

# Into the Darkness

## A STUDY OF GOTHIC FICTION

Prepared for NCEA LEVEL 2  
by Miss Macdonald

### CONTEXT

"Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder and awe, the more often and the more seriously reflection concentrates upon them: the starry heaven above me and the moral law within me."- Immanuel Kant

I have always been fascinated with what makes us want to turn the page of a novel. What really draws us in and captures our attention. What makes us want to know more than we did before. The wise words of Albus Dumbledore must be noted here, "Curiosity is not a sin...but we should exercise caution with our curiosity...". You could argue that the fatal flaw of many characters in literature that meet a less than pleasant ending is that they are unable to check their curiosity.

They cannot help but go down into the basement when they hear the creaking below. Gothic fiction embodies curiosity and its consequences. Originating in a time referred to as "The Age of Enlightenment", when people began to realise science could offer an alternative explanation to religion, gothic fiction explores the boundary between moral obligations and the need to experience understanding.

It does so in a unique style and it is this style that students can expect to gain understanding in.

The elements that make up a work of gothic fiction, the language used to express these elements and the individual approach to the genre that every different author takes, are all areas that this course will focus on. Gothic fiction embodies the dark, the supernatural and the flawed. As we take a journey into this genre, I hope to find some answers to the age old question:

why can we not leave that creaking basement door alone?



## **COURSE RATIONALE**

The Level 2 English course at Mount Aspiring College is, for many students, a culmination of over a decade of learning in the areas of language and communication. By this stage, the students will be very sophisticated in their approach to the use of English, and the Level Two NCEA courses are designed to enable them to further develop their critical thinking faculties and to begin to find their own voice.

As ten Level Two NCEA credits in Reading and Writing are a prerequisite for University Entrance, there is a continued emphasis on consolidating the students' skills in the mechanics of the language (accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar are essential components of a number of the Level 2 Achievement standards). As well as this, we aim to develop the students' ability to express themselves, their personal responses to texts, and ideas with fluency and persuasiveness.

Each teacher selects novels, plays, stories, poetry, films and other primary material both to suit the interests and needs of the students in their classes, and about which they are personally passionate. We strive to challenge, motivate and inspire our students by exposing them to literature that is original, relevant and of a high standard.

## **PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF WORK**

All NCEA assessments must be completed in their entirety, including early drafts, on your English Department blog. Where appropriate your teacher may give feedback in the comment section below your piece as you are developing it. This feedback will be of a holistic nature, rather than addressing specific components, as each assessment requires student ownership. You may also use this commenting function to seek feedback or ask clarifying questions.

When submitting your work you need to follow the guidelines below:

1. Ensure the completed piece is published on your blog headed with the Assessment Title and NCEA Achievement standard number
2. The blogging system will record the time and date of the final edit.
3. Any editing of your work subsequent to the final submission date and time will render the submission invalid.



## **ASSESSMENT AND REASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

During assessment teachers can validly make suggestions about areas where further development is needed (this is acceptable in the 'hands on' phase, which is usually the first 4 periods of an 8 period assessment phase), but constructive feedback should not compromise the authenticity of students' work. All submitted material must be your work alone.

In the final phases of the assessment ('hands off' phase), it is the student's responsibility independently to polish their work to a publication standard.

All written assessments should be completed under supervision and during class time unless specifically approved by application to the Head of Learning Area.

The Achievement Standards offered in this course may be re-submitted under very specific circumstances, and only at the discretion of the Head of Learning Area. However, if a student does not achieve in their first attempt, then a reassessment opportunity may be offered to students. This opportunity will only be offered to students who have shown a reasonable initial effort and who can demonstrate that further learning has occurred since the initial assessment opportunity.

All reassessments are composed of an entirely different assessment task. These will be completed during a time that is organised by the department.

The English department retains the right to set final dates for submissions and these will be clearly stated by your classroom teacher and published on your class blog.

## **LATE WORK**

Work submitted late for the internal assessment Standards will not be marked. You may have the opportunity to gain the credits through reassessment, if available. If you have a genuine reason why you are unable to submit work by the due date, then you are able to apply for an extension. However, this should occur prior to the due date, not after it. Absence from school due to sickness is not normally regarded as an acceptable reason for the non-submission of assessed work. Alternative arrangements, electronic or otherwise should be made in this event.



## WHAT'S BEING ASSESSED?

Standard	Title		Credits
91098 (2.1)	Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence. <i>UE Reading</i>	External	4
91100 (2.3)	Analyse significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence. <i>UE Reading</i>	External	4
91101 (2.4)	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing. <i>UE Writing</i>	Internal	6
91102 (2.5)	Construct and deliver a crafted and controlled oral text.	Internal	3
91106 (2.9)	Form developed personal responses to independently read texts, supported by evidence.	Internal	4
Total credit value			21



## YEAR OUTLINE

Below is a general outline of the plan for this year. Please be aware that plans can change according to the needs of the class, so use this as a guideline only.

Term One		
Week 1-3	Short story study <i>The Tell Tale Heart</i> .	No Formal Assessment Opportunities
Week 4-5	Inquiry into gothic time period and influences.	No Formal Assessment Opportunities
Week 6-11	Literature study on <i>Frankenstein</i> . Novel to be read in class. Mixture of in and out of class activities.	No Formal Assessment Opportunities
<p>This term is all about laying the foundations of our course and understanding the term “gothic fiction”. There will be a large focus on the stylistic elements of gothic fiction as well as the language used to develop these elements. Students can expect to be reading independently during this term for their 2.9 assessment.</p>		
Term 2		
Week 1	Formal writing workshops.	No Formal Assessment Opportunities
Week 2-3	Writing Portfolio Task 1	Formal Assessment: NCEA 2.4. Students will complete their first task for their writing portfolio. There are several opportunities for students to produce work for this assessment.  6 Credits
Week 4-9	Visual Language study. Exploration of “The Modern Gothic” via a selection of Tim Burton films.	Formal Assessment: NCEA 2.4. Students will complete their second task for their writing portfolio. There are several opportunities for students to produce work for this



		assessment.  6 Credits
Week 10	Short text study- TBC. Emphasis on close reading and understanding of the effects of language.	No Formal Assessment Opportunities
<p>This term has a writing focus. Students will build on the writing skills from Level 1 and begin to put together their writing portfolio for the year. The term also will begin to explore the relationship between Tim Burton and gothic fiction. They will develop skills around understanding visual language and take a “creators as manipulators” approach to their viewing. Students can expect to be reading independently during this term for their 2.9 assessment.</p>		
<b>Term 3</b>		
Week 1-2	Speaking and presenting tasks. Introduction to the speaking assessment and drafting of speeches.	No Formal Assessment Opportunities
Week 3-6	Creative writing unit and writing portfolio task 3.	Formal Assessment: NCEA 2.4. Students will complete their third task for their writing portfolio. There are several opportunities for students to produce work for this assessment.  6 Credits
Week 7	School Exam Preparation	No Formal Assessment Opportunities
Week 8-9	School Examination Week	<u>Practice Assessment:</u> Students will sit two papers at the end of the year. In this 3 hour exam, they will rehearse the strategies

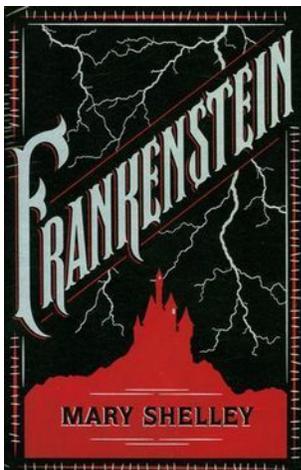


		and protocols for the external examination. 2.1- An essay on our written text. 2.3- Understanding unfamiliar texts.
Week 9-10	Speech presentations to the class.	Formal Assessment: 2.5 Construct and deliver a crafted and controlled oral text.  3 Credits
<p>This term students will unleash their creativity. The program for term 3 allows students to explore ideas, issues and elements of the gothic genre that interest them. They can express this through both the speech and the creative writing tasks. Students will also prepare for their NCEA external examinations by sitting the school exams. Students can expect to be reading independently during this term for their 2.9 assessment.</p>		
<b>Term 4</b>		
Week 1	Final submissions for Wide Reading are due.	Formal Assessment: 2.9- Form developed personal responses to independently read texts, supported by evidence.  4 Credits
Week 2 onwards	External Examination Preparation	No Formal Assessment Opportunities
Monday 19th November	NCEA Level 2 English Exam  Students will have 3 hours to complete the two papers assigned to this course. They are then marked by external markers and students will receive the results in January.	Formal Assessment:  2.1- Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence 4 Credits 2.3- Analyse significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence. 4 Credits



## CORE TEXTS

Throughout the year, we will be using a range of literature that falls into the gothic Fiction genre. We will be using a range of written and visual texts from a range of authors. The texts and authors listed below form the bulk of where we will direct our focus.



### **Frankenstein** by Mary Shelley

In January 1818, a woman barely out of her teens unleashed a terrifying tale on the world: the story of a doctor who builds a creature from scavenged body parts, then recoils in horror, spurns it, and...you will have to read the rest to find out the ending! There is a reason that Frankenstein has seen so many reincarnations over the 200 years since its publication- people are simply fascinated by the brilliant but flawed protagonist who's exploration of science comes back to bite him. The novel embodies and even establishes some of the key elements of a true gothic work.

### The work of **Tim Burton**

With more than 25 films to his name, Tim Burton can create "a world full of contradictions, both dark and light, frightening and welcoming, cruel and tender."

His unique and eccentric style has fascinated people for decades and that in itself is what gothic fiction is all about. We will be looking at a range of his films such as Edward Scissorhands, Sleepy Hollow and Sweeney Todd- The Barber of Fleet Street. There may be the chance to look at some of his animated work through the lens of the gothic genre. How fascinating would it be to explore Alice in Wonderland as a gothic film?



## Authenticity Statement

The English Department has an Authenticity Statement, which students are to sign when submitting an assessment. This signifies that the work is the student's own and safe-guards students from the dangers of plagiarism. A printable copy of this can be found on our class blog.



**MOUNT  
ASPIRING  
COLLEGE**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

**ASSESSMENT AUTHENTICITY  
STATEMENT**

### Instructions

This Authenticity Statement is to be confirmed and signed, by all students and their teacher, when submitting an English internal assessment

**Name of School: MOUNT ASPIRING COLLEGE, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

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

Year Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Student:

- I understand that all the work I submit for assessment must be my own.
- I have read and understand the School's assessment requirements and the consequences of submitting material for assessment that is not my own.
- I understand that I must not receive undue assistance or the unauthorised help of others in the preparation of my assessment work.
- I understand that I must acknowledge in an appropriate manner all information and sources of assistance used in my assessment work.
- I will not allow other students to access or copy any of my assessment work.

### Student Declaration:

I hereby declare that I have read the above statement and that all the material I submit for assessment is entirely my own and meets all of the School's assessment requirements.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

