

# *Frankenstein Unit*

## *Packet*



# Introduction to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Please note: the information in this first section of your packet is fair game on quizzes and the unit final. The information contained in this section important to your overall understanding of *Frankenstein* and your own edification. ***It is your responsibility to read and study the background information.***



*Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*  
1797-1851



*Mary's Mother*  
*Mary Wollstonecraft*



*Mary's Father*  
*William Godwin*



*Mary's Husband*  
*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

**Mini-Biography:** Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was the daughter of radical parents who didn't believe in marriage and lived separately.

Her father, William Godwin was a radical political philosopher who advocated utilitarianism and anarchism.

Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, who wrote "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792) was a writer and feminist.

Shelley's mother died eleven days giving birth to little Mary and she was raised by her father.

At age 18, Mary Wollstonecraft ran off with Percy Bysshe Shelley, a leading British Romantic poet, who she married in 1816. Percy Shelley's pregnant wife, Harriet, drowned herself because of the shame.

Mary and Percy were married in London in an unsuccessful attempt to gain custody of his two children by Harriet. Three of their own children died soon after birth, and Mary fell into a deep depression that did not improve even after the birth in 1819 of Percy Florence, her only surviving child. The Shelleys' marriage suffered, too, in the wake of their children's deaths, and Percy formed romantic attachments to other women. The deaths of Mary and Percy's children had a profound impact on Mary's writing. In *Frankenstein*, apprehension about giving birth is a theme that runs throughout the novel.

In 1822 Percy Shelley drowned during a storm while sailing to meet some friends. After her husband died, Mary Shelley fell into poverty. She continued to write fiction to support herself.

*Frankenstein* (1818) was her first and by far her most successful work of fiction.

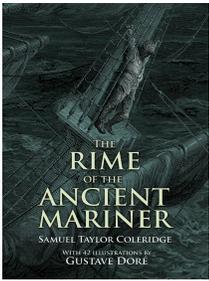
Apprehension about giving birth runs throughout *Frankenstein*.

## Frankenstein's Historical Context:

Most critics consider the Gothic genre a reaction to the "Age of Reason," a movement in 18th-century British and European art and politics that stressed the power of the human mind above all. Empowered by an unchecked faith in humanity, people set out to reshape society: The American and French Revolutions erupted, and the Industrial Revolution forced people into long grueling days in factories. The Gothic novelists aimed to represent the dark side that accompanied this age of apparent human progress. At a time when writers and thinkers had begun to believe in the "infinite perfectability of man," Gothic novelists portrayed human beings as woefully imperfect and at the mercy of far more powerful forces, such as nature and death.



## Related Literary Works:



The Gothic novel flourished in English literature from the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, which established the genre in 1764, until about 1820. Gothic novels emphasized mystery and horror, and almost always contained dark forests, castles, the supernatural, trap doors, secret rooms, and other similar elements now familiar from "horror" movies. Yet while *Frankenstein* is one of the most famous novels in the Gothic genre, it was written at a time when the Gothic novel was slowly giving way to the literary movement of Romanticism, and the novel shares the Romantic emphasis on the "sublime" power of nature. In writing *Frankenstein*, Shelley also drew heavily on John Milton's seventeenth century *Paradise Lost*, an epic poem that traces humankind's fall from grace. The epigraph of *Frankenstein* is a quotation from *Paradise Lost*, in which Adam curses God for creating him, just as the monster curses Victor Frankenstein, his creator.



## Key Facts About The Novel:

- **Full Title:** Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus
- **When Published:** 1818
- **Literary Period:** Switzerland and London, England: 1816–1817
- **Genre:** Gothic novel
- **Setting:** Switzerland, France, England, Scotland, and the North Pole in the 18th century.
- **Point of View:** Frankenstein is told through a few layers of first person narratives. Walton is the primary narrator, who then recounts Victor's first-person narrative. In addition, Victor's narrative contains the monster's first person story as well as letters from other characters.



## Interesting Facts About The Novel:

**A ghost story.** On a stormy night in June of 1816, Mary Shelley, her husband, and a few other companions, including the Romantic poet Lord Byron, decided to try to write their own ghost stories, but Shelley couldn't come up with any ideas. A few nights later, she had a dream in which she envisioned "the pale student of unhallowed arts" kneeling beside his creation—the monster. She began writing the story that became *Frankenstein* the next morning.

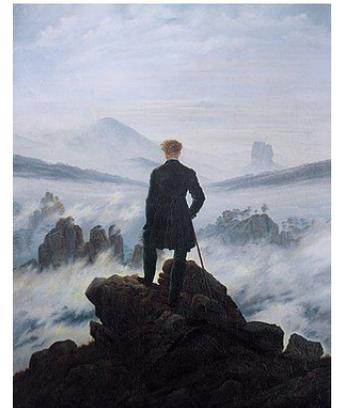


**The tale of two *Frankensteins*.** Shelley published the first edition of *Frankenstein* anonymously, perhaps due to her concern that such a grim and violent tale would not be well received by her audience if they knew her gender. She revised the novel and published it under her real name in 1831. Some key differences exist between the editions, namely that in the first edition, Elizabeth is Alphonse's niece and, therefore, Victor's cousin. In the 1831 edition, the more popular version, the Frankensteins adopt Elizabeth from another family).

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## Romanticism

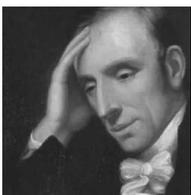
Romanticism was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century, and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. Romanticism can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, 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 irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary, and the transcendental.



*Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*  
Caspar David Friedrich, 1818

### Characteristics of Romanticism

- Valuing sensitivity and feelings over intellectualism
- Valuing the wisdom of people who might not be well-educated or sophisticated
- Appreciating people for being unconventional and unique
- Maintaining childlike curiosity and spontaneity
- Maintaining a strong connection with nature
- Considering science and technology dangerous



William Wordsworth  
Romantic Poet



Lord Byron  
Romantic Poet



*The Nightmare*  
Henry Fuseli, 1781

# Gothic Literature

Gothic as a literary genre begins with later-eighteenth-century writers' turn to the past; Gothic literature is considered an offshoot of Romantic literature. In the context of the Romantic period, the Gothic is, then, a type of imitation of the “dark ages” & medievalism.



At first, The Gothic featured accounts of terrifying experiences in ancient castles — experiences connected with subterranean dungeons, secret passageways, flickering lamps, screams, moans, bloody hands, ghosts, graveyards, and the rest. By extension, it came to designate the macabre, mysterious, fantastic, supernatural, and, again, the terrifying, especially the pleurably terrifying, in literature more generally. Closer to the present, one sees the Gothic spreading through Victorian literature (for example, in the novels of Dickens and the Brontës), American fiction (in the stories of Poe, Hawthorne, and Faulkner to name a few), and of course the modern films, television, and videos. The Gothic is directly related to, and arguably led to, the modern genre of horror in literature and film.



When the Gothic made its appearance in literature, the novelist Horace Walpole was a chief initiator, publishing *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), a short novel in which the ingredients are a haunted castle, a charismatic villain, mysterious deaths, supernatural happenings, a moaning ancestral portrait, a damsel in distress, and violent emotions of terror, anguish, and love. Walpole’s novel was tremendously popular, and imitations followed in such numbers that the Gothic novel was probably the most common type of fiction in England for the next half century. **It is noteworthy in this**

**period that the best-selling author of the genre (Ann Radcliffe), the author of its most enduring novel (Mary Shelley), and the author of its most effective sendup (Jane Austen) were all women.**

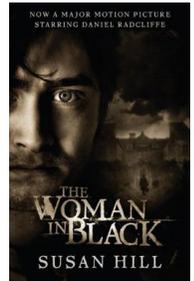
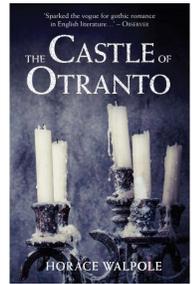
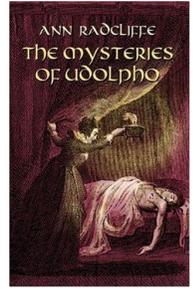
Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was inspired, as Shelley explains in her introduction to the edition of 1831, by a communal reading of German ghost stories with her husband and the Romantic poet Lord Byron during bad weather on the shores of Lake Geneva. *Frankenstein* is arguably the single most important product of this Gothic tradition. Its numerous themes relate to science, poetry, psychology, alienation, politics, education, family relationships, and much more. It is hard to imagine a more archetypically Gothic circumstance than the secret creation of an eight-foot-tall monster out of separate body parts collected from charnel houses.



*“I pass, like night, from land to land;  
I have strange power of speech;  
That moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me:  
To him my tale I teach.”*

## Characteristics of Gothic Literature

- Setting is often dark and creepy; many scenes in old houses, castles, graveyards, and other macabre locals.
- Stories have an atmosphere of mystery and suspense.
- Novel overshadowed by a threatening feeling, and/or a fear of the unknown.
- The stories contain visions and omens; these phenomenon can be seen as portents or foreshadowing of coming events.
- There are often elements of the supernatural and/or inexplicable events; fantastic, dramatic events, such as ghosts appearing, giants walking, or inanimate objects coming to life.
- High, “overwrought” emotion; characters experience feeling of impending doom, and suffer from “raw nerves.” Characters seen crying, or giving emotional speeches, also always the sense of breathlessness and panic are all common.
- Stories often portray women in distress; female characters find themselves fainting, terrified, screaming, and/or sobbing as an appeal to the pathos and sympathy of the reader.
- Stories portray female characters as threatened by a powerful, impulsive, and/or tyrannical male.

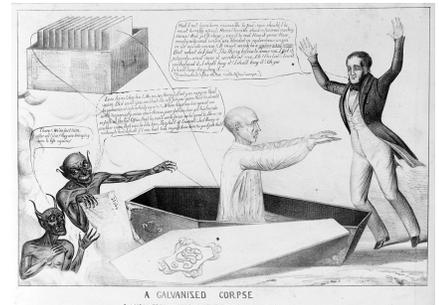
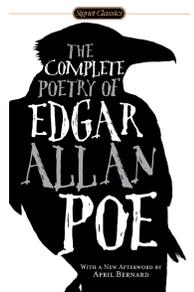


## Other Important Information About *Frankenstein*

*Frankenstein* is considered a **frame tale**. A frame tale (also known as a frame story or frame narrative) is a literary technique where an author “frames” a story within another story, whereby an introductory or main narrative is presented, at least in part, for the purpose of setting the stage either for a more emphasized second narrative or for a set of shorter stories.

*Frankenstein*'s frame tale: Walton, an explorer, is telling the story of Victor Frankenstein through letters to his sister; the story then changes to the story of Frankenstein's monster as told by Victor Frankenstein.

Another major influence on *Frankenstein* is the scientific exploration of the day. As is the case with the ideals of the Romantic & Gothic movements - there is an element of distrust and fear of science. Some of the scientific concepts explored in the novel are Galvanism (reanimating bodies with electricity), advances in human anatomy, vivisection (the practice of performing operations on live animals for the purpose of experimentation or scientific research), and the polar expeditions happening at the time.



## NOTE:

**“Frankenstein” is the name of the man who made the monster. The monster is known only as “the creature.” Also, the monster IS NOT GREEN!**

## Frankenstein Characters

Character Name	Character Biography
 <p><b>Victor Frankenstein</b></p>	<p>The oldest son in the Frankenstein family and the novel's protagonist and narrator of most of the story (he tells his story to Robert Walton, who relates it to the reader).</p>
 <p><b>Creature/Monster</b></p>	<p>The hideous creature/monster that Victor Frankenstein creates (though the name "Frankenstein" has become associated with the monster, the monster is, in fact, nameless).</p>
<p><b>Robert Walton</b></p>	<p>An explorer who rescues Victor from the ice, hears his harrowing story, and sets it down on paper in letters to his sister, Margaret Saville. Walton's quest for knowledge in the North Pole parallels Victor's search for education and enlightenment at Ingolstadt. Because he parallels Victor in this way, Robert Walton is a "double" of Victor, whose actions, by mirroring or contrasting Victor's own, serve to highlight Victor's character and various themes in Frankenstein.</p>
<p><b>Elizabeth Lavenza</b></p>	<p>Victor's sister by adoption, is a stunningly beautiful and remarkably pure girl whom Victor's mother adopts. All the Frankensteins adore Elizabeth, and Victor quickly begins to "protect, love, and cherish" her.</p>
<p><b>De Lacy</b></p>	<p>A blind old man who lives in exile with his children Felix and Agatha in a cottage and a forest.</p>
<p><b>Henry Clerval</b></p>	<p>Victor's dear friend from childhood. Victor describes Clerval as having a vast imagination, a sensitive heart, and boundless love of nature.</p>
<p><b>Alphonse Frankenstein</b></p>	<p>Victor's father. A devoted husband and parent, and a well-respected public magistrate. Alphonse is a loving father to Victor, and a man who believes in family and society.</p>
<p><b>Justine Moritz</b></p>	<p>A young woman who the Frankensteins adopt at the age of twelve. She is convicted of the murder of William Frankenstein on circumstantial evidence and executed. Though all the Frankensteins believe she is innocent.</p>
<p><b>William Frankenstein</b></p>	<p>Victor's youngest brother, beloved by everyone.</p>
<p><b>Ernest Frankenstein</b></p>	<p>Victor's younger brother by six years.</p>
<p><b>Caroline Beaufort</b></p>	<p>Beaufort's daughter, Victor's mother, and Alphonse Frankenstein's wife. Caroline is an example of idealized womanhood: smart, kind, generous, and resourceful. Caroline dies of scarlet fever when Victor is seventeen.</p>
<p><b>Margaret Saville</b></p>	<p>Robert Walton's sister and the recipient of his letters, which frame the novel.</p>

## Frankenstein Vocabulary

### Prologue

**fervent** - passionate, glowing  
**perpetual** - never ending, eternal  
**diffusing** - to pour out, spread  
**phenomena** - fact, event, or circumstance that can be observed, usually considered extraordinary or remarkable  
**eccentricities** - deviating from a conventional pattern  
**ardent** - characterized by strong enthusiasm  
**induce** - to persuade  
**requisite** - required; a necessity  
**dominion** - sphere of influence or control  
**tranquilize** - to make calm, peaceful, quiet  
**effusions** - a pouring out of unrestrained expressions or feelings  
**inuring** - to become used to something undesirable by prolonged subjection  
**dauntless** - without fright or discouragement  
**inexorable** - relentless, unyielding  
**allusion** - reference to a historically significant person, place, or event  
**solicitude** - concern, anxious care  
**capitulated** - surrender on terms or conditions  
**repose** - rest or sleep  
**conciliating** - reconciling, a winning over  
**paroxysm** - a spasm, fit, or sudden outburst  
**ameliorate** - improve, to become or make better

### Chapters I and II

**indefatigable** - tireless  
**intimate** - very familiar, close  
**rankling** - soreness, great pain  
**plaited** - weave, braid  
**pittance** - very small amount; a trifling  
**disconsolate** - hopelessly sad  
**interment** - burial  
**recompensing** - reward; pay back, or payment  
**penury** - very great poverty  
**chamois** - small, goat-like antelope  
**ardor** - great intensity; passion; strong enthusiasm  
**sublime** - exalted; inspiring awe  
**rapture** - elation; exhilaration  
**infidels** - without religion or belief; an atheist  
**indulgence** - liberal or lenient treatment  
**caprice** - impulsive change of mind, whim  
**filial** - affectionate; obedient; pertaining to a son or daughter  
**metaphysical** - mystical, abstract, spiritual  
**predilection** - preference, partiality  
**inclemency** - severity of weather, stormy  
**chimerical** - illusionary, fanciful, dreamlike  
**avidity** - eagerness; greediness  
**imbued** - filled with ideas, feelings, etc.  
**tyros** - beginners, amateurs  
**tertiary** - third place or rank  
**impediments** - hindrance; block  
**repined** - express discontent  
**averred** - to declare in a positive, formal way

**progeny** - children, descendants, offspring  
**immutable** - not susceptible to change

### Chapters III and IV

**menaced** - threatened, put in peril  
**imprudence** - unwise  
**prognosticated** - to predict on the basis of present indications  
**fortitude** - valor; determination  
**benignity** - kindly disposition; gracious  
**irreparable** - hopeless, irreversible  
**deferred** - to put off, delay, postpone  
**zeal** - eagerness, enthusiast  
**chaise** - two-wheeled, open carriage  
**imbued** - saturated, filled  
**reprobate** - morally unprincipled person  
**recapitulation** - the act of being repeated; summarized  
**panegyric** - speech filled with praise, compliments  
**elixir** - sweetened solution containing medicine  
**palpable** - acceptable to the mind or sensibilities  
**mien** - appearance, look  
**erroneously** - mistakenly  
**physiognomy** - facial features which reveal characteristics  
**dogmatism** - authoritarian assertion of opinion  
**pedant** - one who flaunts learning  
**abstruse** - difficult to understand  
**facile** - achieved with little effort  
**esteem** - high regard, favorable opinion  
**receptacle** - a container or place for keeping things  
**emaciated** - starved, extremely thin  
**unhallowed** - not sacred, wicked, sinful, evil  
**incipient** - just beginning, early stage

### Chapters V and VI

**delineate** - describe in words  
**lassitude** - weariness  
**shroud** - burial cloth or garments  
**demoniacal** - devilish, very wicked  
**palpitation** - throbbing, beating rapidly  
**languor** - lack of enthusiasm  
**allude** - hint at, mention slightly  
**unremitting** - steady  
**pertinacity** - great persistence, not giving up, continuing, stubbornness  
**remorse** - deep, painful regret  
**fetter** - restrain, tie up  
**placid** - peaceful, quiet  
**perversity** - abnormality, difference  
**dissipate** - totally scatter, dispel  
**vivacity** - liveliness  
**vacillating** - unsteady, wavering  
**antipathy** - strong dislike, hate  
**encomiums** - songs of praise, highly complimentary  
**diffident** - lacking in self-confidence  
**eulogy** - speech or writing in praise of the dead  
**dilatoriness** - lateness, not prompt  
**perambulations** - walks or strolls  
**salubrious** - healthful

## Chapters VII and VIII

**prognosticate** - to forecast, to predict from facts  
**tedious** - long and tiring  
**promontory** - a high point of land extending from the coast into the land  
**dirge** - funeral song  
**precipices** - cliff, crag, steep mountainside  
**venerable** - worthy of respect or reverence due to age, character, or importance  
**alleviate** - to relieve, to lessen, to make easier  
**deposition** - testimony under oath or sworn testimony in writing  
**candor** - speaking honestly, frankness, sincerity  
**mockery** - to ridicule, to make fun of  
**ignominious** - shameful, disgraceful, dishonorable  
**exculpated** - to free from blame, prove guiltless  
**countenance** - facial expressions  
**execrated** - detested, abhorred  
**adduced** - to give as proof or evidence  
**indignation** - anger at something unworthy or unjust  
**conjecture** - guess, theorize  
**wantonly** - done in a reckless and malicious way; not moral  
**timorous** - timid, easily frightened  
**approbation** - approval, favorable opinion  
**guile** - deceit, sly tricks  
**absolution** - freeing from guilt or blame  
**excommunication** - a cutting off or removal from the church  
**obdurate** - stubborn, obstinate; not repentant  
**perdition** - loss of one's soul; utter loss or destruction  
**lamentations** - cries of sorrow or grief, wailing, mourning

## Chapters IX and X

**remorse** - deep, painful regret for having done wrong  
**perceptible** - to become aware of or understood through the senses  
**augmenting** - making greater in size, number or amount; increasing  
**malice** - a desire to hurt or harm others  
**unalterable** - not changeable, permanent  
**efface** - rub out, to obliterate  
**abhorrence** - intense dislike  
**desponding** - becoming disheartened  
**sacrilege** - an intentional injury to anything sacred  
**ephemeral** - transitory; lasting for a brief time  
**epoch** - beginning of a period of time or era when something striking happens  
**impetuous** - impulsive, brash; rushing with violence  
**reverberated** - resounded; reflected  
**anon** - soon, in a short time  
**rent** - to rip, to make an opening  
**divert** - to turn aside from a direction; to distract or amuse  
**pinnacle** - the highest point  
**surmount** - to overcome; to ascend to the top and cross over  
**mutability** - ability to change

**diabolically** - devilishly, wickedly  
**dissoluble** - capable of being dissolved  
**negligently** - habitually guilty of neglect  
**irrevocably** - incapable of being retracted or revoked  
**commiserate** - to feel or express sorrow or pity; to sympathize

## Chapters XI and XII

**opaque** - impenetrable by or not reflecting light  
**impervious** - incapable of being penetrated, allowing no passage  
**dormant** - inactive; resembling sleep  
**orb** - a sphere  
**canopied** - covered  
**mode** - a method, way, or manner of doing something  
**uncouth** - crude, unrefined, awkward  
**inarticulate** - not distinct; irregular speech  
**offal** - waste parts of a butchered animal; rubbish  
**assuage** - to make less severe; to satisfy or appease  
**rambles** - wanderings  
**disconsolate** - gloomy, helplessly sad, despairing  
**hovel** - small, miserable dwelling  
**barbarity** - inhuman; harsh or cruel conduct; uncivilized  
**purloined** - stolen  
**demeanor** - the way a person looks and acts  
**countenance** - expression of the face  
**imperceptible** - very slight  
**pensive** - thoughtful  
**symmetry** - well-balanced arrangement of parts  
**venerable** - deserving respect because of age, character, or importance  
**viands** - food  
**enigmatic** - an obscure riddle, puzzling, unexplainable  
**poignantly** - very touching; keenly distressing to the mind or feelings  
**abstained** - hold oneself back  
**articulate** - distinctly, clear  
**exhortations** - urgings by strong appeals  
**conjectured** - guessed  
**mortification** - shame, humiliation  
**arbiters** - one who has power to judge or decide  
**conciliating** - to overcome the hatred of; to win favor; make calm and amenable; pacify, reconcile  
**exhilarated** - made lively  
**execration** - to denounce; to hate, to abhor or loathe

## Chapters XIII and XIV

**verdure** - fresh greenness of flourishing vegetation  
**conjecture** - guess or theory based on inconclusive facts  
**dispelling** - driving away, scattering  
**cadence** - rhythmic flow, vocal inflection  
**enraptured** - filled with great delight  
**declamatory** - overblown style of speaking, verbose  
**subsequent** - following in time or order  
**degenerating** - deteriorating or decaying; morally degrading  
**scion** - a descendant  
**squalid** - very dirty

**unsullied** - untainted, perfect cleanliness  
**subsist** - to exist  
**stealth** - secret or sly action  
**dote** - to lavish excessive fondness  
**indignation** - anger over something unjust  
**obnoxious** - very disagreeable, offensive; hateful  
**flagrant** - outrageous; glaring  
**zeal** - eager desire or effort, enthusiasm  
**consummation** - completion, fulfillment  
**ensuing** - a consequence following immediately afterward  
**implements** - tools  
**tenets** - principles, beliefs  
**indelibly** - permanently, something not easily erased  
**harem** - multiple women living in a male-dominated dwelling, like a palace  
**emulation** - trying to equal or excel  
**facilitated** - made easy; helped bring about, assisted  
**exile** - person forced to leave his or her country or home  
**expostulate** - remonstrate in a friendly way; reason earnestly  
**reiterating** - verbal repetition  
**mandate** - an authoritative command  
**adverse** - unfavorable, harmful

#### Chapters XV and XVI

**deprecate** - express strong disapproval of  
**portmanteau** - stiff, oblong traveling bag with two compartments opening like a book; pouch  
**disquisition** - long or formal speech or writing about a subject  
**vice** - fault, bad habit  
**patriarch** - male leader of a family or clan  
**imbued** - filled with; inspired  
**alluring** - strongly attractive  
**sagacity** - keen, sound judgment  
**supplication** - humble and earnest request or prayer  
**mediation** - friendly intervention  
**intrusion** - coming unasked and unwanted  
**instigate** - urge on; stir up  
**consternation** - great dismay; paralyzing terror  
**tumult** - commotion  
**wantonly** - done without reason or excuse; heartlessly  
**havoc** - ruin, injury  
**impotence** - helplessness  
**myriads** - countless  
**imprudently** - unwisely  
**appeased** - satisfied  
**gesticulations** - lively or excited movements of body parts  
**soothed** - calmed or comforted  
**spurned** - refused with scorn  
**inanimate** - lifeless  
**vestige** - trace; track; footprint  
**succor** - help, aid  
**imprecate** - call down evil curses on  
**rustic** - a country person; rough in appearance  
**recompense** - to award compensation, to make amends for damage  
**imbibed** - to take in, to absorb, or assimilate

**ogre** - monster  
**epithets** - curses; hateful comments  
**benignity** - kindness, graciousness  
**sanguinary** - bloodthirsty or bloody  
**requisition** - a demand, a requirement

#### Chapters XVII and XVIII

**concede** - to acknowledge as true or proper  
**precipitate** - to bring about suddenly; hasty; rash  
**insurmountable** - unable to overcome  
**contortions** - a twisting out of shape  
**detrimental** - harmful; causing a disadvantage  
**detestation** - hate, intense dislike  
**compassionate** - helping those that suffer; feeling for another's sorrow  
**malice** - a desire to hurt or harm others  
**feint** - a false pretense, movement intended to deceive  
**naught** - nothing  
**disquisition** - a formal discourse  
**exordium** - an exposition or introduction of a speech or composition  
**dissipate** - dispel, cause to disappear  
**solemnization** - to turn into; to observe a formal ceremony  
**candor** - speaking openly what one thinks, giving an honest opinion  
**manifold** - of many kinds; many and various  
**dilatory** - tending to delay, not prompt  
**guise** - mask; pretense  
**coveted** - eagerly desired (usually something of someone else's)  
**impediment** - hindrance, obstacle  
**intimated** - suggested indirectly, hinted  
**machinations** - evil plottings, secret schemes  
**acquiesced** - to give in to, to consent passively  
**sedulous** - hard-working, diligent  
**indolence** - idleness, laziness  
**variegated** - to give a variety of colors; to diversify  
**promontory** - point of land extending into the water  
**chastened** - restrained from excess, moderated  
**ineffectual** - useless; without effect

#### Chapters XIX and XX

**afforded** - to have the financial means for  
**profound** - coming from the depths of one's being; extremely thoughtful  
**transitory** - existing briefly, short-lived  
**debar** - to exclude, forbid, prevent  
**alleging** - stating positively as a reason or excuse  
**palpitate** - beat very rapidly, throb  
**novelties** - new or unusual things  
**expedite** - make easy; speed up  
**remissness** - negligence, carelessness in doing what one has to do  
**languid** - weak, lacking energy or vitality  
**antiquity** - things from times long ago, great age  
**rendezvous** - meeting place  
**congenial** - agreeable  
**dissuade** - to discourage from a purpose or course of action by persuasion

**remonstrate** - to protest or object  
**benumbed** - to make numb or inactive  
**tumult** - commotion, noise, or uproar  
**immersed** - absorbed; involved deeply  
**unremitting** - incessant, persistent  
**malignant** - highly injurious, showing ill-will  
**provocation** - causing someone irritation  
**propagated** - to reproduce  
**sophisms** - a plausible but mistaken argument  
**profundity** - a deep intellectual ability  
**presentiment** - premonition, a sense of something about to occur  
**condescension** - patronizing manner  
**wiliness** - calculating  
**inexorable** - relentless; not capable of being persuaded by pleas  
**insuperable** - insurmountable, incapable of being overcome  
**atrocious** - horrible, cruel, extremely evil  
**reverie** - dreamy thoughts, thinking of pleasant things  
**cultivation** - preparing land for crops by plowing and planting  
**debility** - feebleness  
**politic** - prudent; wise in looking out for one's own interests  
**fortitude** - courage in facing pain or danger

#### Chapters XXI and XXII

**benevolent** - kind, good natured, charitable  
**deposed** - declared under oath  
**supposition** - the act of believing an unproven statement; an assumption  
**augury** - act of predicting the future; an omen  
**apothecary** - druggist or pharmacist  
**interment** - placement in the grave  
**squalidness** - having a dirty appearance  
**languid** - feeling weak; indifferent  
**livid** - ashen or pallid (usually due to anger)  
**retrospect** - a review or contemplation of past events  
**incitement** - to stir up, urge on, or provoke to anger  
**repugnance** - offensive, repulsive  
**delirium** - a clouded mental state, confusion  
**precarious** - uncertain, dangerous, risky  
**enraptured** - to move to delight  
**vexations** - those problems that irritate or annoy  
**torpor** - apathy; condition of inactivity  
**in quietude** - a state of uneasiness  
**laudanum** - an opium-based drug  
**indefatigable** - untiring, tireless  
**erroneous** - mistaken  
**unhallowed** - unholy  
**consternation** - sudden confusion or dismay  
**curbed** - anything that is checked or restrained  
**imperious** - domineering, overbearing, urgent  
**formidable** - arousing dread or awe  
**augmented** - to increase or make more  
**futurity** - a future event or possibility  
**enunciate** - to pronounce clearly; articulate  
**consecrate** - to make sacred  
**emaciated** - extremely thin (usually by starvation or illness)

**vivacity** - liveliness, spirited  
**tangible** - real, concrete  
**artifice** - ingenuity, subtle deception  
**nuptial** - marriage or wedding ceremony

#### Chapters XXIII and XXIV

**adversary** - opponent, enemy  
**acme** - the point of highest achievement  
**reconciled** - to reestablish friendship or love  
**invective** - an abusive speech; violent attack with words  
**incredulity** - disbelieving, skeptical  
**physiognomy** - facial features that reveal characteristics  
**proportionate** - to adjust so that there are proper relations between parts  
**martyr** - one who sacrifices, suffers, or dies for principles  
**abjuration** - giving up  
**extricate** - to release from entanglement or difficulty; disengage  
**invoked** - to call upon a higher power for aid  
**bedim** - to make less bright  
**repose** - to rest  
**enjoined** - commanded; prohibited  
**instigated** - urged on  
**impassive** - revealing no emotion, expressionless  
**ecstasy** - condition of great joy, rapture  
**gibe** - to taunt; to make mocking remarks  
**sentiment** - an opinion based on emotions not fact  
**retribution** - punishment; something demanded in payment; vengeance; requital for some wrong that has been done  
**protraction** - prolonging  
**disencumbered** - to relieve or free from hindrance  
**appalling** - causing horror, terrifying  
**congeal** - to solidify  
**imprecations** - curses  
**posterity** - generations of the future  
**illustrious** - celebrated; famous  
**infantile** - babyish, childish  
**eradicated** - to destroy totally; to erase  
**fraught** - attended; accompanied  
**imminent** - about to occur  
**deputation** - a group appointed to represent others  
**immure** - to imprison  
**modulate** - to regulate; to vary the frequency of  
**languor** - spiritlessness, sluggishness  
**renounce** - give up formally  
**irradiation** - illuminations, brightness  
**purport** - to claim or profess the main idea  
**opprobrium** - disgrace arising from shameful conduct  
**contumely** - insulting treatment  
**execrate** - to denounce, to abhor  
**irremediable** - incurable, impossible to remedy  
**consummate** - to complete, to fulfill  
**rankle** - to cause irritation  
**conflagration** - a big and destructive fire

## Themes & Big Ideas Explored In *Frankenstein*

- Family, Society, & Isolation
- Ambition & Fallibility
- Romanticism & Nature
- Revenge/Vengeance
- Prejudice
- Lost Innocence
- Creation & Child Birth
- Idealism
- Appearance
- The Quest for Knowledge

## Symbols/Symbolism In *Frankenstein*

- Fire
- Light
- Darkness
- The Bible
- The Monster/Creature/Wretch
- Books
- The necklace
- Ice and Cold

## *Frankenstein* Essential Questions

- What consequences do we face when we don't take responsibility for our actions?
- Can individuals transform society?
- How can scientific advancement and exploration be both good and bad?
- What happens when our ideals are realized?
- What is the relationship between nature and nurture? Which is more important?
- What is the tension between reason and intuition?
- What is the ethical relationship between creator and creation?
- In what ways can imagination and inspiration unleash the best and worst in man?
- How do writers structure their work to reflect their message?
- How is the feminist perspective demonstrated in Romanticism?
- How does *Frankenstein* fit the ideals of Romanticism & the Gothic?
- How does lack of compassion lead to prejudice and stereotyping?
- Who in the story is the “real” monster – Victor or his creature?
- Do we need love? What is to become of man if he cannot find love?
- When is the soul present? Does the creature have a soul?
- What happens when science assumes the role of creation?

## Frankenstein Reading Questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Letters

Note: The letters help form the frame tale. The explorer Robert Walton is narrating as he writes letters to his sister who lives in England.

1. List some examples of light/dark imagery that appear throughout all of the letters.

### Letter 1

2. Where is this letter written?
3. What attitudes and beliefs does the letter writer (Robert Walton) have about the arctic?
4. What does Walton want to discover in the arctic?
5. In what career did Walton fail?
6. What has Walton been doing to prepare himself for his arctic exploration?
7. Look on page 3. What does Walton believe he deserves?
8. What does Walton plan to do in Archangel (another city in Russia) and thereafter?

### Letter 2

9. What does Walton lack? What does he say this thing would do for him?
10. What does Walton say about his education? What problems does he see with it?
11. To what literary work does Walton attribute his attachment to and passionate enthusiasm for the dangerous mysteries of the ocean? How will he be different from its main character?

### Letter 3

12. How does Walton say he will be when he encounters danger?

#### Letter 4

13. What strange sight did Walton and his crew see?
14. Walton describes how his crew helped an emaciated, exhausted man. What did the man say he had been doing in the arctic?
15. How does Walton feel about the man they rescued? What reasons does he give?
16. What warning does the rescued man give to Walton?

#### Chapter 1

**Note: Here we get into the main story. Victor Frankenstein takes over the narration.**

17. What modern day country would Victor be from if he says he is "by birth a Genevese"?
18. Describe the history of the relationship of Victor's parents and his family history.
19. Fill in the blanks of the description uses for his parents' treatment of him:  
"I was their plaything and their \_\_\_\_\_, and something better – their child, the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ creature bestowed on them by heaven, whom to \_\_\_\_\_, and whose future lot it was in their hands to \_\_\_\_\_, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me."
20. What's the story of how Elizabeth joined the Frankenstein family?
21. How did Victor's parents present Elizabeth to him?

#### Chapter 2

22. How did Elizabeth and Victor's individual personalities complement one another?
23. How else did the Frankenstein family expand?

24. Who is Henry Clerval? Describe his personality.
25. How did Victor feel about his parents and childhood?
26. What does Victor say was the reason why he could have a violent temper and vehement passions when he was young?
27. What even led Victor to pursue knowledge in the natural sciences?
28. Victor's father says the works of Cornelius Agrippa, which interested Victor, are "sad trash." Why didn't this stop Victor from reading it? What *didn't* his father say?
29. Victor remarks that he was "left to struggle with a child's blindness, added to a student's thirst for knowledge." With those qualities, Victor began his search for the philosopher's stone and "the elixir of life," but soon focused on the latter. Why?
30. What else did Victor want to accomplish?
31. What event changed the focus of Victor's studies? What did he decide to study instead of the natural sciences?
32. Who does Victor credit for the change in his studies? (And then how does he create some suspense at the end of the chapter?)

### Chapter 3

33. In keeping with the characteristics of gothic literature, Victor describes how there was an "omen...of my future misery" the day before he left for college at the University of Ingolstadt (in Germany). What was it?
34. What is denied to Henry?
35. What does Victor say led him to M. Krempe, the professor of natural philosophy? What does this suggest about Victor?

36. What does M. Krempe think of Victor's previous studies?
37. What did Victor believe he would be able to do at college, after hearing the inspiring lecture from M. Waldman, the chemistry professor?
38. How does M. Waldman's attitude towards Victor differ from that of M. Krempe's?

#### **Chapter 4**

39. Why doesn't Victor go home (to Geneva) from college for two years?
40. How does Victor say scientific studies are different from other studies?
41. What "bold question" began to fascinate Victor as he progressed in his studies?
42. What else did Victor begin to study?
43. What did Victor discover and be able to do?
44. Why won't Victor tell us readers/listeners about the secret he knows?
45. Relating to the previous answer, how is Victor similar to the Ancient Mariner?
46. What did Victor plan to create?
47. What result did Victor (arrogantly) imagine from his experiment?
48. Where was Victor locating the materials for his experiments?
49. How did Victor's experiments change him physically and mentally?

50. What does Victor say a “human being in perfection” ought to do?
51. What does Victor say about studies that have a “tendency to weaken your affections and to destroy your taste for those simple pleasures in which no alloy can possibly mix”?
52. What does Victor say was the cause of Greece being enslaved, Caesar harming his country, America being discovered rapidly and the empires of Mexico and Peru being destroyed?

## Chapter 5

53. List the physical details of the creature that Victor brought to life.
54. How did Victor respond to the creature?
55. Why does it matter that *Ancient Mariner* is referenced?
56. What suddenly distracts Victor for the better? What does Victor also suddenly worry about?
57. What then affected Victor for several months?

## Chapter 6

Elizabeth writes to Victor to catch him up on family news, but this letter mostly functions to give the reader background on the Frankenstein family. We learn:

- Victor has a brother named Ernest who is 16.
- A woman named Justine Moritz is part of the Frankenstein family. She did not get along with her mother and Victor’s mother adopted Justine. Justine is a servant, but in Switzerland, there isn’t much distinction amongst the social classes, so she is really like family. She received an education and was treated well.
- Justine’s mother apologized and called her home, but they still had problems. The mother died and Justine came back to live with the Frankensteins.
- Victor has another much younger brother named William.
- Note that Elizabeth refers to Victor as her cousin and Victor’s father as her uncle.

58. What does Henry study at the university (which Victor also begins to study)?
59. What do Victor and Henry do for a fortnight (two weeks) in spring?

60. How does Victor feel at this point?

### **Chapter 7**

61. What are the circumstances of William's death?

62. Why did Elizabeth blame herself for William's death?

63. As Victor returns to his hometown in Switzerland, what is illuminated in a flash of lightning? What does Victor realize?

64. Why does Justine get blamed for William's murder?

65. Why doesn't Victor explain who the real murderer is?

### **Chapter 8**

66. Why does Justine confess to committing William's murder?

67. How does Justine describe the world?

68. What is Justine's final advice for Elizabeth?

69. How does Victor describe William and Justine, collectively?

### **Chapter 9**

70. How does Victor, at the beginning of the chapter, begin to portray himself as a tragic figure?

71. What was Victor "seized by"?

72. How does Victor often deal with his grief?

73. How has the death of William affected Victor's father?

74. How has the death of William affected Elizabeth?

75. What sudden decision does Victor make to try to restore his spirit?

## **Chapter 10**

76. What does Victor credit for giving him "the greatest consolation that I was capable of receiving"?

Note: the poem excerpt in this chapter is from "Mutability," a poem by Mary Shelley's husband, Percy Shelley. The word "mutability" means "constantly changing" or "fickle."

77. Victor suddenly encounters the creature he made. What does the creature accuse Victor of treating like "sport"?

78. Why is it so difficult for Victor to attack the creature?

79. According to the creature, what made him a "fiend"?

80. What seems to make the creature so sad?

81. How does the creature point out Victor's hypocrisy?

## **Chapter 11**

Note: The creature begins narrating in this chapter.

82. How did the creature satisfy his basic needs in his earliest days? How did he develop?

83. How do the people in the first village that the creature visits react to him?

84. Where does the creature take up residence?

85. How does the creature really seem to learn about human nature? What kinds of things does he observe?

## **Chapter 12**

86. What does the creature learn about the people who live in the cottage?

87. How does the creature show a sense of morality? Where does he seem to have gotten the idea for this action?

88. Identify the people who lived in the cottage.

89. What things does the creature do in hopes of winning over the family?

90. What terrified the creature and filled him with “the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification”?

91. What lifts the creature’s spirits?

### **Chapter 13**

92. What makes Felix happy in a way that the creature had not yet witnessed?

93. What barrier is between Safie and the cottagers?

94. What does the creature learn from hearing the cottagers read *Ruins of Empires*?

95. What thoughts about “man” did *Ruins of Empires* provoke in the creature?

96. The creature recognized that he was powerless in society. What qualities made him thus?

97. What does the creature recognize as missing from his infant days?

### **Chapter 14**

98. What is the cottagers’ background and reason for their current living situation?

99. Besides wanting to be with Felix, why did Safie not want to live with her father in Turkey?

## Chapter 15

100. How did *Sorrows of Werter* make an impact on the creature?
101. What questions puzzle the creature?
102. What did the creature learn from *Lives*?
103. How does the monster compare and contrast himself with Adam, as portrayed in *Paradise Lost*?
104. What does the creature hope will happen when he talks to De Lacey and why? What actually happens?

## Chapter 16

105. What does the creature do after the De Lacey family flees the cottage?
106. What events during the creature's travels to find Victor confirm his hatred of humans?
107. What does the creature demand from Victor?

## Chapter 17

Note: Victor resumes the narration in this chapter.

108. What will the creature do if Victor fulfills this wish?
109. What does the creature say would be the only reasons that Victor would have for denying him his wish?
110. How does Victor feel about the creature while hearing him express his wishes?
111. What does the creature say is the cause of his vices?

## Chapter 18

112. What does Victor's father encourage him to do? How does Victor feel?

113. What allusion is made to *Ancient Mariner* on page 141?

114. How does Victor delay fulfilling his father's wish?

### **Chapter 19**

You will not be quizzed on this chapter. It mainly details all the places in England that Henry and Victor visit. It ends with Victor going to a remote part of Scotland on his own to work on the project that the creature had requested.

### **Chapter 20**

115. How much time passed since Victor made the creature to the time described in this chapter?

116. What concerns does Victor have about his project?

117. What does the creature threaten?

### **Chapter 21**

118. What has happened to cause Victor's arrest? What happens to Victor after his arrest?

119. What is Victor doing to fall asleep?

### **Chapter 22**

120. What worry does Elizabeth express in her letter to Victor?

121. What are the marriage plans? How does Victor prepare for what he fears will happen?

### **Chapter 23**

122. Of course, what's the major event in this chapter?

123. What happens to Victor's father?

124. How does Victor attempt to correct the situation?

### **Chapter 24**

125. What has Victor been doing for months?

126. Why is Walton returning to England?
127. Victor warns Walton to seek happiness in \_\_\_\_\_ and avoid \_\_\_\_\_.
128. When Walton sees the creature in the cabin with Victor's body, what is familiar about the scene?
129. What had changed in the creature's personality by the time of his last murder?
130. The creature reminds Walton that, above all, he wanted what?
131. What does the creature say he will ultimately do and why does he choose this method?