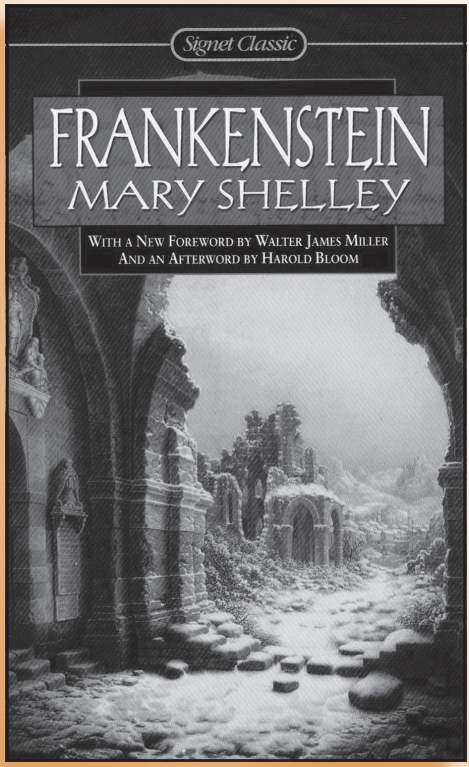
Signet Classics

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SIGNET CLASSICS EDITION OF

MARY SHELLEY'S

FRANKENSTEIN



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INTRODUCTION

March, 2009: In one of the most significant and controversial reversals of previous policy, newly innaguarated U.S. President Barack Obama signed an executive order to permit federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research. The ensuing debate continues to rage in both congress and culture, centering around the following questions: At what point does human life begin? Do human beings have the right to pursue science over ideology, no matter the gains or sacrifices?

Mary Shelley's 18th century Romantic novel *Frankenstein* raises the same questions about a scientist's quest to produce a living creature from human parts. When Dr. Frankenstein abandons his creation out of horror and remorse, the monster sets out on a quest of his own, to connect with the rest of human-kind. The parallel journeys of Dr. Frankenstein and his creature lead both characters and readers to question the nature of humanity, the rights of the living, and and the responsibility of science.

High school students are in a unique position to appreciate these questions as they are facing many of the same issues: the roles of technology verses humanity, the search for self-identity, and the responsibility they have to others. Students who remember "Frankenstein" as a Halloween monster will be surprised to find themselves re-visioning their view of Dr. Frankenstein's creature, and will form contemporary connections as they explore the role of parent-child relationships in Shelley's Gothic tale.

This guide is designed to be accessible for a variety of learning styles and literacy needs. Pre-reading activities are provided to prepare students for reading a Romantic novel, and to challenge them to think about the dilemmas Dr. Frankenstein and his creature face. During-reading activities ask students to read the text more critically and to engage in the making of meaning. And Post-reading activities encourage students to process and extend their thinking through a variety of written, verbal, and visual responses. The activities offered in this guide can be used selectively by teachers in focusing on their course objectives and student needs.

LIST OF MAIN CHARACTERS

Robert Walton — ship captain, explorer, and confidant of Frankenstein
Victor Frankenstein — scientist who designs a living creature from human remains
The Creature — the un-named human being created by Victor Frankenstein
Henry Clerval — Victor's best friend and fellow student
Alphonse and Caroline Beaufort Frankenstein — Victor's parents
Ernest and William Frankenstein — Victor's brothers
Elizabeth Lavenza — Victor's adopted cousin and wife
Justine Moritz — servant and friend of the Frankenstein family
Mr. DeLacey, Felix, Agatha, and Safie — Impoverished cottage family observed by the Creature

SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVEL

WALTON MEETS FRANKENSTEIN: LETTERS

In a letter to his sister Margaret in England, Robert Walton expresses excitement over his plans to discover a passage from Russia to the North Pole. He yearns for a friend to share his dreams, despairs, and successes. What he finds is Victor Frankenstein, stranded and nearly frozen on the ice, yet determined to continue his pursuit northward. Sensing that Walton is a kindred spirit in his pursuit of knowledge and the unknown, Frankenstein offers his history as a moral tale.

VICTOR'S EARLY LIFE: CHAPTERS 1-2

Victor begins his story by detailing his childhood in the Genevese Republic, starting with his father Alphonse's marriage to Caroline Beaufort. Victor was their only child for five years, after which they adopted orphaned toddler Elizabeth Lavenza who they present to Victor as "a pretty present." He vows to protect and cherish Elizabeth as his very own possession. The Frankensteins have two more sons, Ernest and William, and settle in Geneva, Victor's happy childhood home. Unlike his best friend Henry Clerval who wishes to learn about "the virtues of heroes and the actions of men," Victor desires to learn "the secrets of heaven and earth." Victor becomes enamored of natural philosophy and begins reading esoteric authors, delving into "the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life." A violent lightning storm and the ensuing scientific explanation from a family friend cause Victor to conclude that he should abandon these outmoded ideas.

CREATION OF THE MONSTER: CHAPTERS 3-5

At age seventeen, after the death of his mother, Victor leaves home to attend university at Ingolstadt where he soon regains his fascination with the mysteries of natural science. With the help of two professors, M. Krempe and M. Waldman, Frankenstein learns to distinguish between ancient myths and current fact, resolving to "pioneer a new way to unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation." Victor spends the next two years immersed in the study of chemistry, without returning to visit family and friends. In an obsessive effort to discover the point at which life begins, Victor spends countless days and nights in charnel houses studying decayed human forms. After two years of work assembling his own creature, Frankenstein succeeds in bringing it to life. However, Victor is disgusted by the creature's appearance and abandons him upon sight. Escaping into town, Victor is surprised to see Henry Clerval, who has just arrived at the university. Overcome with the horror of his secret act, Victor becomes violently ill.

CONSEQUENCES: CHAPTERS 6-10

Clerval delivers a letter from Elizabeth, expressing concern for Victor's illness and anxiety for his long absence. She reports that Justine Moritz, cousin and family friend to the Frankensteins, has come back to live in their home. Upon Victor's recovery, he and Henry turn their studies to the Oriental languages and decide to tour the Inglolstadt countryside. Henry's romantic appreciation of their surroundings has a restorative effect on Victor's

health and psyche. His reprieve is shattered, however, when a letter from Alphonse Frankenstein reports the strangulation death of Victor's five year old brother, William.

As Victor and Henry return to Geneva, Victor catches a glimpse of his creature and realizes that it is the murderer of young William. Arriving at home to his grief-stricken family, he learns that Justine has been accused of the crime because a locket given to William by Elizabeth has been discovered in Justine's pocket. Although she is innocent, Justine is pressured to give a false admission to the court, and even Elizabeth's impassioned defense fails to prevent Justine's condemnation. Victor is overcome with guilt yet feels no one will accept his fantastic explanation of the creature, and despairs to see William and now Justine "the first hapless victims to (his) unhallowed arts." In guilt and self-imposed isolation, Victor is tempted to take his own life. He refrains from doing so only because he feels it is his duty to protect his family from the creature, whom he "abhors" and blames with growing intensity. To relieve his agony, Victor travels to the Chamounix valley where he encounters the creature. Admonishing Frankenstein for abandoning his own creation, the creature compares himself to a fallen angel. Although Victor curses the creature, he is compelled to hear his tale.

THE CREATURE'S STORY: CHAPTERS 11-16

The creature describes his first experiences of the sights and sounds of Inglostadt. Similar to a newborn baby, he learned to distinguish between day and night and to find food and drink in the forests and streams. Nature became his home and his protector, and he gradually discovered fire for cooking and warmth. Desiring the company of fellow human beings, he entered a village but was met with screams and stones. Coming upon the impoverished DeLacey family, the creature kept himself hidden while observing them for several months. It was here he learned the beauty of music, the pleasure of reading, and the power of the spoken word. Longing to join the cottagers, he secretly cuts their wood and eventually approached the blind patriarch, attempting to befriend him. When his presence is discovered by DeLacey's son, the creature is cruelly rejected once again and forced to flee.

The creature continues his tale, explaining his suffering as he set out in the cold and snow to find his creator. While on his journey, he rescued a young girl from drowning, and when he was rewarded with a bullet, he "vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind." After two months, he reached Geneva, where he happened to encounter young William in the woods. When William struggled and called him "monster," the creature strangled William. Then for revenge the creature plants William's locket in the sleeping Justine's pocket. But he now knows what he wants, the creature explains to Victor, a female creature made explicitly for him.

AFTERMATH: CHAPTERS 17-24

Frankenstein argues that the creature will only double his efforts to destroy mankind if presented with a partner, and refuses despite the creature's threats of revenge. Frankenstein only relents when the creature promises exile from Europe. Upon his return to Geneva, though, Victor delays the repugnant task. But when he considers marriage to Elizabeth, Victor realizes he must give the creature his mate if he hopes for any peace. Fearful the monster will kill his father, Elizabeth, or Henry, Frankenstein sets out to accomplish the task quickly.

Victor settles in a hut on one of the Orkney isles, where he feels the landscape is as miserable as the "filthy process" in which he is engaged. Near completion of the female creature, Frankenstein worries he may be creating "a race of devils," and when he sees the creature spying upon him one night, Victor destroys his work. Returning to confront his maker, the creature vows to Victor, "I shall be with you on your wedding night." Victor casts the remains of the female creature into the sea, but is cast adrift by high winds. After a fearful struggle, Victor makes it to land, but is ordered to report to Mr. Kirwin, the magistrate. Victor is shocked to find he is accused of killing a young man whose body has just been found by local fishermen. Victor is agonized to recognize Henry Clerval and immediately falls into a fever, and remains deathly ill for two months.

When his father comes to take him home, Victor is found innocent. Still melancholy, Victor is determined to protect his loved ones. His wedding to Elizabeth is planned quickly in hopes of relieving Victor of his continued anguish. Convinced the creature will act on his threat to appear on his wedding night, Victor plans means of protecting himself. To his great agony, Frankenstein discovers he has misinterpreted the creature's threat, for it is Elizabeth, not Victor, that the monster murders. Frankenstein finally confides the entire tale to Geneva's magistrate, who promises to seek justice but doubts the possibility of success. Highly agitated, Frankenstein vows to devote himself, "either in life or death," to the creature's destruction. For months Victor finds himself in a perpetual game of hide and seek, leading to the northern lands where he must procure a dog sled to continue on ice. It is here Frankenstein encounters the ship of Robert Walton.

WALTON'S CONCLUSION: LETTERS

The frame story is completed with a return to Robert Walton's letters. Walton details how Frankenstein reverts from calm to rage, and is saddened to note "what a glorious creature must (Frankenstein) have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin!" Rejecting Walton's offer of friendship as a painful reminder of what he has lost, Victor vows to fulfill his fate and destroy the being to whom he gave existence. When Walton's men demand he turn the ship around or risk losing all aboard to the ice, Frankenstein encourages them to pursue their "glorious, honorable undertaking" or risk disgrace. Yet Walton chooses to respect the power of nature and save his men's lives. With his death imminent, Frankenstein asks Robert to continue his pursuit of the creature but then warns Walton to avoid ambition in pursuit of scientific discovery. In a troubling state of inner-turmoil, Victor Frankenstein dies. When Walton later returns to his cabin, he is shocked to find Victor's creature, lamenting the fact that Victor can never pardon him. The creature shares his tale with Walton, promising that Victor Frankenstein is his last victim. The creature vows to surrender himself on a funeral pyre, finally ending the wretched existence shared with Frankenstein.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to deepen students' background knowledge of literary symbols and traditions, and to introduce them to the novel's major themes. (Note: Consult other Teacher's Guides to Signet Classics; they contain ideas that can be adapted to prepare students to read and enjoy this novel).

I. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN HISTORY AND CULTURE

PATRIARCHY AND THEORIES OF LOCKE AND ROUSSEAU: CRITICAL READING & CORNELL NOTES

Because the setting and characters in *Frankenstein* are so intricately tied to the culture of Shelley's time, it would be useful to review the patriarchal system and the educational theories of Locke and Rousseau with students prior to reading the novel. A discussion of these topics is found in Walter James Miller's foreword to the Signet Classics edition of *Frankenstein*, "The Future of Frankenstein." Ask students to read Miller's essay and take Cornell Notes by drawing an inverted capital "T" on a piece of paper. On the left side of the vertical line they will label Miller's main ideas. On the right side, they will record supporting details. At the bottom of each page, under the horizontal line, students will synthesize their notes into a one or two sentence summary. Students should be sure to include the following topics:

1. The male pursuance of goals against all odds
2. The role of women as passive and dependent on men
3. The usurpation of female reproductive power by science
4. John Locke's "tabula rasa," or "blank slate" theory of individual character
5. Rousseau's philosophy that society is responsible for the development of individual character

As a formative assessment, student summaries can be posted on the wall or shared via document camera.

EDUCATIONAL THEORIES OF LOCKE AND ROUSSEAU: TARGET NOTES

In writing *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley drew on the philosophies of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) argued that a child is a "blank slate" that is formed only through experience. Rousseau's' *Emile, or On Education* (1762) promotes the idea that a child's upbringing is responsible for his education. Provide articles on each of these philosophies, such as the online encyclopedia links below. Use one article as a class model for determining and summarizing main ideas with "target notes." Afterwards, students can complete individual target notes on the other article. Target notes are a graphic-organizer alternative to traditional outlining. Students draw a bull's eye target on a piece of paper. In the center circle, they label their topic, such as "Locke's theory." Depending on the number of subtopics identified from the article, students draw vertical lines through the outer rings of the target, creating separate spaces for sub-topic notes. When note-taking is complete, students write a one or two sentence summary synthesizing the main ideas they derived from the article. Target notes are an opportunity to teach two skills: the previewing of text features to determine main and supporting ideas, and the summarizing of notes to comprehend significance, or "the big idea."

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/185833/Emile-or-On-Education

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/179408/education/47573/Education-during-the-Enlightenment

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE: ACCESSIBLE TEXT

Assigning students a short, interesting, and easier modern text prior to beginning a more challenging classic novel is an excellent method for generating student interest, making connections, and building prior knowledge. One connection between the popular *Harry Potter* series and *Frankenstein* is the legend of the "Philosopher's Stone," or its Americanized version, the "Sorcerer's Stone." Ask students to read chapter 13 from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (J.K. Rowling, 1998) that examines the history of the "Philosopher's Stone." Afterwards, ask students to journal on the following:

1. What is the appeal of the Philosopher's Stone? What is the danger?
2. Why might the magician who has held the stone all these years wish to surrender it now?

THE RISKS AND REWARDS OF SCIENCE: MULTI MEDIA PRESENTATION

Eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe was fascinated with scientific exploration and experimentation. Using Inspiration! or another multi-media program, ask students to research and produce a 1-3 minute audio-story or podcast introducing the class to one of the following late 18th/early 19th century topics:

1. Galvanism (Luigi Galvani's work with electric currents to stimulate muscle movement)
2. Body Snatching (theft of bodies from graves for the purpose of sale to doctors and scientists)
3. Vivisections (dissecting living animals for the purpose of scientific study)
4. Polar Expeditions

Students need only a microphone and audio-editing software program like Audacity, which can be downloaded for free. Students create an MP3 file with their information and include transitional commentary. Next, students upload the podcast to a free site such as iTunes, or ask the local webmaster to post it to the school website. Classmates, parents, and other community members can listen to the recordings online or download them to their ipods.

FEMINIST IDEALS: TALKING POINTS

In 1792, Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, published the first great feminist treatise, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.* The text provides an excellent picture of the patriarchal society into which *Frankenstein's* author was born, detailing the lack of rights, property, and respect afforded females in the late 18th century. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group one chapter of the text to read and summarize into bulleted "talking points." Discuss clues for identifying main ideas, such as repetition, restatement, and transitional language. After reading and summarizing, students split up into new groups composed of one representative from each chapter assigned. Each student shares talking points while the other group members listen and jot down notes on the main ideas in the chapter.

EXPLORING THE FRANKENSTEIN LEGEND: WEBQUESTS

Assign partner groups a topic from the following list, and ask them to explore the Internet for information to be compiled into a short media presentation, complete with clip art if

possible. Students share findings with the class while other groups take notes on each presentation. The objective is two-fold: whet students' appetites for uncovering the novel's legendary and timeless intrigue, and provide practice in research, writing, and speaking.

For all WebQuests, decide whether to direct students' research by providing web sites, which saves time, or to allow students freedom to locate their own web sites. A combination of teacher and student identified sites is also appropriate. In any case, a reminder of source validity and appropriateness is always a good idea. Library media specialists are often willing to assist in this endeavor.

1. Explore the Frankenstein legend through art: find at least three paintings/drawings that depict Frankenstein. Arrange them in chronological order and give some background on the artists.

   Sample Internet sites on the Frankenstein tradition in art:

   http://web.org.uk/picasso/frankenstein.jpg

   http://www.artnet.com/artwork/425954728/425200182/ron-english-lazarus-rising-frankenstein.html

2. Explore the Frankenstein legend through literature: the story of Dr. Frankenstein has been referenced countless times, and by writers other than Mary Shelley. Find at least three poems/short stories/novels/essays that include references to Frankenstein. Arrange them in chronological order and give some background on the writers.

   Sample Internet sites on the Frankenstein tradition in literature:

   http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2078/is_4_43/ai_64975487/

   http://www.amazon.com/Prodigal-Dean-Koontzs-Frankenstein-Book/dp/0553587889/

   http://www.radiodramarevival.com/episode-39-frankensteins-monster-wakes/

   http://www.amazon.com/Frankenstein-Cultural-Susan-Tyler-Hitchcock/dp/0393061442/

   http://www.amazon.com/Frankenstein-Makes-Sandwich-Adam-Rex/dp/0152057668/

3. Explore the Frankenstein legend through music: find at least three musical allusions to the Frankenstein story. Arrange them in chronological order and give some background information on the composers.

   Sample Internet sites on the Frankenstein tradition in music:

   http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=394

   http://www.allthelyrics.com/lyrics/frankenstein_the_musical_soundtrack/

   http://www.lyricstime.com/rocky-horror-picture-show-over-at-the-frankenstein-place-lyrics.html

EXPLORING THE LIFE OF THE NOVELIST

Students can create their own Internet biography on Mary Shelley, such as the ones below. After researching Shelley's life, groups can write commentary and post links on the class webpage or moodle.

Sample Internet sites on Mary Shelley:

http://www.rc.umd.edu/reference/chronologies/mschronology/mws.html

http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/mshelley.html

http://shelley.classicauthors.net/

EXPLORING SETTING: TRAVEL WRITING

Assign partners a mountain, lake, city, or other setting from *Frankenstein*, and have them take the role of travel agent. Students can research and respond to one of the following topics by writing a digital or hard-copy travel brochure.

1. The North Pole
2. Mont Blanc
3. The Alps
4. Geneva
5. The Orkney Isles

II. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLDEGE THROUGH EXPLORATION OF GENRE

TENETS OF ROMANTICISM

Select a work of art from the Romantic era, such as Caspar David Friedrich's 1818 painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog.* After showing it to the class on a document camera or LCD projector, ask students to complete the following response:

1. Draw a quick thumbnail sketch of the painting.
2. Write a brief description of the painting. What is the most dominant image? What is on the periphery? Include discussion of color, medium, and style.
3. Write a brief analysis of the painting based on your description above. Why does the painter choose to make certain images dominant and others marginal? Does the painting evoke a certain mood or theme? How? Why? How might the title of the painting affect the analysis?

After students are finished with individual responses, invite them to discuss their thoughts in partner groups or as a class. Explain that the mood and themes evoked by the painting are the same elements they will be seeing in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and other works from the Romantic Era. Record these on the board. Lists should include characterization of nature as a healing force, use of the supernatural, emphasis on human individuality, belief in innate goodness, and the advocacy of free thought. (Characteristics not obvious in the painting may be added by the teacher).

GOTHIC COMPARISONS

Popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Gothic novels are characterized by the use of intense emotion, the characterization of nature as a powerful and destructive force, the use of weather and atmosphere to depict mood, and the evocation of terror and horror. The survival of the gothic tradition can be seen in modern movie monsters such as *Nightmare on Elm Street's* Freddy Kruger and *Silence of the Lambs's* Hannibal Lecter. To initiate a discussion of Gothicism, play a video recording of Michael Jackson's hit, *Thriller*, which can be found on multiple websites, including YouTube.com

Discuss with students:

1. What is it in human nature that attracts us to gothic tales?
2. Can you think of any previously read titles that are gothic in nature? (Students might recall an Edgar Allan Poe tale such as *The Cask of Amontillado*).

Ask students to compare/contrast Romanticism and Gothicism. *Frankenstein* blends elements of both genres. Answers might take the form of a double-bubble or Venn-diagram.

FRAME STORY

Using the popular novel *The Princess Bride* (William Goldman, 1998) as an example, demonstrate visually the structure of literary frame stories. On a document camera, whiteboard, or overhead, draw a large picture frame. On the outer frame, write "grandfather visits grandson," and on the inner surface, write, "Princess Bride story." Show the clip from *The Princess Bride* where the grandfather visits his sick grandson and offers to read a story. A discussion of the scene is an excellent introduction to the frame story device.

Discuss with students:

1. Why did the novelist choose to utilize the frame story device?
2. What methods does the screenwriter use to transition between the frame and the story?
3. Can you provide another example of a frame story, either in literature or film? (Students might recall Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*).

Answers can take the form of journal entries or partner chats prior to discussing with the class.

The Princess Bride [videorecording]. Act III Communications [Buttercup Films Ltd., The Princess Bride Ltd.] ; Screenplay by William Goldman; produced by Andrew Scheinman and Rob Reiner; Directed by Rob Reiner. Originally produced as a motion picture in 1987.

TREASURE HUNT

One way to arouse students' interest in studying any novel is to have them bring or draw objects which are connected to the setting, characters, or theme of the story. You can provide students with a list if you want to do this activity before they read the book, or they can brainstorm a list after they read specific chapters or as a post-reading activity. Students can gather or create a range of objects, from easy to difficult, to bring to class to organize displays. Here are a few suggestions for a class reading *Frankenstein:*

1. SETTING: a map of Europe, an ice cube, a raincoat, an audio soundtrack of howling wind and human screams.

2. CHARACTERS: a Frankenstein mask, a Barbie doll, a lab coat, a chemistry beaker.
3. THEME: objects which symbolize science, obsession, patriarchy, Gothicism, and nature (prior to the scavenger hunt allow students to brainstorm ideas of objects which suggest these abstract qualities).

III. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN LANGUAGE

VOCABULARY CONCEPT MAPS

The language of Romantic novels can prove daunting to students. One method of providing background knowledge and promoting connections is to select Romantic-era vocabulary from the beginning of the novel that is critical to reader comprehension. Distribute a list of *Frankenstein* vocabulary words, complete with definitions. Then ask students to form partners or groups and create concept maps that illustrate their understanding of the assigned terms. Maps may include the definition, an illustration, examples, characteristics, etc. Groups may work on every word or only one, and can share their work by posting maps on the wall. Other students may walk from map to map and add observations and suggestions with post-it notes. Vocabulary might include *sledge, natural philosophy, elixir, chimera, chamois, predilection, anatomise, tertiary, alchemist,* and *charnel-house.*

PROBABLE PASSAGES

To encourage student predictions, generate a list of ten to fifteen words related to *Frankenstein*. Ask students to write a "probable passage" paragraph that predicts the content of the novel by using all the words from the list. After the book is read, students can return to the passage and make corrections to their summaries. Possible words might include: *Alps, Antarctic, ship, laboratory, ice, university, monster, thunder, cottage, locket, wedding, murder, dogs,* and *Scotland*.

DIRECTED READING ACTIVITY: INTERACTIVE NOTEBOOKS

A directed reading activity using interactive notebooks introduces students to Romantic language by focusing attention on a manageable excerpt and by delving into its diction, syntax, and tone. Have students read the novel's first chapter, on the background of the Frankenstein family. Direct them to mark the text as they read: draw a star next to words, sentences, or paragraphs they admire and a question mark beside text they find confusing or questionable. Ask students what they questioned and why. Re-read these words or excerpts aloud. Allow classmates to address each other's questions. Before adding teacher input, ask students for the lines they marked with stars. Re-read these aloud. Ask students what they admired about these excerpts. In this way, the teacher allows students to make meaning of the text on their own and with the help of peers rather than immediately relying on teacher input. Focusing on reader interest and questions also provides an illustration of how style affects comprehension.

To further this activity, ask an open-ended question that encourages readers of all levels to participate by writing an answer in their interactive notebooks. Students can share what they have written and respond to each other's observations. The quietest students can at least read their answers aloud, thus participating in class discussion.

The teacher's role during this activity is to encourage students to cite the text. While there are no wrong answers to an open-ended question, ask students, "what part of the passage led you to believe . . ." Possible open-ended questions from the first chapter of *Frankenstein* include:

1. Why does Shelley have Victor characterize his parents with "a deep consciousness of what they owed towards the being to which they had given life?"
2. Why does Shelley call Victor's mother "the guardian angel to the afflicted?"
3. Why does the author end the chapter with, "since till death she was to be mine only?"
4. How might you characterize Shelley's syntax? Give an example from chapter one.

IV. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH INITIAL EXPLORATION OF THEMES

THE LIMITS OF SCIENCE

1. Contemporary science is ripe with parallels to Victor Frankenstein's controversial experiment. In order to bridge this Romantic novel with today's young readers, invite students to investigate one of the following modern studies and present their findings to the class.
    1. *Human Genome Project:* an international effort to decode genetic information in human DNA
    2. *Visible Human Project:* study of an actual human cadaver sliced into razor thin sections for the purpose of scientific study
    3. *Dolly the Sheep:* the world's first successful living clone

2. Show students the two political cartoons on genetic engineering referenced below. One shows President Obama blowing the dust off a science book the day after releasing the moratorium on embryonic stem cell research. The second illustrates a couple "making a baby" by mixing chemicals in a test tube. For each cartoon, ask students to answer the following questions independently before sharing with a partner and the class.
    1. What is the dominant image in the cartoon? Why?
    2. What is significant about the secondary images and text in the cartoon?
    3. What is the cartoonist's point of view about his subject matter?
    4. What is your opinion about the subject matter introduced by the cartoon?
    5. After considering both cartoons and your opinion, write a thesis statement that supports, opposes, or argues a point about genetic engineering.

    http://www.cartoonistgroup.com/store/add.php?iid=30882

    http://www.cartoonistgroup.com/store/add.php?iid=4841

3. In *Frankenstein,* originally subtitled *The Modern Prometheus,* Mary Shelley's characters directly or indirectly allude to several other classic and Romantic works. Reading or discussing these works will provide students with critical background

knowledge prior to reading the novel. "Promethean Ambition" is the trait said to be exemplified by both literary and real characters who strive beyond their mortal limitations, often to dangerous or tragic ends.

Read the Greek myth of Prometheus, the Titan who angers Zeus by introducing fire to mortals and is punished eternally by having his liver eaten away by a great eagle. He suffers the same agony every day until he is freed by Heracles. Then discuss the following questions with students, asking them to keep these ideas in mind and to look for connections as they read the novel:

1. What knowledge was forbidden to man by Zeus? Why?
2. What might have motivated Prometheus to defy Zeus?
3. What was Prometheus's punishment? What does it symbolize?

One version of the myth of Prometheus is available at the following web site: http://web.archive.org/web/20071018065319/www.geocities.com/Athens/6969/myth.htm

THE DOUBLE-SELF

1. Doppelgangers

The literary tradition of dark doubles or shadow-selves spans the ages, including Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night,* Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities,* and *Prometheus Unbound*, by Percy Shelley, husband to *Frankenstein* author Mary Shelley. Perhaps the most recognizable to students is the example of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* (Students might be interested to know that in May 2009, Universal Studios announced a new *Jekyll and Hyde* movie named *Jekyll,* starring Keanu Reeves). Play a recording of *Obsession,* from the Broadway musical *Jekyll and Hyde.* An excerpt of the lyrics appears below.

JEKYLL:

What streak of madness lies inside me?
What is the truth my fears conceal?
What evil force makes Edward Hyde of me?
What darker side of me does he reveal?
What is this strange obsession
That's tearing me apart?
Some strange, deranged expression
Of what's in my heart?

Am I the man that I appear to be?
Or am I someone I don't know?
Is there some monster drawing near me to me?
Becoming clear to see?
Will what I fear to be
Be so?

Ask students to create a double-columned note-taking organizer, with significant lyrics on one side, and the doppelganger's characterization as revealed by the lyrics

on the other side. Because critics of Frankenstein often characterize the creature as Victor Frankenstein's dark double, or "shadow-self," this activity will help students think about this theme.

2. Archetypes

Introduce or review with students the different types of Jungian or literary archetypes with emphasis on the *self* and the *shadow* which they will encounter as they read the novel. Students might review several web sites to get an overview of Jungian psychology and archetypes. One such site is http://www.csulb.edu/~csnider/jungian.outline.html

Other literary archetypes that apply to *Frankenstein* might include the *hero,* the *wanderer,* the *orphan,* the *mad scientist,* and the *monster.* Discuss with students:

1. What characteristics define this archetype?
2. What are his goals?
3. What are his fears?
4. What are his nemeses?
5. Name examples of this archetype in literature, film, and society.
6. Has society's attitude towards this archetype changed over time? If so, how and why?

ROLE OF PARENTS

1. Anticipation Guide

Anticipation Guides provide personal connection and promote student thinking about significant themes they will encounter in the reading. As a literacy tool, they encourage students to engage while reading and focus on the issues they introduce. Before reading *Frankenstein*, ask students to answer the following questions. They can respond with "true" or "false," or they can answer on a continuum, such as "highly agree" or "agree somewhat." Then the class can engage in a discussion of individual responses, identifying areas of controversy.

1. It is a parent's job, more than society's, to nurture his/her child.
2. With the advent of genetic engineering and "designer" babies, parents now have less important roles in the birth process.
3. All children are innately good.
4. Every child needs "mothering" in order to become "human."
5. All parents love their children unconditionally, no matter how they look or act.
6. Children who are "deformed" physically or mentally should be isolated from society.

After reading, students can return to the anticipation guides and note how their thinking has changed or been impacted by the text.

2. Paradise Lost

In John Milton's *Paradise Lost,* Lucifer is expelled from Heaven and Adam from Eden when they challenge their creator. Read the excerpts from Book I involving

Adam's creation and Lucifer's expulsion, and ask students to consider the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between God and Adam? Between God and Lucifer?
2. How and why does this relationship change?
3. What does Milton suggest about the duty of a parent/creator to his creation in these excerpts?

Encourage students to keep these ideas in mind when they read *Frankenstein*, by listing ideas on class room charts or having students note their ideas in their reading journals.

THE ROMANTIC'S VIEW OF NATURE

1. Healing Power of Nature: "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is another Romantic tale of man's struggle to understand the relationship between nature and man. As a class, read Coleridge's poem and ask students to consider the following questions and to keep these ideas in mind when they read *Frankenstein*.

1. What is the symbolism of the ice? of the "albatross?"
2. Why does the mariner slay the albatross and what happens as a result?
3. What is the role of the crew in the story?
4. What "saves" the mariner? How does he react to the natural world?
5. Why must the mariner tell his story?

2. Sublime in Nature: "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"

Like *Frankenstein*, William Wordsworth's "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" examines man's relationship to Nature. Ask students to read Wordsworth's poem and to discuss the following questions about the impact of nature on the poet. Jot down these ideas on a class chart so students can make connections as they read the novel.

1. How does the poet feel when he revisits the banks of the Wye?
2. What gifts does he receive from Nature?
3. What does the poet mean by the use of the word sublime?
4. How does Nature serve the poet?

DURING READING ACTIVITIES

These activities encourage students to utilize research-based comprehension strategies such as predicting, connecting, summarizing, and determining main ideas while reading *Frankenstein*. Whether the novel is read aloud in class or silently at home, teachers can choose appropriate assignments from the ideas below.

I. ANALYZING THROUGH GROUP RESPONSE

CLASS BLOG

Students can use their post-it note questions, connections, and inferences as the basis for an online blog. Using an online teaching assistant such as Blackboard or Moodle, or using your teacher website, create a discussion board for student responses outside of class. Post two or three open-ended questions designed to elicit a broad range of answers with the capacity for complex and controversial responses. Give students a deadline to respond, and ask them to discuss not only the initial topic, but their classmates' responses as well. Some teachers consider blogs an extension of traditional class discussions, and therefore expect the use of academic language. Discuss in class your expectations concerning academic versus "texting" type language.

ELECTRONIC CHAT ROOM

The difference in blogs and online chats is that blogs are composed over a period of days, whereas chats occur in "real time," while the teacher is present and monitoring. In a computer lab or lap-top classroom, students read and respond to each other's posts in silence. Due to this real-time atmosphere, many teachers allow "IM" or "texting" type language for online chats.

For both blogs and chats, the use of alias screen names encourages traditionally reticent students to respond without fear of appearing foolish or hurting classmates' feelings. Because online postings allow multiple responses simultaneously, questions that normally receive five or six verbal responses in the classroom elicit hundreds of responses online. The teacher's job is to insure posts are on-task, appropriate, and analytical. Assessments can be completed later when the teacher pulls up the discussion as a whole. You may wish to extend the blog or chat discussion in class.

Sample blog or chat prompts for *Frankenstein* include:

1. Who is the biggest victim in chapters 1-8? Victor? William? Justine? The creature? (You may choose another character). Explain your choice.
2. What connections are you making to other literature we have read in class? To the contemporary world? To your own experience? Explain how these connections inform your reading of the novel.
3. Why is Frankenstein's creature never given a name?

FOLDABLE DIALECTIC JOURNALS

Using one piece of notebook or typing paper (or two facing pieces from a sewn composition book), model for students how to fold paper into four columns. Label the columns in the following order from left to right.

1. "From the Text"
2. "From Me"
3. "From my Classmate"
4. "My New Thinking"

During an in-class reading of the novel, students record in the first column any significant

words, phrases, or sentences from the selection. Excerpts may be chosen because they align with a theme or style discussed in class or because they promote student questions, connections, or inferences. In the second column, students record their questions or explain their thinking. In the third column, classmates exchange journals and respond to or extend on each other's thoughts. Afterwards, students reflect on classmate input and record their new thinking.

CRIMINAL PROFILING

Students will be familiar with "Criminal Minds," the highly popular TV series that follows the adventures of an FBI profiling team from the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) from Quantico, Virginia. Unlike other crime shows, which focus on the crime, "Criminal Minds" focuses on the criminal.

Ask students to take on the role of a FBI profiler and analyze Frankenstein's creature based on the crimes he has committed thus far in the novel. Profiles may include answers to the following questions.

1. What does this character look like? How does he/she carry himself? How does he/she dress?
2. How does this character speak? Does he/she have any identifiable speech patterns?
3. Where was this character born? How was he/she raised?
4. Describe the time period in which this character lives. How do the times affect this character's thinking and actions?
5. What is this character's main motivation? Why?
6. Describe any redeeming qualities this character may have.
7. Analyze the character's personality flaws. From what do they stem? How do they affect the choices he/she makes?
8. Choose an object this character holds or would hold dear. Explain the connection.
9. Does this character have any secrets? If so, explain.
10. Who would be this character's contemporary counterpart? Explain your choice.

To extend the assignment, students might compare the profile of the creature to a notorious criminal mind such as Jack the Ripper, John Dillinger, Bonnie and Clyde, or Son of Sam.

CRIME-SCENE DIAGRAMS

Another activity that will appeal to students is the crime scene diagram. In order to review the novel's complex plot as well as to connect to visual learners, assign students the task of creating a diagram, either by hand or on the computer, of any of *Frankenstein's* murder scenes. Diagrams should make clear the who, what, and where of the crime, including "X marks the spot."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discussion questions encourage students to deepen their individual analysis of the novel by sharing their reactions with classmates. Students generally feel more comfortable

sharing their ideas with a small group of peers first. When group discussions are complete, student spokespersons can discuss their findings with the class as a whole.

Discussion questions on *Frankenstein* ask students to analyze the author's purpose, themes, social commentary, and literary techniques. Below are some thought-provoking questions based on the text.

Letters

1. Is Walton a reliable narrator? Why or why not?
2. Is Walton's goal to "confer on all mankind . . . a passage near the pole" noble or overly ambitious?
3. How does Robert's desire for a friend affect his relationship with Dr. Frankenstein? How might this relationship affect the reader's trust in Walton as a reliable narrator?

Chapters 1-2

1. How does Victor's statement that "the world was to me a secret which I desired to divine" serve as characterization?
2. How do Henry and Victor differ? Why might Shelley be setting them up as character foils?
3. What is Shelley's intent when she has Victor characterize Elizabeth as "the saintly soul (who) shone like a shrine-dedicated lamp in our peaceful home?" What role does this characterization set for Elizabeth?
4. Is Victor's fascination with the Philosopher's Stone an admirable one?

Chapters 3-5

1. Victor's obsession with natural science results in two years passing with no visits home. How would you evaluate his character at this point?
2. Describe the shift in tone when Victor says, "Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier the man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow."
3. During his summer experiment, Victor admits "his eyes were insensible to the charms of nature." What role might nature (or the lack of it) play for Victor?
4. What message might Victor be missing when he dreams that his kiss turns Elizabeth into a corpse?

Chapters 6-10

1. Who is at fault for William's death? Is anyone other than the murderer responsible for what happened?
2. How might Justine's trial have differed in today's court system?
3. How does Victor's guilt affect his health? What is Shelley's purpose in this recurring plot device?

4. How is Victor's reaction toward the Valley of Chamounix a departure from his previous views of nature?

Chapters 11-16

1. What imagery does Shelley employ when the character describes his "awakening?" What does his reaction remind you of?
2. How does the change in narration to the creature's point of view affect the reading of the novel? Do you feel sympathy for the creature when he is rejected by humanity?
3. What crucial role in the creature's development is played by the DeLacey family?
4. What is the motivation behind the creature's vow of "eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind?"

Chapters 17-24

1. Is the creature's demand for a female companion a valid request? Examine the pros and cons of Victor's compliance. Consider evidence provided by both Victor and the creature.
2. To what famous Romantic symbol is Shelley alluding when she has Victor think, "Could I enter into a festival with this deadly weight yet hanging round my neck and bowing me to the ground?"
3. What is Victor's greatest fear as he leaves for England? Describe the irony in his decision to continue.
4. What evidence suggests Victor feels responsibility for the murders? What evidence illustrates that he still blames the creature?
5. How is Victor's view of the Scottish Orkneys a reflection of his emotional state?
6. After watching his female companion torn to bits, the creature makes an eloquent defense and vows Victor will "repent of the injuries (he) inflicts." Is the creature justified in his feelings? Why or why not? What is Shelley's purpose in his defense?
7. After hearing of Clerval's murder, Victor falls ill once again. In agony, he wonders, "Why did I not die?" What would your answer be? Is there a reason for his continued anguish?
8. For Victor and his father, what purpose would a quick marriage to Elizabeth serve? Discuss the impact on Elizabeth. What role does she continue to play? Does her death alter or perpetuate that role?
9. Discuss the irony in Victor's statement to the magistrate: "Man, how ignorant art thou in thy pride of wisdom!"
10. What is the motivation behind Victor's vow to find and destroy his creature? Has he learned any lessons?

Letters

1. What is the purpose of Shelley's irony when Walton recognizes he has found the friend he is looking for only to watch him die?
2. When Walton listens to his men and turns his ship homeward rather than risk their lives, is he accurate in his statement that he has "lost (his) hopes for glory?" Explain.

3. Why does the creature choose to die at the end of the novel? What does his choice suggest about his connection to Frankenstein?

II. ANALYZING THROUGH INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE

POST-IT NOTE QUESTIONS

Student-created questions that lead to interpretation and analysis are much more effective comprehension tools than the traditional end of chapter questions provided by teachers or textbooks. Discuss with the class the different levels of questions and how broader questions lead to interpretation and analysis. Ask students to pose one or two questions per chapter and to jot questions down on post-it notes, one per note. Post-its are affixed to the page of text they reference. In class, students can categorize these questions on the board or on a concept chart, and discuss possible answers with their peers.

To help students make personal, literary, and cultural connections to Shelley's novel, ask them to record on post-it notes any connections they see as they read *Frankenstein*. To emphasize the idea that connections should "count," remind students to think about how these observations help them better understand the text, and to discard the post-its that do not aid in comprehension. At the end of an assigned section, students can collaborate and categorize their connections, and stick their post-its on labeled posters throughout the room, allowing the class to view each other's ideas.

CHARACTER-FOIL DOUBLE-BUBBLE MAPS

Robert Marzano's first essential teaching strategy is the study of similarities and differences. In *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein serves as a foil to almost every other character in the novel. To help students compare and contrast Victor with the creature or with any of the novel's secondary characters, ask students to label one bubble "Victor," and the other with another character. In the bubbles shared by the foils, students record similarities, such as "obsessive desire towards goal." In the bubbles specific to each of the characters, students record parallel differences, such as "has nothing to lose" and "will lose friends and family." After students fill in their double-bubble maps, they might turn and share with a classmate or the class, adding to their maps as the discussion ensues. Possible character foils include the following.

1. Victor Frankenstein and Robert Walton
2. Frankenstein and the Creature
3. Victor and Elizabeth Lavenza
4. Victor and Henry Clerval

Double-Bubble Maps are also effective for comparing *Frankenstein* to another print or non-print text. Other possible maps include the following:

1. The Creature and Adam from *Genesis*
2. The Creature and Satan from *Paradise Lost*
3. Robert Walton and "The Ancient Mariner"
4. The Creature and Shrek
5. The Creature and Beast (from *Beauty and the Beast*)

MULTI-FLOW MAP

The act of creating his monster causes a myriad of effects for Victor Frankenstein as well as the other characters in the novel. Ask students to choose a character such as the creature, Justine, Elizabeth, Henry, or even Victor himself, and "map" the effects of Victor's action. In the middle box of the multi-flow, ask students to write the event, "Victor creates the monster." In boxes to the left, students identify the causes of this act and connect to the middle box with arrows. In the boxes to the right, students identify the effects of the act and connect them to the middle box with arrows. The multi-flow map activity is a study in character motivation. Students might write the following in their boxes.

Action

- Victor Creates the Monster.

Causes

- Victor isolates himself in his studies.
- Victor is obsessed with the Philosopher's Stone.
- Victor's ambition overrules his sense of ethics.

Effects (on Victor)

- Victor's isolation increases as he pursues the creature.
- Victor loses his brother, wife, and best friend.
- Victor loses his life.

EPISTOLARY WRITING

Because *Frankenstein* is an epistolary novel, give students practice in letter writing for the purpose of delineating character. Students can choose a character in the novel and explain his/her motivation, actions, or feelings to a specific audience. For instance, the creature can write a letter to Victor Frankenstein, explaining how his upbringing (or lack of it) has defined his character. Or Justine can write a letter to the jury, explaining her innocence. The class can combine these letters to create their own epistolary novel, either on the class website or in hard-copy.

JOURNAL WRITE: ROMANTICISM VERSES GOTHICISM

Assign two sections of text from *Frankenstein*, such as Henry's awestruck reaction to the Alps in chapter 18 and Victor's disgust at the Scottish Orkneys in chapter 19. Another pairing is the lightning storm in chapter 7 and the Arveiron Valley description in chapter 10. Ask students to respond in their journals: Which selection demonstrates the ideals of Romanticism? Which is more Gothic in nature? Is there any overlap? Explain your answer.

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

These activities encourage students to deepen their interpretation of *Frankenstein* by helping them make connections between themes and issues in the novel, in other works, and in the outside world.

I. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND ESSAYS

Now that students have read the entire novel, they can return to the text for a deeper understanding of its significant themes. The following topics and questions can be used for whole class and small group discussion or as essay topics.

1. The horror story is just as popular today as it was in Shelley's early nineteenth century England. What is the appeal of this genre? Discuss elements from *Frankenstein* that parallel characteristics of modern horror tales such as Stephen King's, or contemporary films such as *Nightmare on Elm Street*. What are the effects of these elements on the audience, and how might that explain our fascination?
2. Dr. Frankenstein finds himself unable to "mother" the being he creates. Why does Shelley characterize Victor in this way? What does this choice say about the role of women during Shelley's era? Discuss the significance of parent-child relationships and birth references throughout the novel.
3. Dreams and nightmares play a recurrent role throughout Shelley's novel. Trace the use of dreams throughout the book, with emphasis on how they relate to changes in Victor's character.
4. Why are there so many references to sickness and fever in *Frankenstein*? Trace these references throughout the novel. What broader theme might Shelley be expressing?
5. Re-visit some of your pre-reading activities, such as the journal entry on the "Philosopher's Stone" and the anticipation guide on parenting. Now that you have completed *Frankenstein*, have your views changed? Why or why not?
6. Ice is a prevalent image and an integral plot device in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. How is it appropriate that the novel ends in ice? What is the symbolism of ice for the characters and the story?
7. In his afterword in the Signet Classics edition of *Frankenstein*, Harold Bloom asserts that "all Romantic horrors are diseases of excessive consciousness, of the self unable to bear the self." Does this Romantic characteristic apply to Victor and his treatment of the creature? Explain. Consider the fact that Victor never gives the creature a name.
8. Place Frankenstein's creature in modern times. Suppose he had a family that raises him, includes him, and even enrolls him in school. How might today's society treat Victor's creature differently? How would it mimic the time period of the novel?
9. Consider the character of Justine Moritz. While her story only takes two chapters of Shelley's novel, her role as a secondary character is significant. What is Shelley's purpose in telling Justine's story? What truths about her time is Shelley revealing?
10. The patriarchal society of *Frankenstein* is one in which men pursue their goals against hopeless odds. In light of this work ethic, is Robert Walton a failure when

he turns his ship around at the end of the novel? How would Victor Frankenstein answer this question? What would Mary Shelley say? What do you think?

II. GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

DIGITAL BOOK REVIEW

Students are accustomed to reading movie, television, and book reviews online and in print publications. For a current and relevant connection, find a review of a new television show or movie. Print publications such as *Entertainment Weekly* or online sites such as http://www.pluggedinonline.com/tv/ will be helpful sources. Ask students to take the role of critic and review Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Topics might include plot, characterization, style, and significance. Students should support all input with quotations and references from the text. In this way, critiques are based on valid examination of the novel, not merely personal preference. This assignment provides practice writing to specific audiences and for specific purposes. In this case, students act as critics writing to potential readers of *Frankenstein*. Writers can share their critiques with the rest of the class or school community via podcast, including a sample reading from the text. Instructions on creating podcasts can be found in the pre-reading section of this guide.

ANIMOTO

Students can create a multi-media presentation using the newly popular Animoto.com. The program is a quick, user-friendly website where students choose music and images from the Internet to illustrate their comprehension of character or theme. The result is a digital story told by music, art, and minimal text, such as quotations from the novel. After teacher-led discussion about how music and visuals can portray certain tones or themes, students simply choose the pieces, and Animoto puts them together in a professional-looking presentation. Students can post the presentations on the class website, where the clips can be viewed either collectively or at home. To extend the assignment, students can critique each other's work. Sample presentations and registration instructions can be found at the following website: http://animoto.com/

WORD-CLOUDS

Using words from the text, from their own brainstorming, or a combination of both, students can create digital "word-clouds" that emphasize characterization and theme through language, font, color, and size. Students choose which words should receive greater emphasis and which colors and font demonstrate personality, tone, and theme. For instance, a word-cloud on Elizabeth Lavenza might be in blue and silver, with text support such as "a pretty present," "celestial," "heaven-sent," and "mine until death" in larger font. Student-chosen words might include "subservient," "victim," and "passive." Using "wordle.net," students indicate their preferences and Wordle does the rest. The colorful charts can be printed off and serve as concept maps on the classroom walls. Or, students can post them on the class website or directly on Wordle for the purposes of discussion and critique. The Wordle website address appears below.

http://www.wordle.net/

MUSICAL MEMOIR

Ask students to choose a character from *Frankenstein*, either a major one like Victor or the Creature, or a minor character such as Elizabeth, Henry, or Justine. Next, students should research and select songs with titles and lyrics that reflect this character's inner and outer conflicts, motivations, and actions. The goal is to create a character "memoir," which can take the form of a CD insert, a digital photo story, or an essay. Memoirs should include titles, lyrics, and explanations that justify the choice of selections and connect them to the *Frankenstein* character. It will be useful to discuss with students how memoirs differ from autobiographies in that the recollections of the character may be altered by emotion and experience. The result is a study in Mary Shelley's characterization.

GALLERY WALK

In this cooperative learning activity, divide students into groups of four or five. Assign each group one of the major themes that have been addressed throughout the reading of *Frankenstein*, such as science verses humanity, ambition, birth and parenting, and the role of women. In front of large sheets of paper posted around the room, groups meet at their base poster, which is the paper pre-labeled with the name of a theme. Students brainstorm and write down all textual evidence and commentary they can think of to support the role of their theme in the play. When the teacher says, "continue your walk," students move to the next base and read what the previous groups have written before adding their own commentary. The gallery walk continues until the groups have seen and contributed to all posters and return to their original place.

BOOK JACKETS

In this activity, groups create and portray a living book cover for an illustrated edition of the novel. In picking a quotation from the book and in portraying an illustration that depicts the quotation's meaning, students take on the role of the bookseller or publishing house, who must decide how best to get across the point of the play to an audience who has not yet read it. Ask groups to follow this process:

1. Pick one quotation from the novel that is particularly significant, one that seems to speak to one of the author's major themes or intents, one that would make good sense on the cover of the novel.
2. Write out the quotation on a long, narrow piece of paper, in large enough print to be seen from the back of the classroom.
3. Decide how to portray the quotation in a frozen tableau. Rather than presenting a scene from the book, create a picture that illustrates the quotation. For instance, the struggle between Victor's role as a scientist and his duty to his family might be portrayed as a tug of war. This activity requires you to illustrate comprehension and synthesis by turning your understanding into performance art.
4. In front of the class, arrange yourselves into a frozen tableau, and either hold or post your quotation so that it is part of the "book cover." Hold the scene for thirty seconds, so that the rest of the class can read and appreciate your "illustrated classic."

CLOSING ARGUMENTS SPEECHES

In this activity, students take the role of attorneys presenting their "closing arguments" at the end of a criminal trial. In this case either Victor Frankenstein or his creature is on trial. The crime can be varied: playing God, blind ambition, desertion, cruelty, or murder. Ask students to choose whether to defend or prosecute the character. To prepare their case, they list all the possible arguments from both sides. For example, if they plan to defend Victor Frankenstein, they list not only all the arguments they plan to use but also as many arguments as they can think of that will be used by the prosecution. Then, they'll list possible responses to the opposition's points. In this way, students not only consider both points of view but also illustrate their skills in persuasive writing and speaking. Students should be encouraged to use their own opinion but should also be required to cite the novel whenever possible to encourage close reading. Prior to preparing their arguments, students might watch a closing argument on video, such as the scene at the end of John Grisham's *A Time to Kill.* Such a model provides ideas for rhetorical strategies such as repetition, storytelling, and gestures. Students present arguments orally to the class.

III. COMPARISONS AND CONNECTIONS

WEIGHTY DECISIONS

In 1917, Sir Ernest Shackleton, in a historic quest to cross the Antarctic continent at the North Pole, found himself and his crew surrounded by ice for nine months. When it became evident the ice would sink the ship and take the lives of his crew, Shackleton made a series of decisions that saved every single man on board. His heroic actions eventually led Sir Shackleton, after death, to become a 21st century icon in Leadership Training. One of his decisions involved what to take from the sinking ship in order to survive. Students can practice quick thinking and priority making by rating the significance of the ship's cargo. Questions to consider after the activity include:

1. What were the principles and guiding questions that drove your group's decisions?
2. Which items were most difficult to agree on?
3. How did your group resolve any differences of opinion?

After the activity, students can review Shackleton's actual choices and his justifications. Additional questions include:

1. Compare Shackleton's actions to Robert Walton's at the end of *Frankenstein*. How are these men "heroes?" How would the patriarchal society of Mary Shelley's era view them?
2. Shackleton's ship was named *Endurance*. Discuss the significance of this term, for Shackleton, for Robert Walton, and for Victor Frankenstein.

The activity and Shackleton's choices are found on NOVA Online, linked below.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/activities/pdf/2906_shacklet_01.pdf

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/activities/2906_shacklet.html

FILM FESTIVAL

Since the age of motion pictures began, the story of *Frankenstein* has fascinated movie producers and audiences alike. The focus of the tale has altered dramatically, though, from Shelley's original work. In almost all movie remakes of the tale, emphasis has shifted away from Victor's inner turmoil and towards the creature's violent crimes. The result, of course, is pure fear of the creature, versus fear mixed with sympathy and even self-recognition. In fact, the shift from creator to creation has been so successful that the creature himself is often mistakenly called "Frankenstein." After watching an excerpt or the entirety of one or more of the following films based on Shelley's work, students write a film critique discussing one or more of the cinematic choices of plot, casting, characterization, special effects, and theme development. If appropriate, critiques should include comparative discussion on watching the film versus reading the novel and the effectiveness of those differences. Ask students:

1. Shelley's novel has been set in modern times on film. Describe the setting and plot of this video production. Where and when does it take place? Do the setting and plot seem authentic? Why or why not? What specific direction and production choices add to the atmosphere? Discuss costuming and prop choices.
2. Discuss the use of special effects. Consider lighting, music, and sound. How do these elements add to your understanding of the novel? What differences exist between the film's interpretation and your own while reading? Do these differences add to or change your analysis of Shelley's work? Explain.
3. Discuss the production's casting. Do the actors provide effective portrayals of Shelley's characters? Why were these actors cast? Consider the time period in which the film was produced.
4. What were the strengths of this film production? Use specific evidence from the film. Were there any weaknesses? If so, discuss specific issues.
5. What elements, if any, have the film makers kept the same as in Shelley's tale? Why have they chosen these elements? Alternately, are there important elements of the novel left out of the film? How might these changes affect the audience? Are elements of humor included in the film? How does it affect the viewer?
6. What is your overall impression of this film? Would your impression be different had you not read the novel first? Explain.

Frankenstein. Dir. James Whale. Universal Pictures: 1931.
Young Frankenstein. Dir. Mel Brooks. Gruskoff/Venture Films: 1974.
Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Dir. Kenneth Branagh. American Zoetrope: 1994.
Frankenstein. Dir. Kevin Conner. Hallmark Entertainment: 2004.

THE NATURE OF HEROES

When Robert Walton describes Victor Frankenstein, he claims, "What a glorious creature must he have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin! He seems to feel his own worth and the greatness of his fall." In doing so, Walton depicts Frankenstein as a classic tragic hero. Ask students to read one short story or poem (such as "Ulysses"), one play or novel (such as *Dr. Faustus*), and watch one film (such as

The Natural) that depicts the role of ambition in a hero's demise or redemption. Students can make a comparison chart depicting the similarities and differences between the main character and Victor Frankenstein.

Students should also consider the following questions as they read/view:

1. What character traits, dramatic elements, or plot events depict the protagonist as being ambitious?
2. Does this character illustrate a moral or social code of behavior? If so, describe it.
3. What is the character's greatest desire?
4. What ultimate price is the protagonist willing to pay to reach his/her objective?
5. Detail the outcome of the protagonist's struggle with ambition.
6. Does the protagonist regret his/her decision? How do you know?
7. Is the protagonist ultimately redeemed or condemned for his/her choices?

EXTENDED READING

The following titles focus on themes of ambition, scientific ethics, doppelgangers, gender roles, and genre and are excellent for both independent reading or literature circles where each group of students reads a different work on the same theme. Ask students for their own additions to the list.

PROMETHEAN AMBITION

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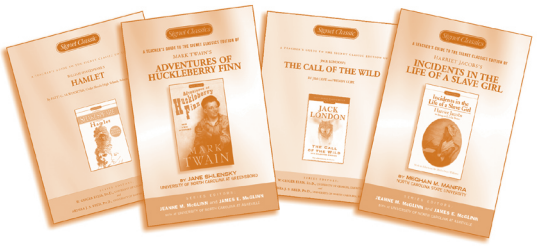

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