

GOTHIC LITERATURE

Gothic literature is a genre of novel that was popular in the late 18th and 19th century and is 'characterized by an atmosphere of mystery and horror, and with a pseudo-medieval setting.' (Oxford Encyclopaedic Dictionary)

Gothic literature has its own distinctive style of **narration, language, characters, settings and events.**

Some of the features of gothic literature are:

- **settings:** wild, bleak and remote, with old castles or Gothic mansions, dungeons, caves, cemeteries, churchyards, monasteries, forbidden chambers, secret passageways, gloomy forests,
- **the supernatural:** ghosts, monsters, dreams, nightmares, superstition, omens, danger and death
- **atmosphere:** claustrophobic and sinister, with turbulent or gloomy weather, often dusk or night or foggy or misty, mysterious, full of suspense
- **mood:** fear of imprisonment, strong emotions, psychological torment
- **plot:** mystery, uncertainty, ancient curses/prophecies, romance, uncertainty of love, tension between true love & maiden's father, separation of lovers, illicit love/lust & revenge.
- **characters:** maidens in distress, heroes, tyrant, villains, villain-heroes, doppelgangers, unreliable narrators, older foolish woman, stupid servants, incompetent or evil priests/monks.



EXTRACT THREE: *FRANKENSTEIN* BY MARY SHELLEY 1817

It was on a dreary night of November, that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, 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 of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

For your conclusions, please refer to the text about the features of Gothic literature on the left.

1. How does the writer, Mary Shelley, create a gloomy and eerie setting in the first paragraph?

➡ pick up the words referring to

- The time and day

- The light

➡ What can you conclude?

2. The creation

What are the words used by the narrator to refer to his creation?

What does it look like?

➡ pick up the words

➡ What can you conclude?

3. How does the narrator react to his creation?
(make your point by quoting the text)

4. Sum up the passage in a few sentences.

➡ as an illustrator, you have been hired to illustrate the book.
illustrate this passage by drawing a strip of 3 or 4 images.