What is their status?
  - What assumptions are made about their roles and destinies?
  - Would you say that Walpole's characterisations draw upon any stereotypes that you recognise?
4. Think about the way society was structured at the time the novel was set: what were the priorities of wealthy, aristocratic fathers?
  - How do you think the original readership would have responded to Manfred's excessive affection for the 'sickly' Conrad and his disregard of his 'beautiful' daughter Matilda?
5. Look carefully at the language used to characterise Matilda. What response does this evoke in the reader (e.g. pity, contempt, a sense of her innocence and/or vulnerability)? What is the effect of this characterisation upon the reader?
6. Look at the ways in which the genders are presented in this extract. Are they sharply differentiated?
7. Can you think of any other genre that presents gender in similar ways to Walpole?
8. Is the prophecy (*That the castle and Lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it*) comprehensible?
  - What response does the prophecy evoke in readers (confusion, bewilderment, incredulity)?
  - How does the prophecy add to the narrative (does it clarify, complicate or leave readers in a state of incomprehension)?
  - What does this tell you about the Gothic?
9. What is your response to the device of the giant 'helmet' as the cause of Conrad's death?
  - Is this a realistic or credible device?
  - What does this suggest about Gothic plots?
10. Do you recognise any narrative correspondences or can you make any connections between this early Gothic text and the novels you are studying?



## Learner Resource 2 Extract from *Frankenstein*



This extract is taken from chapter 5 of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

....I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.



# Learner Resource 3 A Gothic vocabulary



	Note definitions, relevant dates, authors/key texts here
<b>Orientalism</b>	
<b>Romanticism</b>	
<b>Uncanny/ unheimliche</b>	
<b>The sublime</b>	
<b>Terror/horror (as distinguished by Ann Radcliffe)</b>	
<b>Doppelganger</b>	



# Learner Resource 4 Log sheet



	Text A	Text B
Date of publication/ critical reception		
Social/political/ context		
Setting		
Characterisation		
Uncanny		
Supernatural		
Gothic motifs		
Critical views		
Key ideas		



# Learner Resource 5 Research – the literary development of Gothic

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The late 18th century established the Gothic as a distinct genre. Use the internet to research: *Varney the Vampire*, *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Monk*.

- Who wrote these novels?
- When were they published?
- Where are they set?
- What plot lines do their authors employ?
- What types of character do they present?

Make notes and give examples.

1. Critics sometimes refer to a 'second wave' of Gothic texts published during the second and third decades of the 19th century. These are often classified as Romantic Gothic. They maintain a stronger focus upon the sufferings of a tormented central character. Often such texts present a more sophisticated treatment of the horrific than is evident in earlier texts such as *The Castle of Otranto*. **Find out** about texts written during this period by authors such as Charles Maturin and James Hogg. **Consider** a protagonist from one of these authors and compare their characterisation to those of the texts you are studying.
2. Look up plot summaries of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey*. What attitudes and insights do these novels reveal about:
  - a. the Gothic as a genre?
  - b. the readers of Gothic novels?

Do you think that Austen and Peacock saw the Gothic as a 'serious' genre? How would you describe the novels named above? Are they imitations, parodies or pastiches? **Explain your response.**

3. Victorian Gothic: writers in this period often adopt the Gothic genre as a means to explore taboo subjects forbidden by 'Victorian' morality. Their texts explore the dark recesses of Victorian society and the private desires, perversions and degeneration that lurk behind the façade of respectability.

**Research** Edgar Allan Poe and R.L. Stevenson. What taboo subjects do they tackle?

4. *Fin de siècle* Gothic (published at the close of the 19th and opening of the 20th centuries): during this period fears were raised about changes in society and a perceived decline in morality. *Fin de siècle* texts tend to focus upon moral decadence and often hint at impending catastrophe. No longer set amongst architectural ruins, *fin de siècle* Gothic narratives substitute the human mind and body for the physical landscape of earlier Gothic texts. The mind and body with its potential to change, mutate, corrupt and decay features in the work of R.L. Stevenson, Arthur Machen, and H.G. Wells.

**Research** these authors and consider how their handling of Gothic motifs compares to your chosen texts.

5. In the 20th century various forms of popular fiction adopted the forms and methods of the Gothic (e.g. horror, ghost stories and historical romances or 'bodice-rippers' as they were commonly known). Fiction considered to be more 'literary' also drew upon Gothic motifs even though it was not strictly regarded as Gothic. **Research** authors such as John Fowles, Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark and consider how their use of Gothic tropes compares to your texts.
6. Postmodern Gothic dates from the 1960s onwards. This is a kind of self-referential Gothic that is aware of its readers' familiarity with the motifs and themes of the genre. Gothic texts in this period utilise the genre as a means to explore questions raised by feminism, anti-racism and Marxism. **Research** Graham Swift and Margaret Atwood. How does their approach to Gothic compare to your texts?



# Learner Resource 6 Research – contextualising the Gothic



1. Linguistic origins:
  - Who were the people to whom the name Goths was first given?
  - Where did they originate?
  - What characteristics came to define the Goths as a people?
  - How did the Goths gain their reputation?
  - Can you make any connections between what you have found out about the Goths and the texts you are studying?

2. Gothic architecture:
  - Find images of examples of Gothic architecture.
  - At what time did this style of architecture first become popular?
  - For how long did Gothic architecture remain popular?
  - What are the characteristic features of Gothic architecture (e.g. plain or highly ornate?)
  - What kinds of decorative features does Gothic architecture employ?

Now that you know something about Gothic architecture, can you draw any comparisons between buildings of this style and the narratives of your set texts for this topic?

3. **Literary Gothic:** the fashion for 'Gothic' novels dates from the three decades after 1790 when the term was applied retrospectively to define a sub-genre of Romantic fiction that made use of the supernatural. In this context, Gothic means 'medieval', a period which, from the perspective of late 18th and early 19th century authors, was considered a dark, barbaric and fearful time.

Find out about the Romantic movement and Romantic literature.

- Who were the main proponents of this literary movement?
  - Can you make any connections between the ideas held by Romantic writers and the writing that grew out of Romanticism to become Gothic?
4. Is the Gothic an artistic form that has been superseded today?
  5. Has the Gothic managed to reinvent itself over time? Give examples of contemporary Gothic art.
  6. How do the more modern Gothic texts differ from the originals?
  7. How far do modern Gothic texts rely upon themes and ideas established in the earliest Gothic texts?



# Learner Resource 7 Research – the intellectual and philosophical contexts of Gothic

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The period in the history of western thought and culture that stretches roughly from the mid-seventeenth to the eighteenth century is known as the Enlightenment. This period is characterised by revolutions in science, philosophy, society and politics; these revolutions replaced the medieval world-view based on religion and superstition with modern systems based on 'reason'.

## Research the Enlightenment

In what ways are 'Enlightenment' ways of thinking relevant to the texts you are studying?

1. Find out about Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756). You should be able to find a summary of the ideas that Burke presents in this essay on the internet.

In what ways is the idea of the sublime, and the responses it generates, related to the Gothic?

2. The 20th century psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud developed the concept of the unconscious mind. Freud's research and writing revolutionised the ways in which we have come to regard human nature, dreams, anxiety and sexuality. **Research Freud** and make notes.

How might Freud's ideas about hysteria and repression relate to the interpretation of Gothic texts?

3. The Gothic has been adopted by feminists as a means of generating discussion about gender and the ways in which women are often represented in literature as creatures who are confined, imprisoned and trapped. Dramatisations of imprisonment pervade Gothic narratives. Research the Feminist Gothic. **What insights does this school of criticism provide into the texts you are studying?**
4. The Gothic at its inception might have been thought of as a conservative genre in that, even though its narratives involved the demonisation of particular aristocratic villains, it did not criticise the social systems that legitimised the existence of an aristocracy. Think about the texts set for this topic. **Would you say that the Gothic, as it develops through time, retains its early political conservatism?**





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