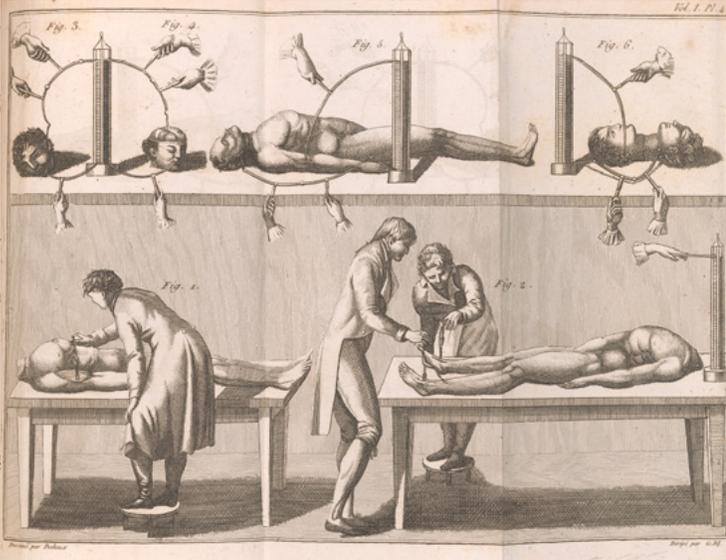


# It's Alive! Frankenstein at 200

Online Teacher Curriculum



one in the morning, the rain pattered  
downwards against the window panes &  
my candle was nearly burnt out, when  
by the glimmer of the lamp extinguish-  
ed light I saw the dull yellow eye of  
the creature open. It breathed hard,  
and a convulsive motion agitated  
its limbs.  
But how soon I overcame my  
emotion at this catastrophe, or how deli-  
cate the wretched storm with a suc-  
cessive pains and care, I had endeavoured  
to form. The limbs were in proportion  
and I had selected his features & as  
the darkness. "Great God! His  
skin then covered the work of  
muscles and arteries beneath his skin  
was flowing and his teeth of a pearly white  
but there luxuriantly only formed  
formed a more horrid contrast with  
his watery eyes that seemed almost  
the same colour as the





THIS PAGE: Boris Karloff and Marilyn Harris, *Frankenstein* (1931), 1931 Photograph, Core Collection Production Files, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC, © 1931 Universal Pictures Company, Inc. COVER, TOP: Roman Freulich, Elsa Lanchester and Boris Karloff in *The Bride of Frankenstein*, (1935), 1935, Photograph, Core Collection Production Files, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC, © 1935 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.; LEFT: Richard Rothwell (1800–1868), *Portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, painted 1831, exhibited 1840, oil on canvas, © National Portrait Gallery, London; CENTER: Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851), *Frankenstein: It was on a dreary night in November* 1816–1817, Pen on paper, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of

This curriculum is designed to complement the Morgan's exhibition ***It's Alive! Frankenstein at 200***.

These curriculum materials, recommended for grades 9-12, are provided to educators for use both during school visits to the Morgan, in the classroom, and are available after the exhibition closes. You may download PDFs of the entire section or search for a specific curriculum area.

Each resource section includes:

- Condensed catalogue essays
- Objects with discussion and activity prompts to facilitate open-ended exploration
- High quality images
- Vocabulary definitions
- A listing of supplemental resources that include books, films, a timeline and family tree, biographies, and additional online resources

For links to the Standards please see page 6 and the Supplementary pages.

***It's Alive! Frankenstein at 200* Online Curriculum is made possible through the generosity of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.**

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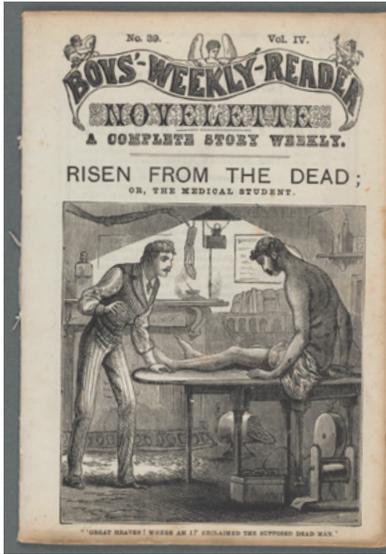
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## INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS



LEFT: Henry Fuseli (1741–1825), *The Nightmare*, 1781, oil on canvas, Detroit Institute of Arts, USAFounders Society Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Bert L. Smokler and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman/Bridgeman Images; CENTER: *Risen from the Dead; or, the medical student*, *Boys' weekly reader* novelette. Vol. IV, no 39 Pamphlet; The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations; RIGHT: *Carl Laemmle Presents Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster*, 1931, Lithograph poster, Stephen Fishler, comicconnect.com, Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC, © 1931 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.

Two hundred years after it was written by a teenager over the course of only ten months, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* continues to grip our imaginations. Through its transformation to stage and screen, it has reached the level of oral tradition and myth. The tale of a **creature** constructed from parts of corpses who then turns upon his creator prompts questions about the definition of humanity and monstrosity that are still relevant today.

The exhibition *It's Alive! Frankenstein at 200* at the Morgan Library & Museum investigates Mary Shelley's novel and its legacy. This curriculum follows the exhibition's narrative in four thematic sections. Section One begins by exploring the historical context from which the novel arose, starting with paintings and prints in the **Gothic** tradition. Next, the curriculum explores the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century science and medicine that Mary Shelley referenced when describing Victor Frankenstein's experiments.

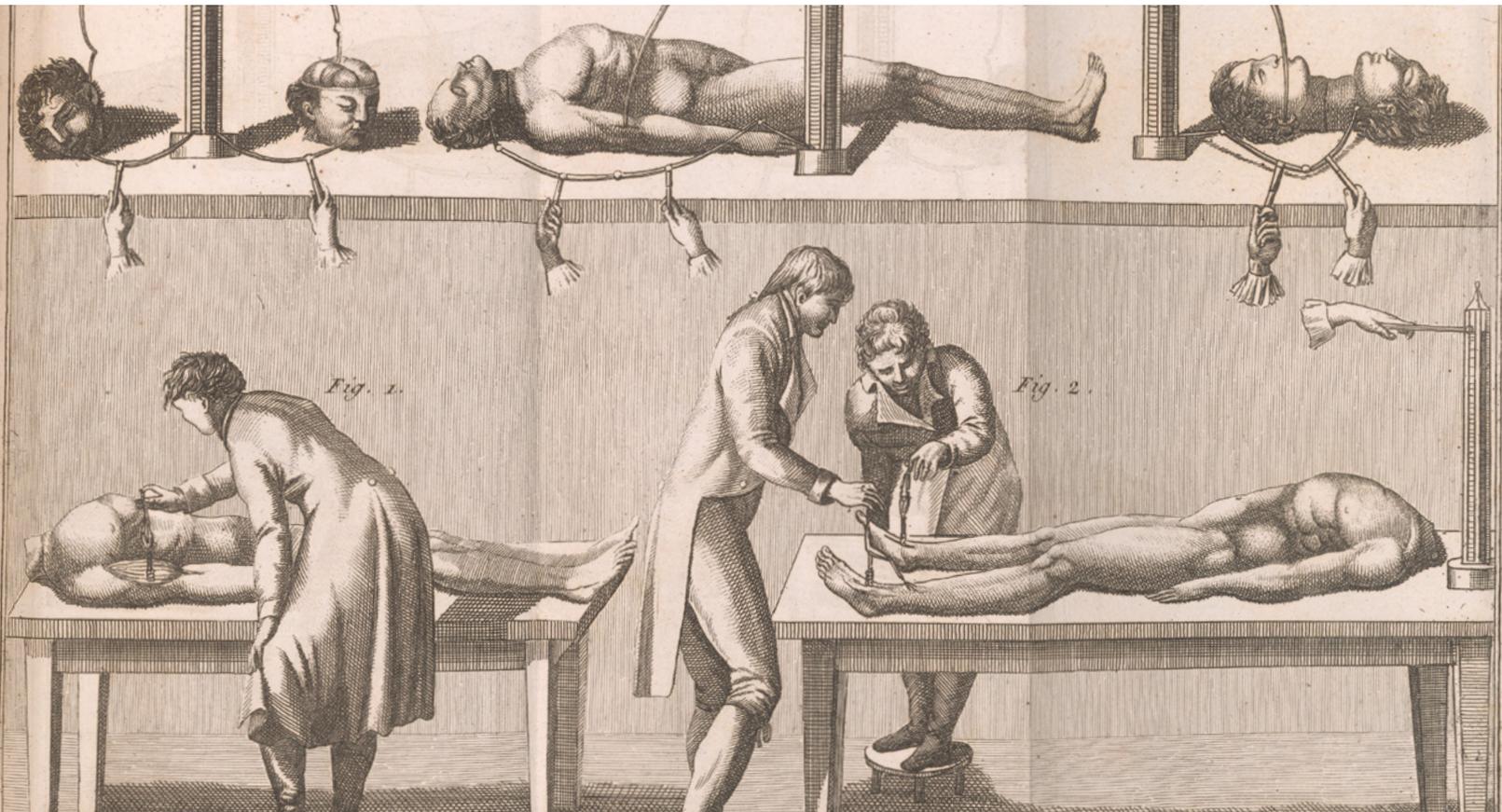
Section Two examines Mary Shelley's life, including her famous family and circle of friends, and the extraordinary circumstances that sparked the novel. Section Three will investigate the novel's composition and editing, including changes made to later editions and literary **allusions**.

Section Four explores the endless adaptations of the novel, beginning with early stage versions produced during Mary Shelley's lifetime. Film

*“We are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves—such a friend ought to be—do not lend his aid to perfectionate our weak and faulty natures.”*

—Victor Frankenstein<sup>1</sup>  
(pg. 30)

<sup>1</sup> Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1831). Penguin Books, 2007. p. 30. All subsequent references to this edition will be given as parenthetical citations. Please note that there are variations between the 1818 and 1831 versions of the text.



Benoît Pecheux (1779–1831), plate no. 4, etching and engraving, in Giovanni Aldini (1762–1834), *Essai théorique et expérimental sur le galvanisme, avec une série d'expériences faites en présence des commissaires de l'Institut national de France, et en divers amphithéâtres anatomiques de Londres*, Paris: De l'imprimerie de Fournier fils, 1804. The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased on the Gordon N. Ray Fund, 2016, The Morgan Library & Museum, PML 196238.

adaptations from different periods, especially James Whale's iconic 1931 *Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster* will be discussed alongside more contemporary variations.

This curriculum is designed to be flexible and can be connected to classroom content including English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, History, and Theater and Performing Arts. The novel *Frankenstein* covers a surprising diversity of topics including the Gothic and Romantic movements, scientific ethics, textual interpretation, morality, prejudice and intolerance, pop culture, and feminism. Teachers can adapt it to their individual classroom needs and to suit different age groups and concentrations.

Teachers can use this curriculum in combination with a visit to the exhibition, to enrich their teaching of the novel, or to inspire lesson plans, classroom discussions and activities in any of the many subject areas to which *Frankenstein* relates. It includes condensed versions of catalogue essays, selected objects and discussion prompts, and activity suggestions. In addition, there are supplementary reference materials such as high quality exhibition images, a family tree, a bibliography, a vocabulary list, and timelines.



Please reference the [Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards](#) here.

## **PLOT SYNOPSIS OF *FRANKENSTEIN; OR, THE MODERN PROMETHEUS***

*Frankenstein* was originally published anonymously in 1818 in three volumes. It was dedicated to Mary Shelley's father, William Godwin. In an introduction added to the third edition of the novel, published in 1831, Mary Shelley described the novel's origins. The poet Lord Byron proposed a ghost story writing contest as a way for a group of young writers to entertain themselves during the unusually cold, dark summer of 1816.

The novel is constructed as a nesting narrative comprised of letters and first-person accounts. The story begins with a series of letters from the polar explorer Robert Walton to his sister Margaret Saville. Robert writes of his desire to visit previously unexplored regions to better understand and master nature for the good of humanity, despite the risks to his crew.

When the ship runs into difficulties on the ice, Walton is surprised by the distant sight of a dogsled racing through the uninhabited landscape with what appears to be a giant driving the team. Later, a second sled appears with only one surviving dog and an exhausted man who introduces himself as Victor Frankenstein. Victor and Walton develop a rapport, although Victor expresses dismay at Walton's ambitions, asking, "Do you share my madness?" (29).

Upon asking this question, Victor Frankenstein begins his narrative. He explains the circumstances of his happy childhood in Geneva with his loving parents, adopted sister (and romantic interest) Elizabeth, and childhood friend Henry Clerval. As a young man Victor is an **autodidact** who teaches himself science, unaware that the scientific texts he studies are outdated. His idyllic youth comes to an end at the death of his mother from scarlet fever. During his college education, his professors scorn his love of **alchemy**, but he finds a sympathetic mentor in Professor Waldman. Victor becomes increasingly interested in chemistry and how death changes living flesh.

Victor thinks he now understands what causes the generation of life, and reasons he can use this knowledge to bestow animation on lifeless tissue, even potentially eradicating death itself. Victor decides to act on his theories and spends two years in an obsessive state experimenting. He decides that to make the process faster, he will need to create a larger being.

Victor successfully assembles a new creature from corpses. However, when his creation comes to life, he finds the result not "beautiful," as he had expected, but horrifying (58). Victor runs away from the Creature. (Because Victor declined to give his creation so much as a name, literary scholars conventionally call Victor Frankenstein's creation "the Creature.") Later that night, Victor dreams he holds Elizabeth in his arms, but when he kisses her, she transforms into the corpse of his mother. Awakening from the nightmare, Victor sees the Creature smiling over him, trying to talk and reaching out his hand to his creator. Victor flees his creation a second time. In the morning, Victor is found by Henry Clerval, who brings greetings from his family. Victor hysterically checks his bedroom for the Creature, but finding nothing, joins Henry with relief.

After a period of illness, Victor Frankenstein begins to slowly travel back to his family. He receives a letter from his father with horrifying news: his younger brother William has been found murdered, strangled, near their home. Another childhood friend, Justine Moritz, becomes a suspect in the crime because a valuable necklace with a portrait of Frankenstein's mother, last worn by William, was found on her person. As Victor walks closer to home and grapples with this news, he sees through the storm a distant figure, enormous in scale. Victor suspects that it is his creation and that it is somehow responsible for William's death.

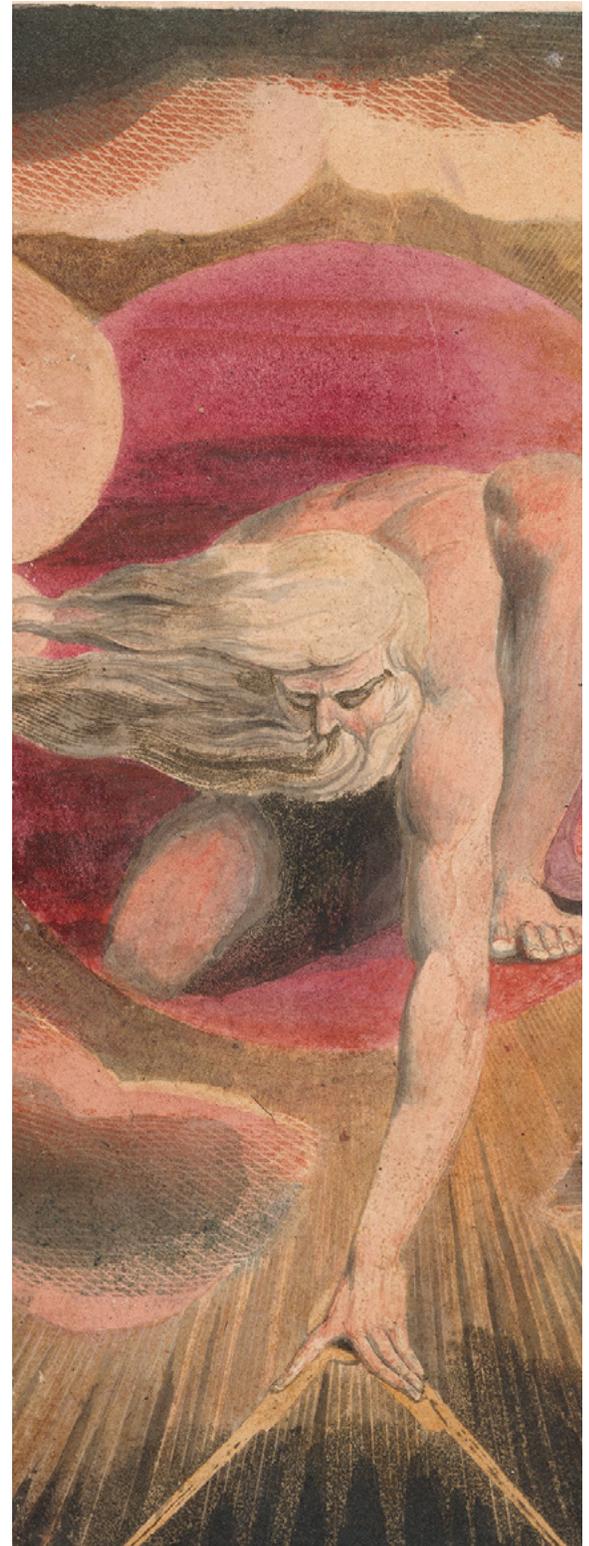
Justine is condemned to death for the murder, and Victor tries to comfort his family and himself. While seeking solitude in nature, Victor is approached by the Creature. Victor is enraged, but the Creature insists that he deserves an audience with his maker. "Do your duty towards me," the Creature demands, and Victor reluctantly agrees to listen as the Creature narrates his brief life (102).

After the night of his creation, the Creature was confused and took shelter in a forest. There he slowly learned how to feed and care for himself, discovering the usefulness of fire. The Creature entered a village, but was attacked by its inhabitants who were afraid of him. He took shelter near the home of impoverished cottagers, the de Lacey family. The Creature hid in an unused shed and watched the household: the senior de Lacey was blind and his adult son Felix and daughter Agatha cared for him. As he observed the family's conversations and habits, he came to learn that they were poor and persecuted for saving the life of a beautiful Arabian woman, Safie, who reciprocated Felix's love. When Safie finally arrived, the family began teaching her to read and write in English, and the Creature followed along and secretly shared in her education.

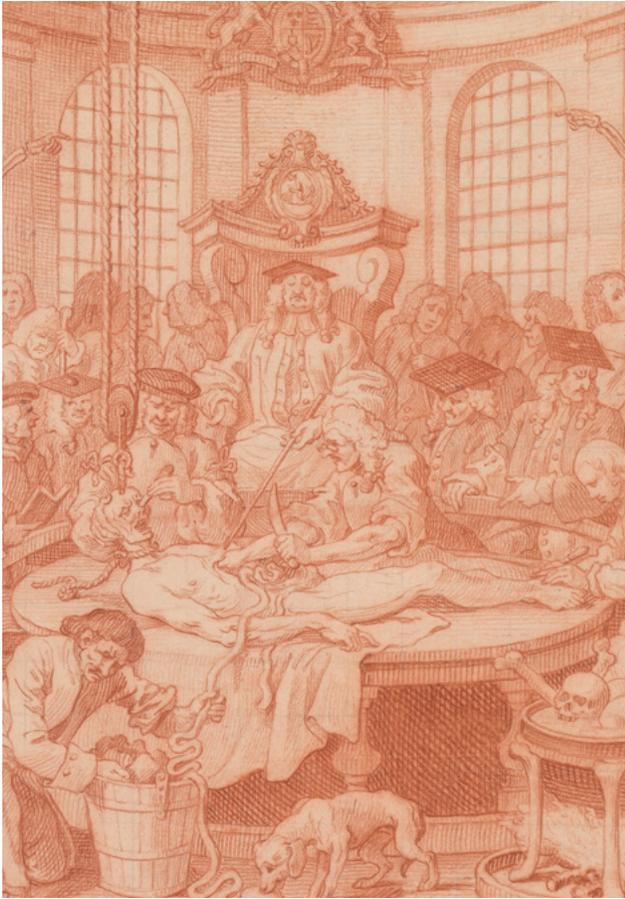
The Creature's education enabled him to interpret notes that Victor left behind and understand his origins. The Creature wanted to join the de Lacey family, but knowing his appearance would frighten them, approached the blind father first for protection. However, when the children saw their father with the Creature, they reacted violently and drove the Creature away. The de Laceys abandoned their home to escape the Creature, who then furiously burned it down. The Creature became increasingly distraught, and although he tried to make connections with people, such as by rescuing a girl from drowning, he was always violently rejected.

Finally, the Creature encountered a young boy, and hoped his innocence would make the child unafraid of him. The boy was William, who also refused the Creature, and when the Creature recognized William's relationship to Victor Frankenstein, he strangled him, later framing Justine for the murder. At the conclusion to his history, the Creature closes his narrative by asking Victor to make him a mate so they can live together in peace and seclusion.

Victor resumes his narrative, moved by his creation's plea. He accedes to the Creature's request for a companion and promises to make another creature, a woman this time. Later, however, he has doubts about her agreeing to a



William Blake (1757–1827), color relief etching frontispiece in *Europe, a Prophecy*, Lambeth: Printed by Will. Blake, 1794. The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Mrs. Landon K. Thorne, 1972, PML 77235.1.



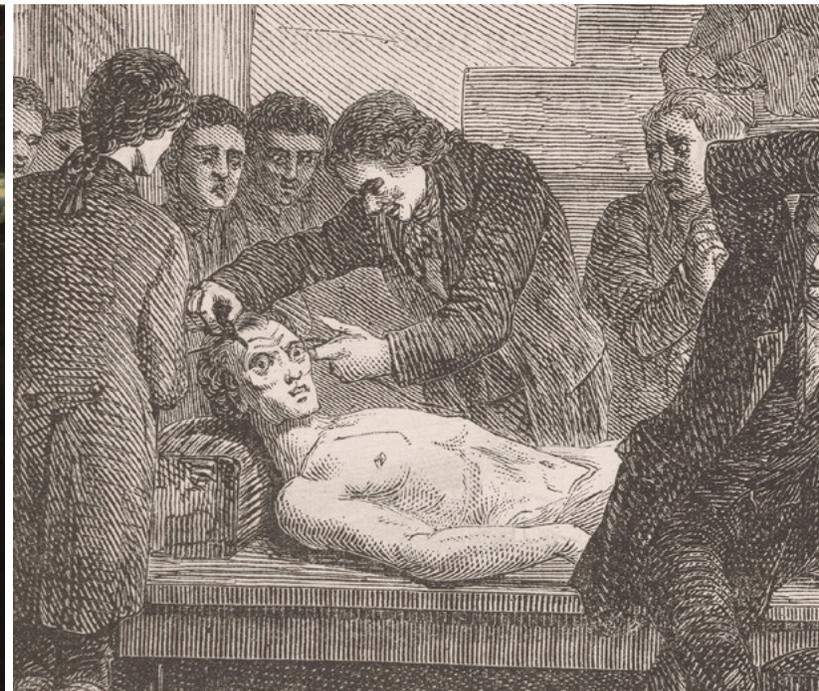
LEFT: William Hogarth (1697–1764), *The Reward of Cruelty*, ca. 1751, red chalk with smudging, squared in graphite, on laid paper, incised with stylus; verso rubbed with red chalk for transfer. The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1909, III, 32c. RIGHT: Franz Joseph Manskirch (1768–1830), *Interior of a Gothic Crypt*, aquatint with etching and some hand coloring and varnish on paper, London: Rudolph Ackermann, 1799. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

“compact made before her creation,” and he destroys the female creature before she is complete (170). The Creature is overcome with anger and vows, “I shall be with you on your wedding-night” (173).

Victor takes the female creature’s body into the water to dump it and then runs into difficulty sailing home. When he returns, he discovers that Henry has been murdered by the Creature. Victor is urged by his father and Elizabeth to return to his family and resume a normal life; Victor is convinced that the Creature will kill him on his wedding night. He marries Elizabeth regardless, but to his horror realizes too late that Elizabeth was the Creature’s intended victim all along. Victor then begins his hunt for his creation, seeking its destruction and his revenge, leading to the arctic pursuit.

Robert Walton and Victor speak again on Walton’s ambitions, and Victor advises him to “[s]eek happiness in tranquility, and avoid ambition...Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed” (220). Victor dies, and the Creature visits his body in the ship. Walton is so overcome by the Creature’s frightening appearance that he closes his eyes. The Creature declares his intention to commit suicide via a funeral pyre, to prevent anyone from repeating Victor’s experiments.

## SECTION ONE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR *FRANKENSTEIN*



LEFT: Joseph Wright, *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump*, 1768 . Oil on canvas. Presented by Edward Tyrrell, 1863. © National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY. RIGHT: Auguste Pontenier (1820–1888), wood engraving in Louis Figuier (1819–1894), *Les merveilles de la science, ou Description populaire des inventions modernes*, Paris: Furne, Jouvet et cie., 1867–70, The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased on the Gordon N. Ray Fund, 2016, PML 196256.

### LITERARY TRADITIONS

*Frankenstein* should be read in the context of the Gothic literary tradition. By the early eighteenth century in Britain, the term Gothic referred to art or literature situated in desolate or romantic settings with plots that were **macabre**, mysterious, or filled with horror. However, the term originated many centuries earlier when Germanic marauders known as Goths invaded European territories between the third and fifth centuries. The word came to signify violence, chaos, and destruction. “Gothic” then expanded around the thirteenth century to describe art and architecture lacking classical or regular proportions and depicting violence.

The British rise in Gothic imagery in literature and art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries echoes the politics of the period. During this time, the British were involved in a brutal eight-year-long war with their thirteen American colonies, bloody uprisings in Ireland, and colonial expansion in India. Meanwhile, the specter of the French Revolution influenced the British government to limit freedoms at home. In this context, artists and writers began to express their anxieties through Gothic chaos and violence.

Whether set on moonlit beaches, desolate moors, in forests, caves, castles, abbeys, crumbling mansions, or even graveyards, crypts, and gallows, these Gothic stories featured demons, possessed monks, dying parents with secrets to tell, or characters with **unnatural** obsessions. In the case of *Frankenstein*, the cemetery, the mysterious murders, and the **sublime** landscapes of the Alps and

Arctic are elements that invoke the Gothic tradition. Shelley's creature-creator pair draws from the demons and obsessions of earlier Gothic stories while creating something wholly new.

Elements of the Gothic can be found throughout British **Romanticism**, the artistic and literary movement spanning the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Inspired by the mystical elements associated with the Gothic genre, Romantic literature often emphasized the natural world. Romanticism focused on the power of the imagination and emotions, and was an optimistic response to new cultural ideas after the American and French Revolutions. Romanticism contrasts with the earlier concept of the **Enlightenment**, which focused on reason and logic. Romantic artists and writers further explored the concept of the sublime, the contemplation of nature as awe-inspiring, and going beyond the realm of perception. We will examine how artists drew on the aesthetic traditions of Romanticism, the Gothic, and the sublime in the "Objects and Discussion Prompts" later in this section.

## SCIENTIFIC HISTORY

Mary Shelley's era was a period of significant scientific discoveries. Inventors revolutionized industry with the creation of the steam engine and increased automation in factory production of goods such as textiles. Public figures such as Erasmus Darwin, physician and poet (and grandfather of Charles), created a positive climate for experimentation. The Royal Institution, founded in London in 1799, promoted and funded **natural philosophers** (as scientists were called at the time) such as Humphry Davy, a chemist who discovered several elements. Lectures and experimental demonstrations on ground-breaking scientific concepts were presented for the general public.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary's husband, took a great interest in chemistry, and Mary likely heard him talk about experiments he conducted as a student at Oxford. Mary Shelley was reading Humphry Davy's book on chemistry as she wrote *Frankenstein*. In her novel, it is chemistry that brings the body to life. Yet, until his professors debunk it, Victor Frankenstein is interested in the medieval predecessor to chemistry, alchemy\*. The ultimate goal of alchemy is to transform lesser metals into gold, which was considered incorruptible. This transformative process can be related to the search for eternal life, the possibility that mortal flesh can be made immortal. Alchemy is associated with mysticism and magic as well as science.

Other scientific endeavors in the news and on peoples' minds during Mary Shelley's time included anatomical dissections by medical students (which Shelley knew were generally performed on the corpses of criminals and the poor) and a case in 1816 in which a surgeon applied electricity to the corpse of a murderer, making the body twitch. A reporter at the event described it this way: "Vitality might have been fully restored, if many ulterior circumstances had not rendered this—*inappropriate*" (qtd. in Denlinger, 61).<sup>2</sup> Mary Shelley cites an interest in **galvanism** in her introduction to the novel, as a potential avenue of reanimation. Galvanism can refer to a muscle contracting after being stimulated by an electrical current.

The scientific methodology that Victor Frankenstein employs to bring his Creature to life is never fully explained in the novel. It is suggested that Victor does not entirely trust anyone with the secret. Although electricity has become part of the visual imagery for the reanimation in film adaptations of the story, it receives less attention in the novel. The most compelling image of lightning in the novel is not associated with the Creature, but with Victor. After the Creature has begun to kill, Victor is bitter, and describes himself as "...a blasted tree; the bolt has entered my soul..." (165).

\*The original British title of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* was *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, which illustrates the close association between alchemy and magic.

<sup>2</sup>Denlinger, Elizabeth C. *It's Alive! A Visual History of Frankenstein*. The Morgan Library & Museum, 2018. p. 61. All subsequent references to this catalogue will be given as parenthetical citations.

## OBJECTS AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

### OBJECT: HENRY FUSELI, *THE NIGHTMARE*, 1782

One of the most famous paintings of the Gothic movement is Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare* (1782). In the painting, a demon perches on the chest of an unconscious woman in a gauzy white gown, and a horse peers out from the curtain behind her. Fuseli was a part of the intellectual circle of Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft. Her daughter would have been familiar with the famous painting. Scholars have suggested that it is the inspiration for the Creature's threat to Victor: "I shall be with you on your wedding-night." The painting's imagery of a beautiful woman in a potentially dangerous bedroom is echoed in many film adaptations. It exemplifies the British Gothic.



Henry Fuseli (1741–1825), *The Nightmare*, 1781, oil on canvas, Detroit Institute of Arts, USA Founders Society Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Bert L. Smokler and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman/Bridgeman Images

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Look together at *The Nightmare*. Ask students what they notice.
- ⚡ How would they describe the mood of the painting?
- ⚡ Ask students what they think of when they hear the word Goth or Gothic. Add to their ideas by sharing the types of settings, characters, and conflicts that define the movement (see "Literary Traditions" above). Examining *The Nightmare*, where do students see these elements of the Gothic?
- ⚡ Mary Shelley was familiar with *The Nightmare*. Ask students to compare the imagery and atmosphere of the painting to the novel, or any of its visual adaptations.
- ⚡ Ask students to construct a narrative story to describe what is happening in the painting. What happened before this scene and what will happen after? The word "nightmare" is a compound of "night" + "mare" (a female horse) and is an old folklore term for a monster that produced a feeling of suffocation in a sleeping person. How has Fuseli incorporated the folkloric elements into his painting?

## OBJECT: PHILIPPE-JACQUES DE LOUTHERBOURG, *A PHILOSOPHER IN A MOONLIT CHURCHYARD*, 1790

Philippe-Jacques de Louthembourg's *A Philosopher in a Moonlit Churchyard* exemplifies the Gothic sublime. The painting, from 1790, depicts a young man standing before an open grave in the ruins of Tintern Abbey (of Wordsworth poem fame) gazing up at a carved image of a resurrected Jesus Christ leaving the tomb. Scholars have suggested that the scene implies an attempt to raise the dead. Louthembourg specialized in creating drama in his settings. He also built stage sets and special effects for theaters and was interested in the **occult**.



Philippe-Jacques de Louthembourg (1740–1812), *A Philosopher in a Moonlit Churchyard*, 1790, oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Ask students to spend a few minutes looking at this painting and jotting down their observations. Then ask them to circle the words or phrases that stand out to them and share these with the class.
- ⚡ What types of words or phrases did students come up with?
- ⚡ What do students think is happening in this painting? Tell them that critics have suggested that the open grave and the young man's expression imply an attempt to raise the dead. Ask for their reactions to this theory.
- ⚡ Like *The Nightmare*, this painting is considered part of the Gothic tradition in art. It is also thought to represent the concept of the sublime, which, starting at about 1757, came to refer to experiences that were beyond human understanding. Visual artists became interested in representing those sensations that cannot be described with words or explained with reason. Ask students to consider the painting again with this in mind. How does the painting exemplify this notion of the sublime?

**OBJECT: JOSEPH WRIGHT, *THE ALCHEMIST, IN SEARCH OF THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, DISCOVERS PHOSPHORUS, AND PRAYS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF HIS OPERATION, AS WAS THE CUSTOM OF THE ANCIENT CHYMICAL ASTROLOGERS*, 1771**

Joseph Wright was a painter who kept up to date on the latest in scientific research through his friend Erasmus Darwin and others in his circle. This knowledge allowed him to depict experiments and scientific demonstrations of the era. This painting from 1771 depicts the alchemist Hennig Brand who discovered phosphorus in 1669 through his experiments with human urine, hoping to create gold. In the painting, the element first appears to Brand in the form of a bright light in a round glass bottle.

**DISCUSSION PROMPTS:**

- ⚡ Ask students to turn to the person next to them and discuss the painting. What do they see? What do they think about it?
- ⚡ Compare and contrast this painting to either *The Nightmare* or *A Philosopher in a Moonlit Churchyard*. How does it compare to the settings and characters in Fuseli's or de Louthembourg's paintings? Do they think it has characteristics of a Gothic painting? Why or why not?
- ⚡ Next, discuss the techniques the artist uses to tell the story, including lighting and point of view.
- ⚡ This painting depicts a moment from a scientific event that occurred in the past, over a hundred years before the painting was made. Since there was no visual documentation of this moment, Wright had to imagine it. How has he envisioned the scene? What do students think Wright's attitude is on this moment in history? Ask them to back up their thoughts with visual analysis.
- ⚡ In the novel *Frankenstein*, how does Victor's reaction to his Creature compare to the imagined scene of Hennig Brand's discovery?



Joseph Wright, *The Alchemist, in Search of the Philosopher's Stone, Discovers Phosphorus, and Prays for the Successful Conclusion of His Operation, as Was the Custom of the Ancient Chymical Astrologers*, exhibited 1771, reworked and dated 1795, oil on canvas. Derby Museums Trust.

## OBJECT: VACUUM PUMP WITH BELL JAR, 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

This nineteenth century vacuum or air pump would have been used to extract air from the attached **bell jar** and create a **vacuum**. The **vacuum pump** was invented in 1650 in Germany and was used to demonstrate that the elements in air were necessary for living creatures to stay alive. Any breathing creature would quickly die inside once the oxygen and other gases were pumped out. The pump was a popular piece of equipment for demonstrating **pneumatics**, the study of the properties of air.

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Ask students to look at the design of this object from the nineteenth century. What materials does it use? What objects does it remind them of from today's world? What kind of function can they imagine it might have had?
- ⚡ Compare to Joseph Wright's *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* from 1768 here:
- ⚡ Tell students that this scene depicts a common demonstration of the function of the air pump. Any breathing creature placed inside would soon die when the air was pumped out. Ask students to compare and contrast the reactions of the experiment's audience in this painting, as some onlookers are more curious, others more concerned for the bird's life. The experiment is shown in process, with the bird in jeopardy but not dead. The central figure looks out to the viewer as if to invite them into the narrative.
- ⚡ Discuss the ethics involved in a demonstration like this. Is it justifiable to risk a life to demonstrate or learn something about science? Why or why not?
- ⚡ Discuss in relation to *Frankenstein*. What are some ethical quandaries Victor encounters in his experimentation? Where do students stand on these ethical questions? For instance, Victor uses parts of dead bodies to bring the Creature to life. Do students think this is ethical? Do students think this is more or less ethical than killing a living thing in the name of science? **DISCUSS.**



Vacuum pump with bell jar, ca. 1800–1850, Division of Medicine and Science, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. CREATING 21ST CENTURY GOTHIC:

In the novel, the Creature is never fully described visually. Characters explain his appearance in different ways, often remarking that he is too frightening to look at. The reoccurring concepts are that the Creature is ugly, large in size, and although similar to a person, does not look quite human. Examples include:

- “A being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature” (25)
- “The filthy mass that moved and talked” (149)
- “This tremendous being...so scaring and unearthly in his ugliness” (221)



For this activity, ask students to visualize the character of the Creature. What do they think he looks like? Ask them to draw or paint his image. What clues did they use from the book's descriptions? What aspects of their drawing or painting may have been influenced from popular culture depictions of the Creature? **DISCUSS.**



As an extension, ask students to think about the context of the term “Gothic” in different media. What does “Goth” mean to them today? What would a modern day Gothic setting, a place of mystery and horror, look like? Students can create a landscape of a twenty-first century Gothic setting for their image of the Creature to inhabit.

### 2. SHARING GOTHIC STORIES:

Mary Shelley's novel was inspired by a ghost story writing contest amongst her friends. Only two participants in the contest completed their stories, and these formed the basis of some of modern literature's enduring myths: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and John William Polidori's “The Vampyre.” Although Polidori's short story does not have the lasting narrative impact of Shelley's work, his concept of the vampire as an aristocrat influenced Bram Stoker's later novel *Dracula*.



As a class, read another example of a Gothic work; there are suggestions in the Gothic novels section of the bibliography. Compare with *Frankenstein*. What are the elements they share? Based on their reading, what would students say about the moods, settings, characters, and plots that are part of the Gothic tradition?



Tell students that they will be writing their own Gothic short stories. They should first brainstorm the mood, setting, characters, and plotlines they will explore to make it “Gothic.” How will they develop the Gothic elements of their story? How would they describe the main characters—their obsessions or conflicts? What kind of settings will it take place in? They should also sketch out the plotline: What is the conflict and how does it resolve?



As an extension of the writing exercise, students can read their works aloud in groups to recreate the ghost story competition.

### 3. EXPERIMENTING WITH A VACUUM PUMP:

The vacuum pump and bell jar were popular pieces of equipment for chemistry and physics demonstrations at the time. Many simple experiments with a vacuum pump and bell jar can demonstrate to students the changes that occur when air is removed from an enclosed space.

For a list of vacuum pump demonstrations online, please see the suggested web resources at the end of this resource. A homemade vacuum pump can be created or a small vacuum pump and bell jar set can also be purchased for a low price (see the online resources.) Possible activities to demonstrate the effects of air being removed include:

- Placing a balloon in the bell jar and watching how the differential in air pressure affects its size
- Similarly, placing shaving cream or a marshmallow inside can demonstrate changes in volume due to air changes
- Simply placing water in a vacuum will cause the water to boil because the air is not exerting pressure



After watching online or participating in a vacuum pump experiment, ask students to revisit the experiment depicted in Joseph Wright's *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* from 1768. Does it affect their understanding of the experiment?

### 4. EXPLORING ETHICS:

Mary Shelley and Joseph Wright both explored the ethics of science through their art. In Wright's painting, he shows witnesses reacting to a demonstration which could result in the death of a living creature. Shelley's novel explores the ethics of bringing a creature composed of the parts of corpses to life. Our existence is filled with ethical questions having to do with progress in science and medicine.

Ask students to choose one ethical question below and discuss with a partner. Encourage students to fully examine each side of the question.

**ETHICAL QUESTION #1:** Is potential harm to living things justified in pursuit of discovery? For example, is it ethical to test products on animals to prevent human suffering?

**ETHICAL QUESTION #2:** How is personhood defined? For example, could artificial intelligence ever be considered alive? Could human clones have human rights?

**ETHICAL QUESTION #3:** How is an experiment conducted? What defines consent for the participants of an experiment? For example, consider the ethics of testing new drugs on patients with terminal illnesses or testing on incarcerated prisoners. Students can explore historical examples such as the Tuskegee Experiment or Henrietta Lacks.



Next, ask students to each write a short fictional story about a scientific quandary in their chosen ethical question. For example, students might want to imagine a world in which a disputed scientific practice is now common. The story can explore the implications of this practice.



Ask students to share their story with a partner. They can discuss the consequences the story envisioned and the reactions of their readers.

## SECTION TWO: MARY SHELLEY'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS



LEFT: John Keenan (active 1791–1815) after John Opie (1761–1807), *Mary Wollstonecraft*, 1804, oil on canvas, The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. CENTER: Richard Rothwell (1800–1868), *Portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, painted 1831, exhibited 1840, oil on canvas, © National Portrait Gallery, London. RIGHT: George Dawe (1781–1829) after James Northcote (1746–1831), *William Godwin*, 1802, mezzotint, The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

### MARY SHELLEY'S CHILDHOOD

In 1797, Mary Wollstonecraft gave birth to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (who would later become Mary Shelley). Only ten days later, Wollstonecraft died due to complications from childbirth.

Mary Wollstonecraft was an important **feminist** thinker. For her time, Wollstonecraft was a rare example of a female author who could support herself financially through her career. Her most famous books were written in response to Edmund Burke's defense of the French monarchy and the traditional structures of society. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), Mary Wollstonecraft argued that religious and civil liberties should be a person's birthright. Soon after, in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), she argued for the equal education of women. Wollstonecraft believed that without education reform, especially a national system with co-education, women would continue to be subjugated, and both men and women would suffer from the inequality.

William Godwin, Mary Shelley's father, was also one of the most celebrated and radical thinkers in Britain. In 1793, he published *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, which argues that individuals should think freely without institutions such as religion and marriage controlling their thoughts. Often considered the father of anarchist thought, Godwin believed that contracts (including social contracts and marital contracts) and even everyday promises hindered human advancement by binding individuals to decisions made based on the inherently partial understanding available at one moment in time. He believed that truly progressive societies and individuals should be free to change course in response to new information.

Wollstonecraft and Godwin met in 1791. Despite their similar beliefs, it was not love at first sight. It would take five years of other relationships and life events before the pair fell in love. Although Wollstonecraft and Godwin did not believe in marriage as an institution, they married to protect the rights of their daughter Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (Mary Shelley). When Wollstonecraft died soon after childbirth, William Godwin raised Mary and her half-sister, Fanny, by himself.



LEFT: Edward Ellerker Williams (1793–1822), *Portrait of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 1822, watercolor over black chalk and graphite on wove paper, The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Mrs. W. Murray Crane, 1949. 1949.3; RIGHT: Giovanni Salucci (1769–1845), *Vue de la ville de Genève & de plein-Palais*, 1817, hand-colored etching. Bibliothèque de Genève, Centre d'icongraphie genevoise. (View from Mary Shelley's travels in Switzerland.)

In addition to the stress of being a single father, William Godwin's livelihood was in jeopardy. Due to the French and American Revolutions, the British government began to suppress freedom of expression. Godwin suffered from financial difficulties in both selling his books and being censored in their content.

William Godwin eventually married again—to a woman who lived next door, Mary Jane Clairmont. She brought two children of her own, Jane (who later went by the name Claire Clairmont) and Charles, into the family. In 1803, Mary Jane gave birth to a son, William Godwin, named after his father. The Godwins were often financially strapped, despite running a successful children's bookshop and publishing company.

Mary Shelley did not get along with her stepmother and it was a crowded house of five children. She grew up reading her mother Mary Wollstonecraft's writing, looking at her mother's portrait hanging in the parlor, and experiencing the great expectations of being the child of two famous writers. Mary's father took her on walks to her mother's grave and it became her private place to read.

When Mary Shelley was sixteen, she met the handsome, famous, and wealthy poet Percy Bysshe (P. B.) Shelley. William Godwin was P. B. Shelley's intellectual hero and Godwin hoped to ask him for a loan. Mary and P. B. Shelley fell in love, despite the fact that he was already married. Mary Shelley was inspired by her parents' lack of convention in their relationship, and she and P. B. Shelley ran off together in July of 1814, bringing her stepsister Claire along for the ride. This would start off a chain of events resulting in a series of scandals, disownments, and deaths.



For further reference please see the [family tree](#) and [biographies supplements](#).

## MARY SHELLEY'S CIRCLE AND THE SUMMER OF 1816

By 1816, the lives of Mary, P. B. Shelley, and her family and friends were still not sorted out. Mary Shelley's relationship with her father, William Godwin was strained, as Godwin still hoped to secure funding from P. B. Shelley, Godwin did not realize that P. B. Shelley was cut off from his family money due to his beliefs, such as arguing in defense of atheism and rejecting his first wife.

Mary Shelley's stepsister Claire wanted a handsome and famous poet of her own, and she began to pursue Lord Byron, the infamous author of *Childe Harold*. Claire convinced Mary and P. B. to join her on a trip with Byron to Switzerland. The landscapes of this vacation —such as the Plainpalais public gardens or rowing on Lac Léman, with the peak of Mont Blanc looming across the water— would later appear in *Frankenstein*. Byron and his friend John William Polidori rented the Villa Diodati in Cologny, a town near Geneva. Byron and the Shelleys became good friends.

However, violent rains due to a volcanic eruption kept the vacationers indoors during the “year without a summer.” Inspired by the unseasonably gloomy weather, the group would read aloud from a volume of ghost stories, *Fantasmagoriana*, German tales translated into French with titles like “The Black Chamber” and “The Dead Bride.” This atmosphere motivated Byron to challenge the group to a ghost story writing contest, an origin story for *Frankenstein* that has taken on its own legendary proportions.

Mary Shelley was inspired, and decided, as she recalled in the introduction to the third edition in 1831, that she wanted to write something to “curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart” (8). More than a contest was at stake. Her father was demanding money from her husband, unaware that P. B. Shelley was cut off from his family funds. She was being publicly slandered for her non-traditional relationship. If Mary Shelley could support herself through her writing, it would not only solve their financial woes but also be a tribute to her mother's independence through publishing. And finally, Shelley was “very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage, and enrol myself on the page of fame” (qtd. in Denlinger, 111). For several days she struggled to come up with something and then one night, as she described it: “I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision,—I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together” (9). Mary Shelley's vision of a man playing God was her own breakthrough moment of creation.

## OBJECTS AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

### OBJECT: JOHN KEENAN, AFTER JOHN OPIE, *PORTRAIT OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT*, 1804, OIL ON CANVAS

A portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft, painted by John Opie when she was pregnant with Mary Shelley, hung over the fireplace in the parlor of the Godwin-Clairmont household. Wollstonecraft remained a central figure in the household even in death—Mary and P. B. Shelley first declared their love for each other in 1814 at her grave.

#### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ A portrait is a cultivated view of a person, designed to demonstrate select aspects of its subject. In this guide, students will explore four different portraits. Ask students to look carefully at this portrait and discuss what it reveals about Mary Wollstonecraft. What does it tell them? What does it not tell them?
- ⚡ Although Mary Shelley never knew her mother, the portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft hung in a prominent place in the Godwin home, even after her father remarried. Do you think seeing this portrait every day influenced Mary's writing of *Frankenstein*? **DISCUSS.**
- ⚡ The American statesman Aaron Burr owned this copy of Mary Wollstonecraft's portrait. He raised his daughters guided by her philosophy.
  - Ask students if they have images of their heroes or those they admire hanging in their room or home. Who are they and why do you admire them?
  - What are other examples of books, films, or public personas who have influenced the discussion of women's rights?



John Keenan (active 1791–1815) after John Opie (1761–1807), *Mary Wollstonecraft*, 1804, oil on canvas, The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

Tell students that Wollstonecraft's philosophy of education—including the idea that women should be educated with men and be given the opportunity to earn a living—was essential to her writing.

**ASK STUDENTS TO DISCUSS:** How does the notion of education come up in the novel? Think about the Creature's education before he finds Victor. What connections can students make between Wollstonecraft's thoughts on the topic and the way Mary Shelley deals with the theme in the novel?

**OBJECT: GEORGE DAWE, *PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM GODWIN*, 4 OCTOBER 1802, MEZZOTINT**

Like Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin was famous as an author. This portrait of Godwin was reproduced many times and sold in print shops. Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) was embraced by radical thinkers. It argues for human enlightenment and critiques political institutions such as property, marriage, and monarchy, arguing that they inhibit individuals and social progress. Godwin wanted people to think for themselves unconstricted by these institutions. When Britain went to war with France and became more conservative, Godwin's popularity suffered. He made later editions of the *Enquiry* less radical. Percy Bysshe Shelley sought Godwin out for his earlier radical ideas. This portrait of Godwin portrays him in the dignified manner he wanted others to see.



George Dawe (1781–1829) after James Northcote (1746–1831), *William Godwin*, 1802, mezzotint, The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

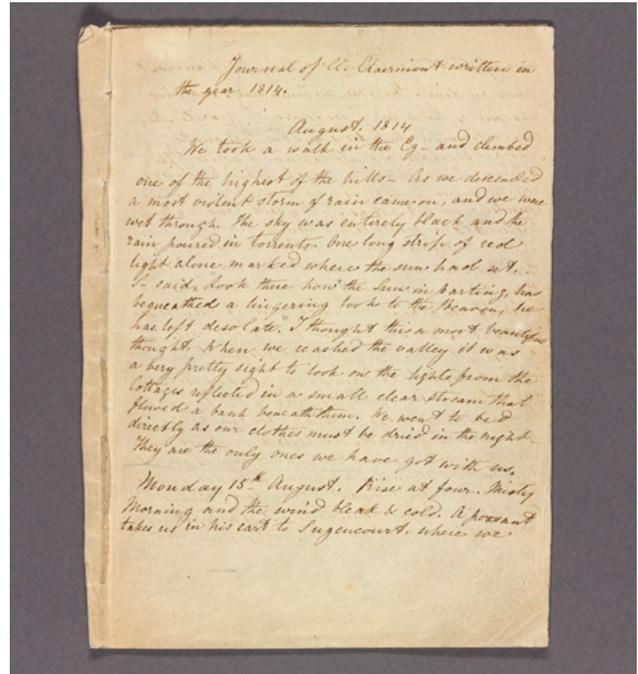
**DISCUSSION PROMPTS:**

- ⚡ What do students notice about this portrait? How do they read his posture and facial expression? Note how the subject is depicted in a side view, called a profile, like an image on a coin.
- ⚡ Share with students that the subject is William Godwin, Mary Shelley's father. He was famous enough to have a print made from his portrait and sold at print shops. Which people in our society have their images reproduced and sold, and why?
- ⚡ Godwin was famous for his political philosophy. He believed, radically for the time, that people should use reason to think for themselves and not be constricted by the institutions of society such as marriage and religion. Whose political ideas influence us today, and how?

## OBJECT: CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT, JOURNAL OF SUMMER 1814, CA. 1814

According to Elizabeth C. Denlinger, author of the catalogue for the Morgan exhibit,

When Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Godwin, and Claire Clairmont eloped to France in July 1814, they packed like bookish teenagers. Mary Godwin brought all her early letters and papers, which she left by accident in Paris, to the dismay of biographers. They had little money and no changes of clothes. Shelley forgot his watch but remembered his three-volume pocket Shakespeare. All kept journals recording the miseries of their journey (rats, dirt, rain, dreadful food, unhelpful drivers, sprained ankles) and the rewards, as well—an al fresco reading of *As You Like It*, for instance: “Shelley said poetry read in a room never came so near the soul as if read in a beautiful spot, in the wide open air and under the wide open Heaven.” Ascending toward Switzerland, Clairmont wrote: “We were so happy ... Shelley in an ecstasy declared how great was his joy—How great is my rapture he said, I a fiery man with my heart full of Youth, and with my Beloved at my side, I behold these lordly immeasurable Alps.” (106)



Clara Mary Jane Clairmont (1798 - 1879), *Journal of summer 1814*, ca. 1814, The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Look together at different days of **Claire's journal**. These pages document a time of strong emotions for Claire and the Shelleys, who had essentially run away from their old lives for an adventure abroad. Ask students if the journal's topics have any connection to their own lives. Why or why not? Would they have liked to join this traveling party? **EXPLAIN**.
- ⚡ Think about *Frankenstein* and discuss how the novel captures these swings in mood. Find excerpts and/or make lists of scenes that illustrate both highs and lows and discuss which types of moments Shelley describes with positive or negative emotions—and how.
- ⚡ Tell students that at the time that Claire Clairmont wrote this journal, the dominant literary movement was Romanticism—an aesthetic movement starting at the end of the eighteenth century that emphasized emotion and individualism as well as glorification of the imagination and nature. How do the actions and reflections of the Shelleys and Clairmont exemplify this movement? What does a journal entry like this tell us about the time in which they lived and the values of those times or their reactions to the values of those times?

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. JOURNAL ENTRIES:

Ask students if they keep diaries or journals. If not, do they keep blogs or other social media accounts of their lives? Ask them to compare the different forms.

For this activity, students will keep journals or diaries for a week, writing entries at least once a day. This can be done digitally in a blogging format, for instance, or by hand. At the end of the week, tell students to look back over their entries and reflect on the content. What kinds of events and experiences did they record? Compare to the events recorded in Claire Clairmont's journals.



Mary Shelley and Claire Clairmont were both teenagers during the summer of 1814. Ask students to discuss how their early nineteenth-century teenage activities compare to teenagers today. Based on what we know about their lives, how has life changed? How do the journal entries illustrate these differences? How do they illustrate what has remained constant about being a teenager?



The Shelleys' era was imbued with the values and ideals of Romanticism. Discuss this movement and what it valued. Ask students to think about their own journal or diary entries. What do they emphasize most? What do the entries demonstrate about their values? How do these emphases reflect the political, social, and aesthetic aspects of our current time and place?



As an alternative or extension to this activity, students can write a journal entry for a character in *Frankenstein*. How would they compare this character's entry to their own and to Clairmont's?

### 2. DEBATING DEMOCRACY:



Mary Shelley's parents were important voices in the political debate sparked by the French Revolution. At this time people discussed whether democracy as a concept for society would tend toward savagery or toward civilization. Mary Wollstonecraft argued for civilization. Ask students to think back to the novel. Which passages deal with political institutions and governments? Encourage students to think, for instance, about the experiences Victor and Justine have with the justice system. How does this element of the novel relate to political philosophy and arguments about political institutions?

### 3. TIMELINE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS:

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Men* was well received. At that time, most journalists were credited only by their initials, so few readers knew that "MW" was a woman. When her publisher, encouraged by the popular reaction, revealed Mary Wollstonecraft's gender, she began to receive new and harsher criticism.

Undeterred, Mary Wollstonecraft proceeded to write her sequel, the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which pushed boundaries further and argued for revolutionary societal change. Horace Walpole, writer of the first Gothic novel and Member of Parliament, called her a "hyena in petticoats." Mary Wollstonecraft's writing began conversations and her work contributed to the development of modern feminism.



For this activity, organize students in small groups to create a timeline of women's rights. What has changed in terms of laws, behavior, and expectations from the mid-eighteenth century (when Wollstonecraft was born) to today? Students should share their timelines with the class and compare them to political and scientific timelines for the same periods. How do the changes for women align with political and scientific changes over time?



As an alternative, choose a different focus for the timeline. Students could explore human rights through the lens of race, religion, sexual and gender identity, freedom of expression or even compare rights between different cultures, systems of government or countries.



As an extension to this activity, encourage students to add "projected" changes to their timeline. What do they think might change or what do they hope might change 50, 100, or even 200 years from today?

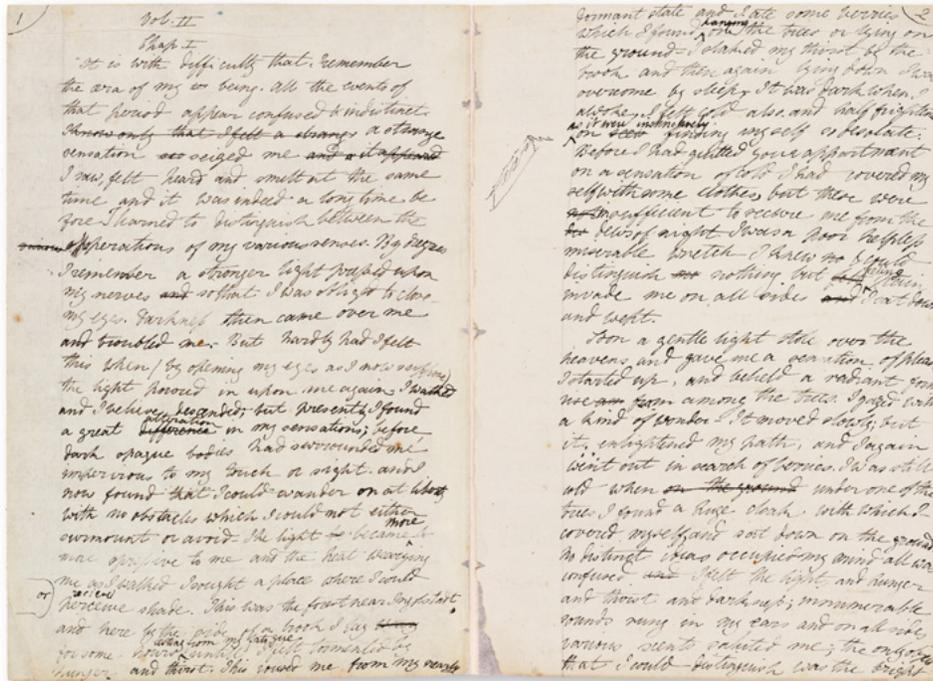
See Supplement on [Vindication of the Rights of Women and Political Justice](#)



#### MATERIALS SUPPLEMENTS FOR THIS SECTION

1. [Godwin-Shelley Family Tree](#)
2. [Biographies for Godwin-Shelley Family Tree](#)
3. [Claire's journal passages](#)
4. [Vindication of the Rights of Women and Political Justice](#)

## SECTION THREE: WRITING AND EDITING FRANKENSTEIN



Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797 - 1851), *Frankenstein: Creature begins his history*, account of his education, 1816-1817, Pen on paper, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford, MS Abinger c. 57, fols. 1v, 2r.

### WRITING THE NOVEL

*Frankenstein* was not created in isolation. Like the Creature, it is composed of many different parts.

Mary Shelley (1797-1851) was greatly influenced by scientific discoveries, political events, and movements in literature and art of her time. Some of the more specific sources for the novel include poetry from contemporaries such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), William Wordsworth (1770-1850), and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822). Mary Shelley also looked to the past, both to the ancient past such as the Roman biographer Plutarch (CE 46-CE 120) and to earlier English writers such as John Milton (1608-1674). The novel quotes from many different literary works and refers to Mary Shelley's own eclectic education.

It can be argued that Mary Shelley drew upon some of her fantasies and her frustrations with her father, deceased mother, and complex family life through the novel. Victor's idyllic childhood seems like the wish fulfillment of the teenage Mary Shelley. The novel was dedicated to Shelley's father William Godwin, whom she adored as a child, but was estranged from after her relationship with P. B. Shelley began. *Frankenstein* explores relationships and obligations between families, parents, and children.

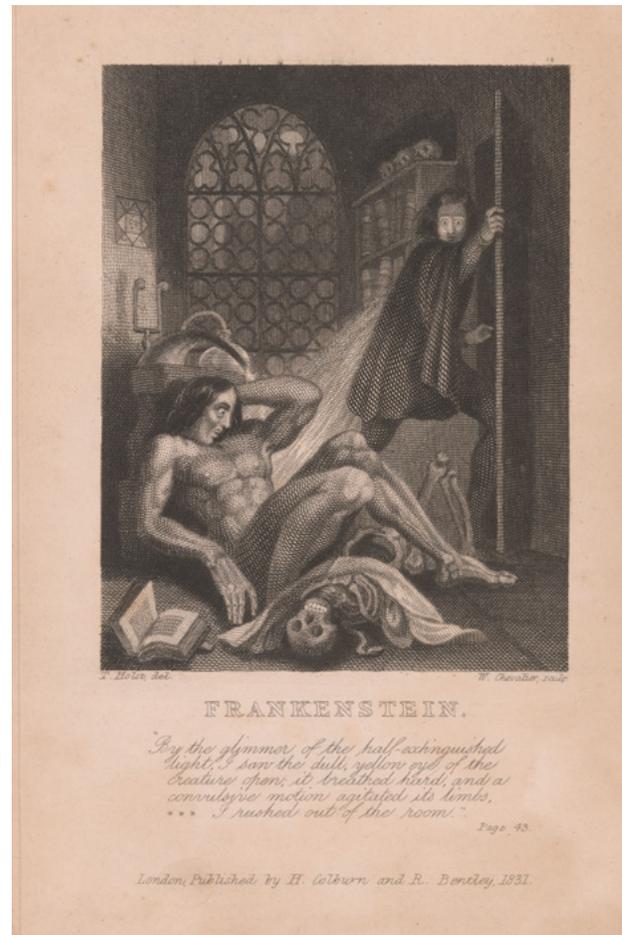
Mary Shelley was also inspired by her travels abroad. Many scenes from her 1814 trip with P. B. Shelley and her stepsister Claire are incorporated into the landscape of the novel. For example, Mary Shelley may have noticed a castle known as Schloss Frankenstein when they passed by it on the Rhine. The castle is the possible birthplace of Johann Konrad Dippel, an eighteenth century alchemist who is said to have tried to create artificial life with a chemical compound named Dippel's oil. Many of the sites around Geneva feature in the novel as part of Victor and Elizabeth's travels to their wedding.

The concepts of parental responsibility, loss, loneliness and social isolation are apparent across different characters in the novel. Mary Shelley's mother died ten days after giving birth. Then, in March 1815 at the age of 17, Shelley lost her first child after only a few weeks of life. In 1816, Shelley's half-sister, Fanny Godwin, and Percy Bysshe's first wife, Harriet Shelley, committed suicide within two months of each other. Mary Shelley and her father were at odds during her marriage to P. B., and Shelley was under heavy social scrutiny for her elopement.

Despite all of these adverse circumstances, Mary Shelley took only ten months (June 1816–April 1817) to complete the first draft of the novel at the age of eighteen. In January 1816, she gave birth to a second child, William, and she married P. B. Shelley in December of that year. She was pregnant with a third child, Clara, and caring for five-month-old William when she began writing *Frankenstein*.

P.B. Shelley was her first reader and editor, and she often took his suggestions. She published the novel anonymously in January 1818, with her husband providing a preface to the 1818 edition. Tragedy continued to strike the couple's young children, and by 1819, both her daughter Clara and her son William had died. In November of 1819, another son, Percy Florence, was born. Percy Florence became the couple's only surviving child.

*Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* blended ideas from the Romantic and Gothic traditions. With the Gothic material, it added new scenarios and nuances; the idea of the laboratory and a natural philosopher (scientist) as a setting for horror was a new take on the stories of ghosts, castles, and desolate moors. Yet the modernism of *Frankenstein* was also combined with the power of the ghost story or folktale, with the appearance of the Creature and his reanimation never fully explained, leaving the horror to the imagination of the reader. Although she published the novel anonymously, Mary Shelley's authorship was widely known, and her notorious relationship with P. B. Shelley as well as her famous parents added to the celebrity of the novel. The novel's adaptation to the stage in 1823 created free publicity though no royalties for the author. As later sections will explore, *Frankenstein* captured the popular imagination as an adapted work, and is still inspiring new versions today.



Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797 - 1851), *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. London, Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831, The Morgan Library & Museum, PML 58778.

## AFTER THE NOVEL'S PUBLICATION

By the summer of 1822, the Shelleys were living with friends in Italy. The summer would end tragically. Mary Shelley suffered a near-fatal miscarriage and P. B. Shelley drowned in a sailing accident.

By the time the novel became famous Mary Shelley had given birth to four children, buried three, and become a widow. The novel had become a blockbuster after its first theatrical staging in 1823. **Copyright** laws at the time meant Mary Shelley earned nothing from theatrical productions, but the play's popularity drove book sales. She moved to England where her father, William Godwin, helped publish a second edition of the novel to capitalize on its newfound fame. The third edition was published in 1831. In this version, the character of Elizabeth became an orphan instead of Victor's cousin (removing the implication of incest), Clerval's character was further developed, and Victor was burdened by an even guiltier conscience. These changes reflected shifting morals as Romantic ideals began giving way to Victorian mores.

Mary Shelley wrote more than one novel. One of her other works is *The Last Man*, a **dystopia** set in a world decimated by disease published in 1826. She wrote travel pieces and for periodicals, and was able to send her son Percy Florence to Cambridge with her earnings and a small allowance from her father-in-law (given to her on the condition that she not bring the Shelley name before the public). She was courted by other men but never remarried. She said she longed for intimacy but, as she wrote to a friend, "experience and sufferings have altered all that—I am more wrapt up in myself ... & prospects for Percy" (qtd. in Denlinger, 170). In place of romance, she was sustained by friendships with women.

Percy Florence eventually became heir to the Shelley estates when P. B. Shelley's father Sir Timothy Shelley died in 1844, and their financial worries were eased. Mary Shelley died in 1851 in London. Percy Florence and his wife, Jane, built a shrine to Mary Shelley and P. B. Shelley at their new house and moved Godwin's and Wollstonecraft's graves so they could all be buried together—with the exception of P. B. Shelley, who was buried in Rome.

Another descendant from the circle of Mary Shelley was Ada Lovelace, the daughter of Lord Byron and Anne Isabella Milbanke. Encouraged in math by her mother to counteract her poet father's outrageous lifestyle, Lovelace became a brilliant mathematician who wrote algorithms to be carried out by a hypothetical computer. She is often considered the first computer programmer.

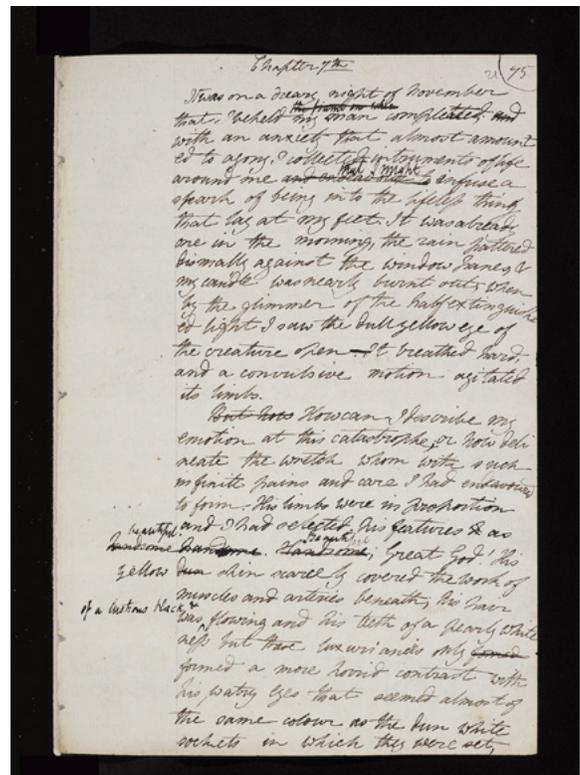
## OBJECTS AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

### OBJECT: MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY (1797–1851), *FRANKENSTEIN: "IT WAS ON A DREARY NIGHT IN NOVEMBER"* 1816–1817, PEN ON PAPER

Mary Shelley's handwritten first draft also features revisions by P. B. Shelley. This section of the manuscript includes the scene that Mary said first came to her when envisioning the novel: the dreary night in November when the Creature awakes. P. B. suggests adding "of a lustrous black" to Mary's description of the Creature's hair and suggests changing "handsome" (a more conventional word choice) to "beautiful" in the description of what Victor hoped the Creature might look like. On the left side of this spread, she cuts a section that would have inhibited the flow of action.

#### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Ask students to examine these **manuscript pages** carefully. Help students distinguish between Mary's handwriting and P. B. Shelley's. What do they notice about the choices each writer makes?
- ⚡ The exhibition curator writes that P.B.'s edits make "the prose more lush" (Denlinger, 138). Ask students where and how they see him doing this.
- ⚡ Ask students to think about the manuscript page in front of them. What would they have edited if Mary Shelley had asked for their feedback? Ask them to defend their choices. **(Teachers may even want to print copies for each student and ask them to make edits onto the copy.)**
- ⚡ Mary Shelley completed the first draft of this novel in less than ten months. Ask students what they think the editing process was like for her. Make connections to students' personal experience with the editing process. What is challenging? What do they learn in the process?
- ⚡ Mary Shelley's revisions did not end with this version of the manuscript. She edited it again after it was published for the third edition in 1831. Ask students to consider how the editing process might change once a book has already been published. Consider the fact that the novel was by then famous because of theatrical productions based on its plot. How might these factors affect Mary's editing process?



Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797 - 1851), *Frankenstein: It was on a dreary night in November*, 1816-1817, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford, MS Abinger c. 56, fol. 21.

**OBJECT: ATTRIBUTED TO EDWARD ELLERKER WILLIAMS (1793–1822),  
PORTRAIT OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822), 19TH CENTURY, WATERCOLOR  
ON PAPER**

This portrait of P. B. Shelley shows him getting older, graying at the sideburns and putting on weight. Historians believe the artist was Edward Ellerker Williams, who was living with the Shelleys in Italy during the summer of 1822. The Shelleys had grown close to Edward Williams and his wife, Jane. P. B. Shelley and Edward Williams died together in a boating accident less than a month before P. B. Shelley's thirtieth birthday.

**DISCUSSION PROMPTS:**

- ⚡ Historians believe that this was painted by Shelley's friend and housemate during the summer of 1822. What do students think about the way Williams depicted P. B. Shelley? How does he characterize Shelley?
- ⚡ How do students think they would be depicted differently by a friend versus someone they don't know?
- ⚡ As a class, explore a text by P. B. Shelley, such as the poem "Ozymandias." Ask students what they notice about his style and subject matter. Ask them to compare it to *Frankenstein's* style and subject matter. While P. B. Shelley was not a popular writer in his lifetime, he is now well known—due in large part to Mary Shelley's efforts to edit and publish his works. P. B. Shelley also helped Mary edit her writing. Ask students to discuss how Mary and P. B.'s relationship may have affected their writing and careers.



Edward Ellerker Williams (1793–1822), *Portrait of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 1822, watercolor over black chalk and graphite on wove paper. The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Mrs. W. Murray Crane, 1949. 1949.3.

**OBJECT: RICHARD ROTHWELL (1800–1868), PORTRAIT OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY, 1840, OIL ON CANVAS**

After Percy Bysshe's death, Mary Shelley went through a period of social isolation. By the beginning of 1830 she wrote in her journal about how this was changing at least a little bit: "I have begun a new kind of life somewhat—going a little into society ... People like me & flatter & follow me, & then I am left alone again. Poverty being a barrier I cannot pass—still I am often amused & sometimes interested" (qtd. in Denlinger, 181). She met the painter Richard Rothwell and he began to attend her parties (where she only welcomed people who would not "gossip about her past" [qtd. in Denlinger, 181]). Rothwell's specialty was portraits of people in high society. In this portrait he painted of her, she still wore the black velvet appropriate for a widow. She could not afford to purchase this portrait but later her daughter-in-law, Jane, the wife of Percy Florence, acquired it and left it to the National Portrait Gallery.



Richard Rothwell (1800–1868), portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, painted 1831, exhibited 1840, oil on canvas. © National Portrait Gallery, London

**DISCUSSION PROMPTS:**

- ⚡ This portrait was painted at a time in Shelley's life when she was emerging from a period of social isolation. She had just begun to have parties with people in her circle who would not bring up her past. Knowing what was happening in her life, what do students think about the way she was depicted in this portrait? Ask students to describe her clothing, facial expression, posture, and the background
- ⚡ Ask students to imagine that they could give the painter suggestions for revisions to the portrait that could communicate more about Shelley's state of mind. What do they think he should have changed or added? For instance, if he could add one prop to the portrait, what should it be?
- ⚡ Choose any two portraits (*Portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft*, *Portrait of William Godwin*, *Portrait of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, or *Portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*) from the exhibition and write an imagined dialogue between them. Which two portraits did you choose and why?

## OBJECT: PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822), FRAGMENTS OF SHELLEY'S SKULL, 1822

Percy Bysshe Shelley drowned at sea with two other companions. They were last seen on July 8 and their bodies washed up on the shore on July 18 and 19. Their bodies were so damaged by days at sea that P. B. Shelley had to be identified by his clothing and a copy of Keats's poems in his pocket. The Italian health authorities required that their bodies be removed quickly. One of Shelley's friends, Edward John Trelawny, organized a ceremony to cremate their bodies on the beach, using frankincense to cover the smell. The scene nauseated Byron yet, according to Trelawny, he asked for Shelley's skull: "Lord B. wished much to have the skull if possible—which I endeavoured to preserve—but before any part of the flesh was consumed on it, on attempting to move it—it broke to pieces—it was unusually thin and strikingly small" (qtd. in Denlinger, 180). Trelawny famously reached into the fire to save what he thought was P. B. Shelley's heart, and Mary Shelley had to fight to keep it. The ashes of this organ were found after her death in her writing desk, tucked into a copy of P. B. Shelley's poem *Adonais* along with locks of hair from her dead children, and were buried with her. The rest of P. B. Shelley's body was eventually buried in Rome.



Percy Bysshe Shelley, skull fragments, 1822. The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Encourage students to think about *Frankenstein* as a product of its time, place, and the culture of the Shelleys' friends. Death was a regular feature of life at the time. By 1823, at age 26, Mary Shelley had lost her mother, three of her four children, her half-sister, her niece, and her husband, among others. Medicine was less advanced and both childbirth and early childhood were dangerous with high mortality rates. How does the novel reflect anxieties about maternity and mortality? What is the relationship of Victor to his mother, and how does the lack of a mother affect the Creature?
- ⚡ Victor Frankenstein wants to use science to combat mortality. Ask students if they can think of other stories—in movies, books, songs, or television shows—in which a character tries to defy death and achieve immortality. How do they end? What are the messages these stories convey?

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. THE CREATURE'S EDUCATION:

Mary Shelley grew up surrounded by Enlightenment ideas of child development in the Godwin household. Essential to these ideas were John Locke's theories about children's minds being formed by their experiences, interactions, and surroundings. She was also influenced by the writing of the Genevan philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who criticized the transition in human development from a primitive or natural state to a civilized one. As she wrote the novel and cared for her own infant son, Mary Shelley likely thought of Locke and her parents' writings.



Ask students to identify sections of the text that deal with child (or Creature) development or education. For instance, the three narrators—Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the Creature are all autodidacts, self-taught individuals, to varying extents.



Does the plot support Locke's notion of children being shaped by experience? Why or why not? What does the novel suggest about learning in isolation? Do Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the Creature demonstrate any areas of ignorance, despite their education?



While he is with the cottagers, the Creature is exposed to Francois Volney's *Ruins of Empire* as well as three other books: Plutarch's *Lives*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. These books form the basis of his education and were all personally significant to Mary Shelley. Discuss which books or other forms of art (such as film, music, or visual art) you would share with a "blank slate" being like the Creature. Discuss how they might affect the Creature's development. Do you think your choices would make a more peaceful Creature or a more dangerous one?

### 2. SHELLEY'S EDITING PROCESS:



All of Mary Shelley's original manuscript pages are digitized and available online. These pages include P. B. Shelley's revisions. For this activity, encourage students to select their favorite chapter from *Frankenstein* and then visit the site below to find Mary Shelley's first draft of this chapter. Ask students to compare the edition they read to the original manuscript. What has changed? Which edits were suggested by P. B. Shelley as early as the original manuscript and which were made later? How did the manuscript change? Invite students to present on what they learned. How would they describe Shelley's editing process? Which elements did she change most?

[shelleygodwinarchive.org/contents/frankenstein/](http://shelleygodwinarchive.org/contents/frankenstein/)

### 3. FRANKENSTEIN: THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION :

Mary Shelley published three editions of *Frankenstein*. Students can see changes she made for her 1831 edition in this [link](#). Mary Shelley wrote edits directly into a printed first edition of the book. In her revisions, she made minor plot changes and shifted the tone of certain passages. For example, Mary Shelley heightened the suspense of Elizabeth and Victor's doomed wedding by extending their approach to their honeymoon site.

For this activity, students will reimagine a scene for a new edition of the novel. Encourage them to think broadly about these changes—including dialogue, character, and setting. Which scene would they expand or remove? What language altered? What character changes would they make?

- A. For the first part of the activity, begin with an original manuscript page. Ask students to edit the page. What did they change? Did they alter language to make it more modern? Did they change setting, mood, or characters?
- B. For the second part of the activity, encourage students to start with the plot synopsis of the novel included in this curriculum, or prepare their own summary. Working with a partner, they should rewrite a section from the synopsis. Students could consider how to modernize the story or expand or contract the roles of supporting characters such as Elizabeth, Justine or Henry. Do they want to change anything about the Creature? Do they envision a different story for the Creature's mate that Victor destroys before completion? How do students want to change the novel's plot and why?

### 4. THE MODERN PROMETHEUS AND LITERARY ALLUSIONS :

The full title of Mary Shelley's novel is *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Encourage students to research the myth of **Prometheus** and discuss why the story is referred to in the novel's subtitle. In Greek mythology, Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to the human race. For this act, he was punished by Zeus by being eternally chained to a rock and having his liver eaten by an eagle every day and growing it back every night to be eaten again the next day.

Victor Frankenstein is a Promethean figure, as he is a human performing an action typically restricted to the divine. Prometheus is not the only literary **allusion** in the text. There are many Biblical references, as the Creature first identifies with the mythical first man, Adam, but later identifies with the bitter fallen angel Satan. The Creature's desire for a mate is expressed as the desire for an Eve to "soothe [his] sorrows" (134). The book opens with a quote from Adam in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, "Did I request thee, Maker from my clay/To mold me man?"

For this activity, encourage students to discuss allusions they find in the story. How do they influence their understandings of the characters?

- A. Create a "modern" character inspired by a mythological or biblical allusion. Whether it is a modern Adam or Eve, a modern Prometheus, or something else entirely, encourage students to draw or paint a picture of their character. They should present their character to the class and explain the allusion.
- B. As an alternative, students could write a short story or design a comic book cover in which the character features prominently.

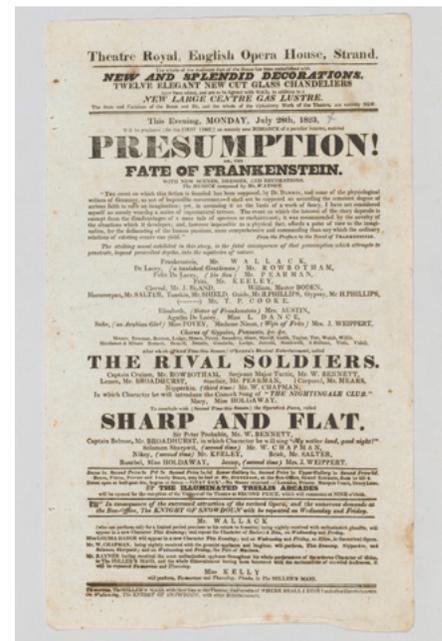
## SECTION FOUR: FRANKENSTEIN ON STAGE AND SCREEN; OTHER ADAPTATIONS

### STAGE ADAPTATIONS

The first stage adaptation of *Frankenstein* had a major impact on those that followed. Produced in 1823 by Richard Brinsley Peake, *Presumption! or, the Fate of Frankenstein* was made while Mary Shelley was alive, even before the publishing of the third edition of the book. We know that Shelley did not think the play's story was "well managed," but, like most others who saw it, she thought the part of the Creature was played "extremely well" (qtd. in Denlinger, 195). Indeed, Thomas Potter Cooke's portrayal of the Creature became the dominant visual image of the character for many years. Cooke was over six feet tall, wore a gray-blue leotard with his skin painted to match, and a toga on top. His movements were graceful and athletic, and unlike the Creature in the novel, he did not speak. His character had no name and was indicated on playbills with a series of hyphens—about which Shelley said, this "nameless mode of naming the unnameable is rather good" (qtd. in Denlinger, 195). In the changes, however, much was lost. The eloquent creature of the novel was gone.

This adaptation altered many other aspects of the novel as well, starting with the title. The script did not retain the moral subtleties of Mary Shelley's novel but instead condemned Victor's presumption: that he dared to make a creature when only God should create life. The Creature's muteness only strengthens this condemnation. Despite leaflets about the immorality of the novel, and rumors about P. B. Shelley's atheism, the play was a hit. Since only two theaters in London were allowed to produce pure drama, the play had to include song and dance. Musical gypsies and a comic servant named Fritz were added. This element continues in film adaptations with Igor playing a similar role in the films. In the novel, much of the plot happens through internal monologue, but in the theatrical and film productions, a foil character was needed to create a dialogue the audience could understand.

Because there was no copyright protection at the time, many other adaptations followed—at least fifteen between 1823 and 1826 using characters and themes from the novel in both England and France. Parodies soon followed, including one in which the scientist becomes a tailor. (Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein* continued this tradition 150 years later.) Peake himself wrote two parodies. Productions continued well into the second half of the nineteenth century.



Lyceum Theatre (London, England), *This evening, Monday, July 28th, 1823, will be produced (for the first time) an entirely new romance of a peculiar interest, entitled Presumption! or, the fate of Frankenstein*, London: s.n., 1823. The Morgan Library & Museum, PML 196172.



Roman Freulich, Jack Pierce devising makeup for Boris Karloff as the Creature in *Bride of Frankenstein*, ca. 1935. Photograph, The John Kobal Foundation, Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC, © 1935 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.



Colin Clive in *Frankenstein*, movie clip, 1931. Library of Congress, Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC, © 1931 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.

## FILM ADAPTATIONS

With the onset of film, adaptations of *Frankenstein* established some of the key visual imagery still associated with the novel. The version that remains the most iconic is James Whale's 1931 *Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster*. This film is "so powerful," argues Elizabeth C. Denlinger in the exhibition catalogue, "that the impact of its vision on the popular psyche has been deeper than that of the novel" and has given it the "strength of a myth" (196). Perhaps Whale's most memorable contributions to the iconography of *Frankenstein* are his laboratory creation scene and the costume and make-up for Boris Karloff's Creature, including the famous **electrodes** protruding from his neck. Boris Karloff's look is still restricted by a copyright that does not run out until 2026.

In Whale's 1935 sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, the actress Elsa Lanchester plays both Mary Shelley and the Creature's bride. Both Whale films create audience **sympathy** for the Creature, who encounters human cruelty and yet does not kill Victor's family and friends like Shelley's Creature in the novel. In these two films, the Creature uses violence primarily in self-defense or through childlike innocence. Like Cooke's theatrical adaptation, the Creature of film is often mute, or speaks simply.



Daniel Parker, torso model of Robert De Niro's makeup for his role as the Creature in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, fiberglass, 1994. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin.

## OBJECTS AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

**OBJECT: N. WHITTOCK AFTER (1791–1860), MR. T. P. COOKE, OF THE THEATRE ROYAL COVENT GARDEN, IN THE CHARACTER OF THE MONSTER IN THE DRAMATIC ROMANCE OF FRANKENSTEIN, BETWEEN 1832 AND 1834**

Unlike Mary Shelley's Creature, Thomas Potter, (T. P.) Cooke's Creature was neither "too horrible for human eyes" nor articulate (qtd. in Denlinger, 11). Instead, he had grace, beauty, and brute power. Whereas Boris Karloff's Creature in the 1931 film aroused compassion, Cooke's character aroused pity. The audience watched as he discovered that fire was painful, delighted in music, and made "gestures of conciliation" to Victor (Denlinger, 206).

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Before looking at this image, ask students to draw what they imagine the Creature looks like. (Teachers may choose to combine this activity with the previous activity 'Painting 21st Century Gothic' in Section One.) Compare the drawings. Ask students to think about what inspired their images. Was it film, television, comic books? Was it a specific passage in the novel?
- ⚡ Now look together at this image of T. P. Cooke playing the Creature. Ask students what they notice about how he is portrayed. What can students surmise about the way this stage adaptation presented the character? Compare this image of the Creature to their drawings.
- ⚡ While Mary Shelley thought the role was played "extremely well" and Cooke's portrayal was popular for many years, the character was quite different from the novel (qtd. in Denlinger, 195). He was not horrible to look at. Cooke's performance of the Creature was informed by the actor's study of mime. Cooke portrayed the character with grace, and also as completely mute. His vulnerable version of the Creature became more sympathetic. Ask students to discuss how these differences would change the story of the novel. What relationships would change? How would the meaning of the novel change for them?

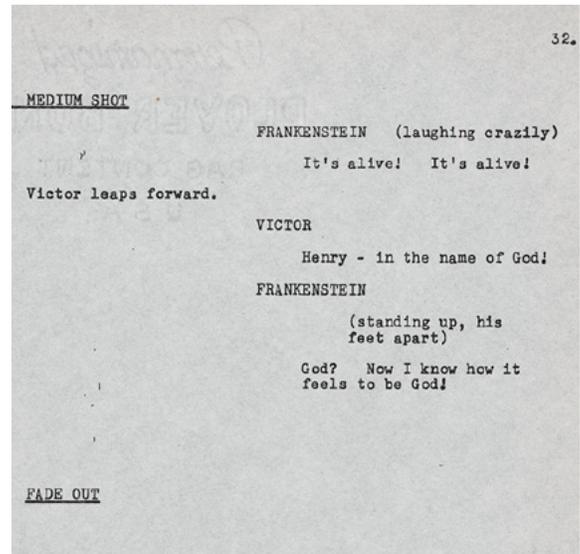


N. Whittock after (1791 - 1860), Mr. T. P. Cooke, of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, in the character of the monster in the dramatic romance of Frankenstein, between 1832 and 1834, The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

**OBJECT: GARRETT FORT, *FRANKENSTEIN* SCREENPLAY, 12 AUGUST 1931**

Adaptations of the novel must contend with how to translate scenes that occur mostly in characters' minds into dialogue and action. The scene in which the Creature comes to life is particularly important. In the T. P. Cooke stage version, the comic servant, Fritz, watches through a window and runs off in terror when Frankenstein exclaims: "It lives!" Fritz then cries "Oh dear! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" and runs off while Frankenstein repeats himself: "It lives! It lives!" In the same director's burlesque version, Frankenstein instead yells: "It lives—it snores—it cries!"

In this screenplay from James Whale's 1931 film, screenwriter Garrett Fort continues the "presumption" focus from the early stage adaptation of *Frankenstein*, emphasizing the hubris of creation. As the Creature comes to life, Victor Frankenstein shouts: "It's alive! It's alive! ...Now I know how it feels to be God."



Garrett Fort (1900–1945) and Francis Edwards Faragoh (1895–1966), *Frankenstein*, typescript screenplay, 12 August 1931. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, gift of Philip Riley, 1990. Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC. © 1931 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.

**DISCUSSION PROMPTS:**

 Read the passage in the novel where the Creature first comes to life.



See the included [Film Guide for Timestamps](#) of significant scenes, as well as the text and citation in the novel.

How does Victor react? What does he do or say or think? How does Mary Shelley let the reader know that the Creature has come to life?

 Compare this passage to the scene in which the Creature comes to life in the 1931 film. What does Frankenstein do or say in this moment? How do we know the Creature has come to life?

 Ask students to think more about the line: "Now I know how it feels to be God." Tell them that early stage adaptations emphasized the moral hazard of playing God by creating life. Think about how Mary Shelley deals with this notion in her novel. Does she condemn Victor for creating life? Why or why not? What are the ultimate fates of both Victor and the Creature? Encourage students to argue their point of view with evidence from the text.

- How would the line "Now I know how it feels to be God" be understood differently in 1818 (when the novel was first published) versus 1931 (when James Whale adapted the novel as a film) versus today? How have changing ethical and religious views altered its meaning?
- Tell students that the line was cut by censors in some versions of the 1931 film. Ask them to think about why and to come up with alternative lines that they think would have been considered acceptable. How do these alternative lines change the story's meaning?

**OBJECT: P. B. SHELLEY, MARY SHELLEY, AND LORD BYRON, PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPH FOR BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935), PHOTOGRAPH WITH ROMAN FREULICH, ELSA LANCHESTER AND BORIS KARLOFF IN THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)**

In James Whale's 1935 sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, Elsa Lanchester plays both Mary Shelley and the Creature's bride. In the first film production photograph, Elsa Lanchester, as Mary Shelley, is shown between Lord Byron and P. B. Shelley. By having Lanchester play both roles, James Whale made the bride an **alter ego** of the author, challenging audiences to find a relationship between the beautiful woman and the uncanny creation. In the film, Byron asks: "Can you believe that bland and lovely brow could have conceived of *Frankenstein*?" And Lanchester replies as Mary Shelley: "Why shouldn't I write of monsters?" Were it not for the censors, the line would have been longer: "You say look at me. I say look at [P. B.] Shelley—who would suspect that pink and white innocence, gentle as a dove, was thrown out of Oxford University as a menace to morality, had run away from his lawful spouse with innocent me but 17...I am already ostracized as a free thinker, so why shouldn't I write of monsters?" (qtd. in Denlinger, 233). The film emphasized "Mary Shelley's" femininity by portraying her in a fairytale-like dress, pricking her finger while sewing.

Later in the film, Lanchester's monster bride is beautiful and strange. The bride's fear of the Creature evokes the audience's sympathy; even his intended mate does not love him. In the novel, by contrast, the bride is never completed and Victor tosses the unfinished pieces of her into the North Sea.

In *The Bride of Frankenstein*, the film's moral responsibility is different. Victor is not the only scientist; he has been tempted to make the bride by his mentor Dr. Pretorius. The older scientist is a clearly villainous character, manipulating both Victor and the Creature. After his bride rejects him, the Creature helps Victor and his wife Elizabeth escape the castle, but makes Dr. Pretorius and the newly created bride stay. After announcing, "We belong dead," he crashes the tower down on them all.



Gavin Gordon (1901–1983), Elsa Lanchester (1902–1986), and Douglas Walton (1901–1961) in *The Bride of Frankenstein*, photograph, 1935. Core Collection Production Files, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC, © 1935 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.



Elsa Lanchester and Boris Karloff in *The Bride of Frankenstein*, photograph, 1935. Core Collection Production Files, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC, © 1935 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ As a class, look together at the production photograph of Elsa Lanchester playing Mary Shelley in *The Bride of Frankenstein*. What do students notice about her character and how she is interacting with the others – Lord Byron and P. B. Shelley?
- ⚡ Compare this photograph to the next—of Lanchester playing the Creature's bride. Ask students to discuss why they think James Whale, the director, might have chosen one actress to play both roles. Explore the concept of the alter ego, or the **doppelgänger**. Can students think of other examples in literature or popular culture? How and why are mirror images both fascinating and strange?
- ⚡ In Mary Shelley's novel, the characters of Victor and the Creature are connected—one always pursuing the other, inextricably tied together. In *Bride*, Lanchester plays both roles, implying a connection between Mary Shelley and the Creature's bride. Ask students to look for other examples of alter egos in the novel. What do they imply about the characters and the meaning of the story?
- ⚡ *Bride* ends quite differently than the novel with the Creature choosing to save Victor and Elizabeth. Both stories end with the Creature's suggested suicide, but the film version transforms the Creature into a hero. Which version do students prefer and why?



Roman Freulich, Elsa Lanchester as the bride, production photograph for *The Bride of Frankenstein*, 1935, The John Kobal Foundation, Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC, © 1935 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.

## FRANKENSTEIN IN OTHER LITERARY WORKS AND ADAPTATIONS

Mary Shelley's story is influential to other literary works and has been adapted into different textual media, sometimes faithfully following the novel, sometimes loosely inspired by film and other adaptations. Her themes of an embattled creator and creation, and a mysterious technical breakthrough, strike a chord with the concept of **dystopia**, especially the idea of an imagined future where science has led to some negative outcome in society.

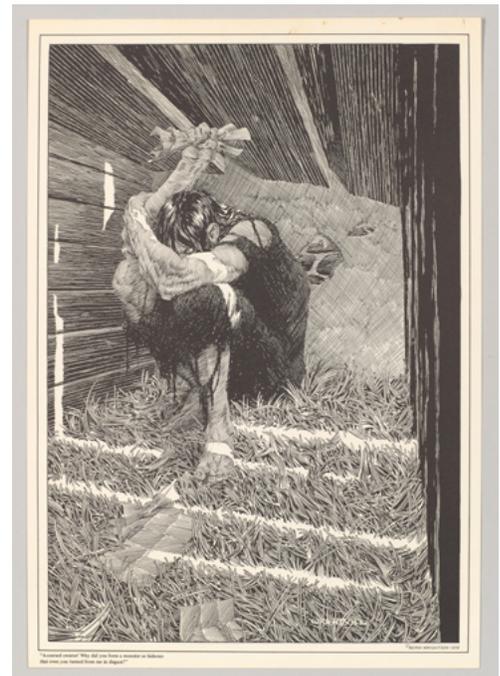
Anxieties about scientific progress that may lead to dystopian societies and dehumanization are a legacy of *Frankenstein*. Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy, beginning with the novel *Oryx and Crake*, explores genetic engineering run amok. The ethics of cloning and the rights of cloned humans are explored in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (adapted into a film by Mark Romanek.) The Frankensteinian themes can be adapted to lighter works as well, such as the young adult novel *Cadaver & Queen* by Alisa Kwitney, which reimagines the romance of Victor and Elizabeth as medical students and features Victor as the reanimated corpse.

The graphic novel combines textual elements of a traditional novel with greater visual interpretation, placing it in between the media of book and film. In adaptation, the Creature's agency and characterization can shift and change from Mary Shelley's original work.

Contemporary artists have created their own images of the Creature for illustrated editions of the novel, such as Barry Moser, or graphic novel editions, such as Gris Grimly. For example, Grimly's adaptation combines the Gothic imagery of *Frankenstein* with a steampunk aesthetic, emphasizing the technical wonderment of the story, and his Creature has visible bones and tendons, accentuating the decay of his corpse body.



*Le Monstre et le magicien . . . Ambigu-Comique, souvenir fan, 1861, color lithograph. Matthieu Biger (CPHB Collection).*



Bernie Wrightson, *Accursed Creator! Why Did You Form a Monster So Hideous That Even You Turned from Me in Disgust?*, lithograph in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, New York: Tyrannosaurus Press, 1978. The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased on the Gordon N. Ray Fund, 2017, PML 197645. © 2018 Bernie Wrightson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## FRANKENSTEIN IN POLITICAL CARTOONS

The concept of an uncontrollable creation has inspired political cartoonists for many years, starting as early as the 1830s. (Denlinger, 275). Heads of state and other political figures undone by their own creations appears to be eternally ripe for satire. For example, in 1866, John Tenniel drew a cartoon he called “The Brummagem Frankenstein,” in which he portrayed the Quaker reformer John Bright as Victor terrified by the monster he created by achieving universal suffrage. In this case, his “Creature” is a looming, empowered working class man. Bright creeps by the Creature, stuttering: “I have no fe-fe-fear of ma-manhood suffrage.”

### **John Tenniel cartoon:**

The sitting presidents of the United States, as well as presidential candidates, are frequently a source of political cartoons using the metaphor of Frankenstein. In a 2017 cartoon by Steve Sack, Trumpcare is the Creature and President Trump is Victor. “It’s alive!” declares Trump over the body. “No wait—it’s dead. No wait—it’s alive again! No wait...”

### **Steve Sack cartoon:**

For a list of contemporary examples including President Donald Trump, President Barack Obama and other contemporary American political figures, [here is a selection:](#)



Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827), *The Covent Garden Night Mare*, hand-colored etching on paper, [London]: W. Humphrey, 1784. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. NOVEL VS. STAGE VS. SCREEN :

Comparisons between the novel and its stage and screen adaptations offer an opportunity to see how the meaning of the story can change with a few alterations—as well as to see what works in different mediums.

Three scenes are of particular interest:

1. The Creature's creation,
2. The Creature's contact with a young child,
3. The Creature's interaction with Elizabeth on her wedding night.



See the [Guide to Film Adaptations: Three Key Scenes](#) below for the timestamped location of each scene in its respective film and the corresponding text from the novel.



For this activity, begin by comparing one or all of these scenes in the novel and in films. How does James Whale's 1931 film depict the moment the Creature comes to life versus Mary Shelley's novel? How does it handle the meeting of the Creature and Elizabeth on her wedding night? If you have time, view another film version for an additional comparison, such as Kenneth Branagh's version. Discuss how the changes alter the characters and the story as a whole.



Then assign students to choose one of these sections of the story and create their own version. They could write a synopsis or treatment for their section and possibly even perform it for the class. They should be prepared to discuss how their version departs from the original and how it affects the work as a whole.

## 2. FRANKENSTEINIAN TERM:



The term **Frankensteinian** entered the lexicon shortly after the publication of Mary Shelley's novel. It can be defined as "a thing that destroys its creator," and it has been used to describe situations ranging from unexpected outcomes in political elections to anxieties about artificial intelligence. For this activity, ask students to discuss the adjective and identify circumstances that it could describe. Then students can either write poems (for example a "list poem," a list or inventory of items, people, places, or ideas) or make collages that explore the term. What do they include? How is "Frankensteinian" a valuable lens through which to view objects we have created in our world?

## 3. FRANKENSTEINIAN STORY:



As an extension or alternative to the above activity, assign students to write either a short story or screenplay synopsis about "a thing that destroys its creator." First, as a class, discuss movies, television shows, or books they already know about that extend this concept in new ways. These could include movies about robots gone rogue, such as *The Terminator*. Next, ask them to create their own version. What kind of creation could they imagine that might eventually destroy its creator? Encourage them to incorporate modern technologies they have heard or read about (and to research this technology before they write). Then tell them they can tell their story in one of two forms: either as a short story or as a screenplay synopsis. A screenplay synopsis is a brief summary of a film or potential film written in a few paragraphs and including only a general outline of events.

When students have completed their stories, ask them to share with the class. Which new developments or technologies have inspired creations that destroy their creators? What do they tell us about our world today? What themes or ethical questions do they have in common with *Frankenstein*?

**\*How to write a synopsis:**



### MATERIALS SUPPLEMENTS FOR THIS SECTION

1. [Suggested Films](#)
2. [Guide to Film with Timestamps](#)
3. [Related Films](#)

## VOCABULARY

**Alchemy:** a medieval branch of study and speculative philosophy aiming to achieve the transmutation of the base metals into gold, as well as the search for human immortality

**Allusion:** a literary device that refers to a well-known story, event, person, or object in order to make a comparison in the readers' minds

**Alter Ego:** a second self or different version of oneself: such as

A: a trusted friend

B: the opposite side of a personality

**Autodidact:** a self-taught person

**Bell Jar:** a bell-shaped glass vessel used for covering delicate objects or used in a laboratory, typically for enclosing samples

**Clone:** the aggregate of genetically identical cells or organisms asexually produced by or from a single progenitor cell or organism

**Copyright:** the exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, sell, or distribute the matter and form of something (such as a literary, musical, or artistic work)

**Creature:** something created, either animate or inanimate

**Doppelgänger:** a double of a living person, possibly a spirit or ghost. In folklore to see your double is typically a forewarning of bad luck or death.

**Dystopia:** An imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible

**Electrode:** a conductor by means of which an electric current is made to enter or leave an object, substance, or region

**The Enlightenment:** a philosophical movement of the 18th century marked by a rejection of traditional social, religious, and political ideas

and an emphasis on reason and experience, as opposed to emotion and religious belief, as the basis for action

**Feminism:** the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes

**Frankensteinian:** a monster who is a terror to his originator and ends by destroying him

**Galvanism:** a direct current of electricity especially when produced by chemical action

**Gothic:** of or relating to a style of fiction characterized by the use of desolate or remote settings and macabre, mysterious, or violent incidents

**Homage:** a work of art or entertainment which incorporates elements characteristic of another work or artist, as a means of paying affectionate tribute

**Macabre:** characterized by or suggestive of gruesomeness; grim, horrific, repulsive

**Monster:**

A. any imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening

B. a malformed animal or plant

C. a person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman

**Natural philosopher:** term used until the nineteenth century to describe those who study natural bodies and the phenomena connected with them; what would today be known as physical scientists

**Occult:** supernatural beliefs and practices with a secret or mysterious nature

**Parody:** a literary or musical work in which the style of an author or work is closely imitated for comic effect or in ridicule

**Pneumatics:** a branch of physics that deals with the properties of air and other gases

**Presumption:** the taking upon oneself of more than is warranted by one's ability; an act, instance, or state of arrogance or overconfidence

**Prometheus:** a character from Greek mythology who is eternally punished for stealing fire from the gods and giving it to humanity

**Romanticism:** a literary, artistic, and philosophical movement originating in the 18th century, characterized by an emphasis on the imagination and emotions, and marked especially in English literature by the use of autobiographical material, an appreciation of nature, a predilection for melancholy, and the use in poetry of older verse forms

**Sublime:** A. lofty, grand, or exalted in thought, expression, or manner  
B. of outstanding spiritual, intellectual, or moral worth  
C. tending to inspire awe usually because of elevated quality (as of beauty, nobility, or grandeur) or transcendent excellence

**Sympathy:** the act or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings or interests of another

**Vacuum:** a space absolutely devoid of matter

**Vacuum pump:** a pump for exhausting gas from an enclosed space

**Vindication:** justification by proof or explanation



Josephine Turner (1909–2003) and Leland Crawford, reproduction of wig for Elsa Lanchester in *The Bride of Frankenstein*, 1935. Courtesy of Museum of the Moving Image, New York, gift of Josephine Turner and Leland Crawford. Courtesy of Universal Studios Licensing LLC © 1935 Universal Pictures Company, Inc.

## SUGGESTED READING

### HISTORY AND CRITICISM:

- Denlinger, Elizabeth C. *It's Alive! A Visual History of Frankenstein*, 2018
- Gordon, Charlotte, *Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft & Mary Shelley*, 2016
- Hunter, J. Paul, ed., *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text, Contexts, Criticism*, 2012
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1831) Penguin Books, 2007
- Smith, Andrew, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Frankenstein*, 2016

### WORKS BY MARY SHELLEY AND HER CIRCLE

- Byron, George Gordon, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1812-1818
- Byron, George Gordon, "Darkness," 1816
- Godwin, William, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, 1793
- Polidori, John William, "The Vampyre," 1819
- Shelley, Mary, *The Last Man*, 1826
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, "Ozymandias," 1818, "Adonais," 1821
- Wollstonecraft, Mary, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, 1790
- Wollstonecraft, Mary, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792
- Wollstonecraft, Mary, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, 1796

### WORKS THAT APPEAR IN FRANKENSTEIN:

- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 1774
- Milton, John, *Paradise Lost*, 1667
- Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, 1st century AD
- Volney (or, Constantin François Chasseboeuf), *The Ruins, or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires*, 1792, translated by James Marshall

### INFLUENTIAL TO MARY SHELLEY'S PHILOSOPHY:

- Locke, John, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690
- Locke, John, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 1693
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men*, 1754

### GOTHIC NOVELS:

- Austen, Jane, *Northanger Abbey*, 1803
- Lewis, Matthew Gregory, *The Monk*, 1796
- Maturin, Charles Robert, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, 1820
- Radcliffe, Anne, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794
- Walpole, Horace, *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764

### ALTER EGOS AND MONSTERS:

- Stevenson, Robert Louis, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1886
- Stoker, Bram, *Dracula*, 1897
- Wilde, Oscar, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1891

### CONTEMPORARY ADAPTATIONS AND REIMAGININGS:

- Atwood, Margaret, *Oryx and Crake*, 2003
- Grimly, Gris, *Gris Grimly's Frankenstein*, 2013
- Ishiguro, Kazuo, *Never Let Me Go*, 2005
- Kwitney, Alisa, *Cadaver & Queen*, 2018
- Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein the Graphic Novel*, 2008, edited by Clive Bryant

## SUGGESTED FILMS

### ADAPTATIONS OF THE NOVEL

- *Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster*, 1931, James Whale, director, NR
- *The Bride of Frankenstein*, 1935, James Whale, director, NR
- *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, 1994, Kenneth Branagh, director, R

### FILMED THEATRICAL ADAPTATIONS

- *Frankenstein*, 2011, Danny Boyle, director, NR

### CREATIVE REIMAGININGS

- *Blade Runner*, 1982, Ridley Scott, director, R
- *The Terminator*, 1984, James Cameron, director, R
- *Edward Scissorhands*, 1990, Tim Burton, director, PG-13
- *The Iron Giant*, 1999, Brad Bird, director, PG

### PARODIES AND HOMAGES

- *Frankenweenie* (short) 1984, Tim Burton, director, PG
- *Frankenweenie* (animated feature) 2012, Tim Burton, director, PG
- *Young Frankenstein*, 1974, Mel Brooks, director, PG

## SUGGESTED WEB RESOURCES

### DIGITAL REFERENCE AND ESSAYS:

The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle  
The New York Public Library (Stephen A. Schwarzman Building)  
[Digital collection](#) of Shelley materials including texts and works of art

*The Dinner Party*

The Brooklyn Museum

[Mary Wollstonecraft](#) has a place setting in the Brooklyn Museum's permanent installation of Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*. Her daughter [Mary Shelley](#) is also included in the installation. The museum's website explains the artist's choice of Wollstonecraft for her feminist work, including articles and images

['Romantic Circles'](#) guide for *Frankenstein*; related resources for Romantic literature

[The Shelley-Godwin Archive](#), manuscript pages digitized and with transcripts

[The sublime in art:](#) The Tate

### FRANKENSTEIN 200<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:

Frankenreads, a National Endowment for the Humanities funded initiative of the Keats-Shelley Association of America for a series of events, initiatives and resources:

[frankenreads.org](#)

Frankenstein200, a project using themes from *Frankenstein* to examine emerging technologies while promoting skills related to creative collaboration and critical thinking:

[nisenet.org/frankenstein](#)

Frankenstein200 online game:

[frankenstein200.org](#)

Romantic Bicentennials, a list of anniversary events sponsored by the Keats-Shelley Association of America (K-SAA) and the Byron Society of America (BSA):

[romantics200.org](#)

### SCIENTIFIC ETHICS AND VACUUM PUMP DEMONSTRATIONS:

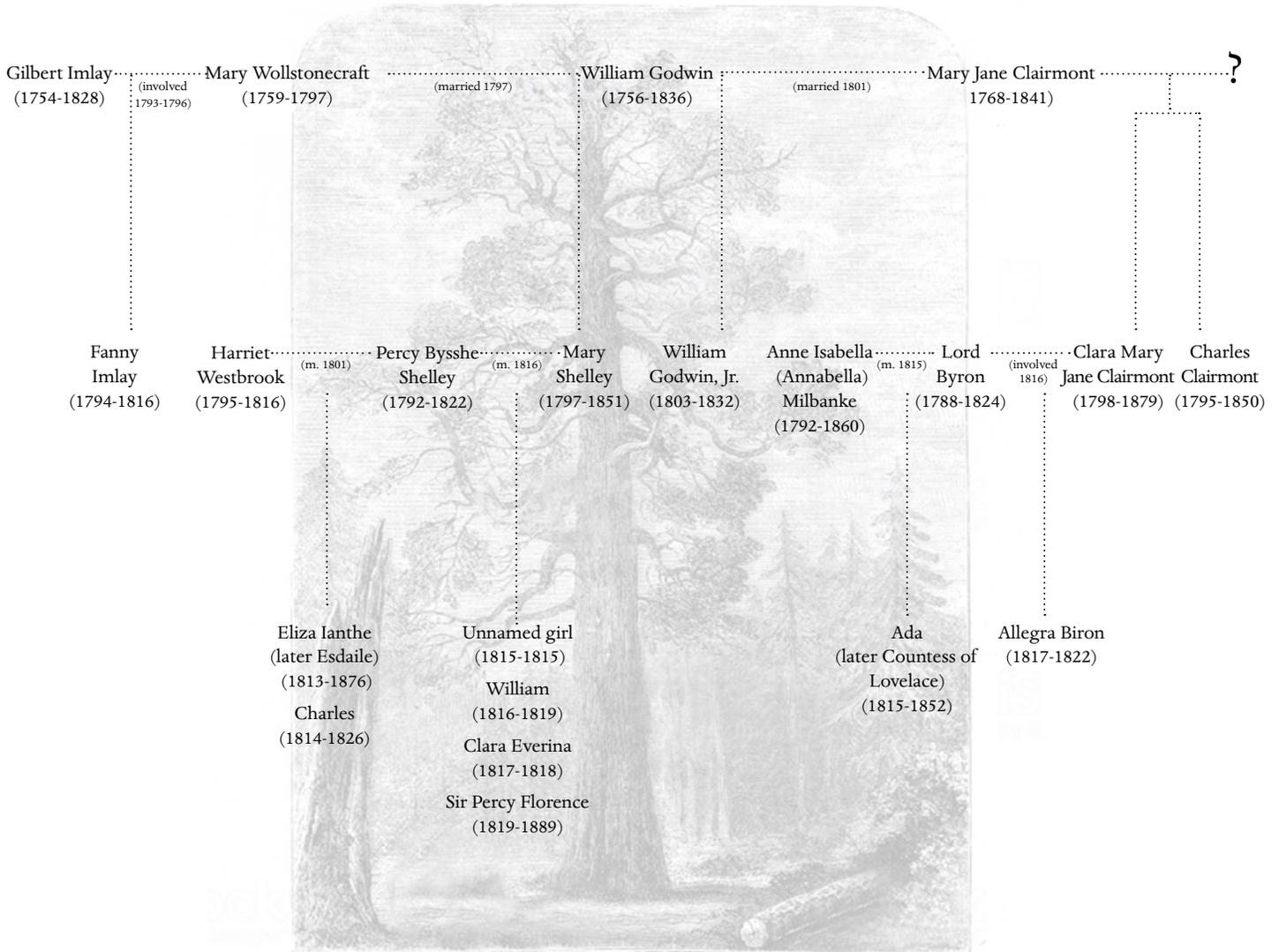
[Ethical dilemmas](#) examples in *New Scientist Magazine*

[Vacuum pump activities](#)

[Vacuum pump DIY](#)

[Vacuum pump video demonstration](#)

## SHELLEY-GODWIN FAMILY TREE



## BIOGRAPHIES FOR GODWIN-SHELLEY FAMILY TREE

### MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT (1759–1797)

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), raised by an abusive father and largely responsible for her siblings' upbringing, was an author and feminist whose arguments frequently reflect her concern for reforming education and domestic relations. She is best known for *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). During the collapse of her relationship with Gilbert Imlay (father of her first daughter, Fanny), she wrote *Letters Written During a Brief Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796)—a text William Godwin described as “calculated to make a man in love with its author.” Wollstonecraft and Godwin married shortly before the birth of their daughter Mary, who would later be known as Mary Shelley. Wollstonecraft died of puerperal fever ten days after Mary Godwin (later Shelley) was born.



### GILBERT IMLAY (1754–1828)

Gilbert Imlay (1754–1828), described by Wil Verhoeven as “perhaps best regarded as an early example of the American con man,” was Mary Wollstonecraft’s romantic partner during the French Revolution. Although the couple did not marry, Imlay declared Wollstonecraft his spouse to offer her the protection afforded Americans during the Terror. The couple had a daughter, Fanny, in 1794, but Imlay proved unfaithful, and a despairing Wollstonecraft attempted suicide. While she recovered, Imlay sent her to Scandinavia to inquire about his business interests; she published the letters she wrote during the trip as *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796). When she returned from the trip, she found Imlay had taken up with another woman. Wollstonecraft attempted suicide once again, and once again survived.

### WILLIAM GODWIN (1756–1836)

William Godwin (1756–1836) was a political philosopher, novelist, and a founder of the genre that became the detective thriller. His best-known works include *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) and *Caleb Williams* (1794). Chronically debt-ridden and frequently threatened with repercussions of his politically radical writing, Godwin raised his large, blended family under extreme stress. When the young Percy Bysshe Shelley sought out his political role model, he met Godwin’s 16-year-old daughter Mary, and they quickly began a romantic relationship.



### MARY JANE CLAIRMONT (1768–1841)

Mary Jane Clairmont (1768–1841) was William Godwin’s neighbor when they met and quickly married. She brought two children of her own, Jane (who later went by the name Claire Clairmont) and Charles, into the family. In 1803, Mary Jane gave birth to a son, William Godwin, named after his father. By this point, five children lived in the house—and none shared the same two parents. Mary Jane was known for her strong personality, but by all accounts the marriage was a success. The Godwins were often financially strapped, despite running a successful children’s bookshop and publishing company. As Mary Godwin (later Shelley) grew up, she and Mary Jane suffered an increasingly tense relationship—especially after Mary and Jane (Claire) eloped to the Continent with Percy Bysshe Shelley.

### FRANCES “FANNY” IMLAY (1794–1816)

Frances Imlay (1794–1816), named for her mother’s friend Frances Blood and called Fanny throughout her life, was adopted by William Godwin after Mary Wollstonecraft’s death. Like her half-sister Mary, she was raised in a lively, intellectual household that set high expectations: her stepsister, Claire Clairmont, later commented that “in our family if you cannot write an epic poem or a novel that by its originality knocks all other novels on the head, you are a despicable creature not worth acknowledging.” Left behind when Claire and Mary ran off to the Continent with Percy Bysshe Shelley, Fanny committed suicide in 1816.

### CHARLES CLAIRMONT (1795–1850)

Charles Clairmont (1795–1850) joined the Godwin household when his mother, Mary Jane, married their neighbor, William Godwin.

### HARRIET WESTBROOK (1795–1816)

Harriet Westbrook (1795–1816) married Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1811, when she was just 16 years old. By the time P. B. Shelley met Mary Godwin in 1814, Harriet was pregnant with their second child, but for him the marriage was already mostly over. When Harriet committed suicide in 1816, Mary Godwin and P. B. Shelley had already had two children of their own.

### PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), a poet, defied his father’s expectations when he was expelled from Oxford for refusing to deny authorship of “The Necessity of Atheism.” He married Harriet Westbrook in 1811, but the marriage quickly fell apart, and he took up with Mary Godwin (later Mary Shelley) in 1814, abandoning his pregnant wife and young child. After Harriet’s suicide, he unsuccessfully sought custody of their two children. In the last seven years of his life, before he drowned just shy of his 30th birthday, he lost three of his four children by Mary Shelley. Percy Bysshe Shelley was Mary Shelley’s frequent editor, and made suggestions to the text of *Frankenstein* as we know it. Although he was not as popular a poet as his friend Byron in their lifetimes, his poetic legacy was secured in large part through the efforts of his widow. He is now best known for poems such as “Ozymandias,” “Queen Mab,” and “Adonais,” an elegy for John Keats.



### MARY SHELLEY (1797–1851)

Mary Shelley (1797–1851) is best known as the author of *Frankenstein* (1818), but she wrote novels, essays, and short fiction throughout her life. Raised in an intellectual household under the shadow of her mother’s death just ten days after her own birth, Mary must have been, as she later wrote of Percy Bysshe Shelley, “very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage, and enrol myself on the page of fame.” She ran off with Shelley at 16 and began writing the novel that would secure her fame at just 18 years old. Her life began with the tragedy of her mother’s death, and tragedy would continue to follow her, as she lost three of four children and her husband before her 25th birthday. She raised her remaining child, Percy Florence Shelley, on a



meager allowance from her father-in-law, supplemented by her earnings as a writer. When she died of a brain tumor in 1851, she had already secured her legacy as author of one of the greatest works of English literature.

### **WILLIAM GODWIN, JR. (1803–1832)**

William Godwin, Jr. (1803–1832), spent a wayward youth before settling into a career as a journalist for *The Morning Chronicle*. Like others in his famous family, he tried his hand at a variety of literary genres, but with little success. After he died of cholera at 29, his father arranged for the posthumous publication of his novel *Transfusion* (1835).

### **CLAIRE CLAIRMONT (1798–1879)**

Clara Mary Jane Clairmont (1798–1879) was known as Jane in childhood, but later chose to go by the name Claire. Like her half-brother Charles, she joined the Godwin household when her mother married William Godwin. She joined her stepsister Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley when they eloped to the Continent in 1814. In 1815, she initiated a relationship with the famous poet Lord Byron, who was unhappily married to Annabella Milbanke. It was at her request that Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley agreed to travel to Switzerland to meet up with Byron and his doctor, John Polidori. During the fateful summer of 1816, Byron challenged the group to write ghost stories, which led to two of the most iconic monsters in British literature, in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Polidori's "The Vampyre" (1819). Claire returned from the trip pregnant with the child who would eventually be known as Allegra Biron.

### **LORD BYRON (1788–1824)**

George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824), wrote that after the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in 1812, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous." It was probably his celebrity as a poet that compelled Claire Clairmont to proposition him in 1815, even though he was unhappily married at the time. Although his relationship with Claire was brief, it forever entangled Byron with the Shelley-Godwin family: in addition to fathering a child by Claire, Byron formed a literary friendship with the Shelleys that began that fateful summer of 1816, when they stayed at the Villa Diodati. Long interested in global struggles for liberty, Byron died of a fever in 1824 while he was on his way to join the Greek independence movement.

### **ANNABELLA MILBANKE (1792–1860)**

Byron proposed to Annabella Milbanke twice before she accepted and they married in 1815. The marriage quickly turned sour as Byron's behavior scandalized the morally upright Annabella. By the time the couple separated in 1816, shortly after the birth of their daughter, Annabella believed her husband was certifiably mad.

### **IANTHE AND CHARLES SHELLEY**

After Harriett Westbrook's suicide in 1816, a custody battle ensued, and Percy Bysshe Shelley lost custody of Ianthe and Charles, the children of his first marriage. The court used P. B. Shelley's radical politics and professed atheism, as expressed in his poem "Queen Mab" (1813), as grounds for denying custody. When Charles died at eleven, Percy Florence became heir to the Shelley estates, and P. B. Shelley's father became slightly more generous in the allowance he paid to Mary Shelley for his upkeep.

## **THE SHELLEY CHILDREN**

Only one of the Shelleys' four children survived. The first, a girl whose name, if she had one, has been lost to the ages, lived only a few weeks. William and Clara died as toddlers, and the Shelleys were childless before the birth of their fourth and last child, Percy Florence. Percy Florence—known as Sir Percy Florence after he inherited the baronetcy upon the death of his grandfather—lived a long and seemingly happy life. He and his wife Jane preserved the legacy of his famous parents, building a shrine to them in their home and relocating the graves of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin to Dorset, where they were laid to rest together.

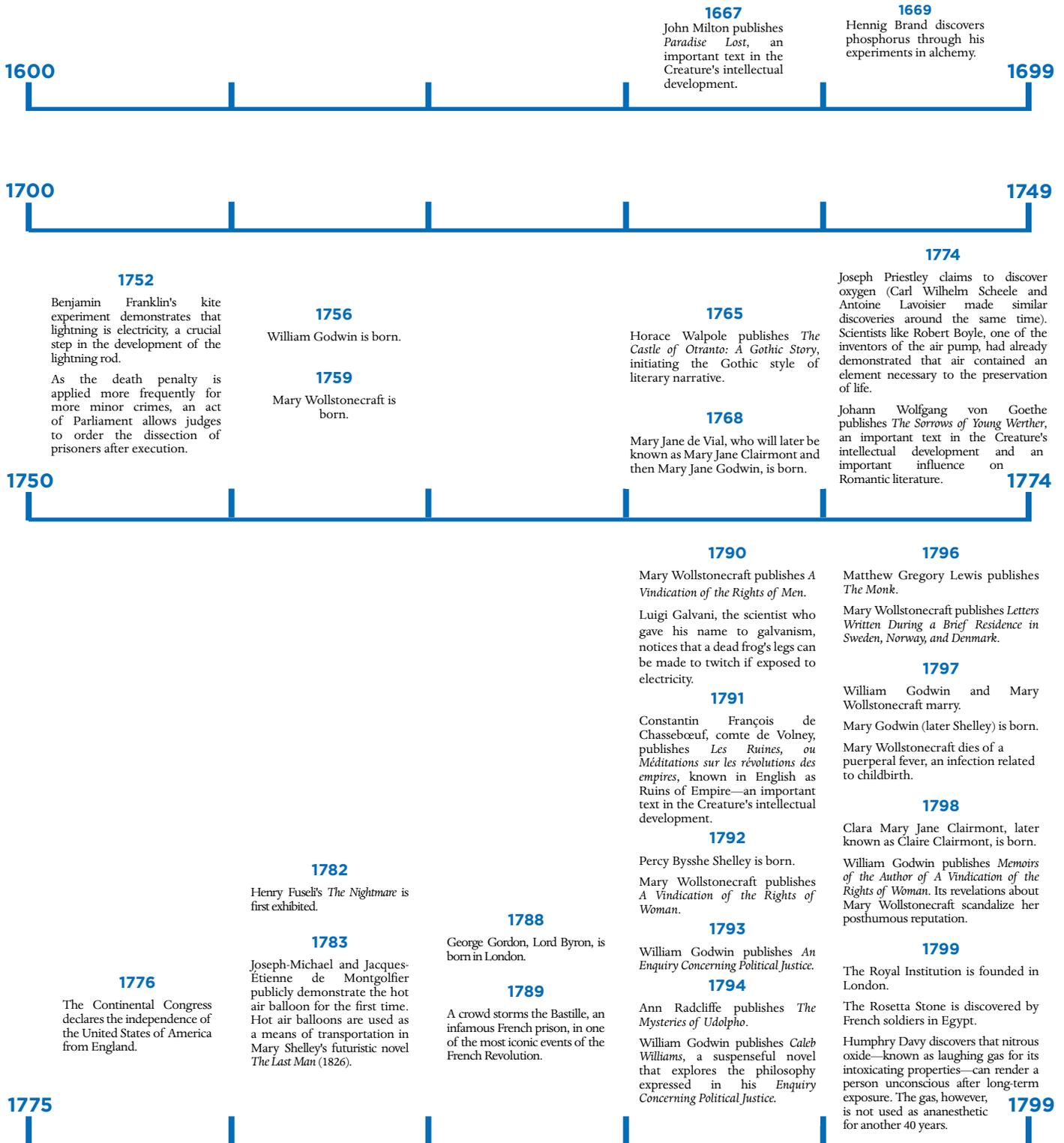
#### **ALLEGRA BIRON (1817–1822)**

Allegra Biron (1817–1822) was first named Alba after the nickname Claire Clairmont and the Shelleys used to refer to Lord Byron, Albè, for its aural similarity to his initials, L. B. Byron renamed the child Allegra and gave her an altered version of his surname to distinguish her from her legitimate half-sister, Ada. Allegra died of typhus fever in an Italian convent when she was five years old; she was buried at Harrow, her father's school. Her mother Claire vocally mourned the child's death until the end of her own life more than fifty years later.

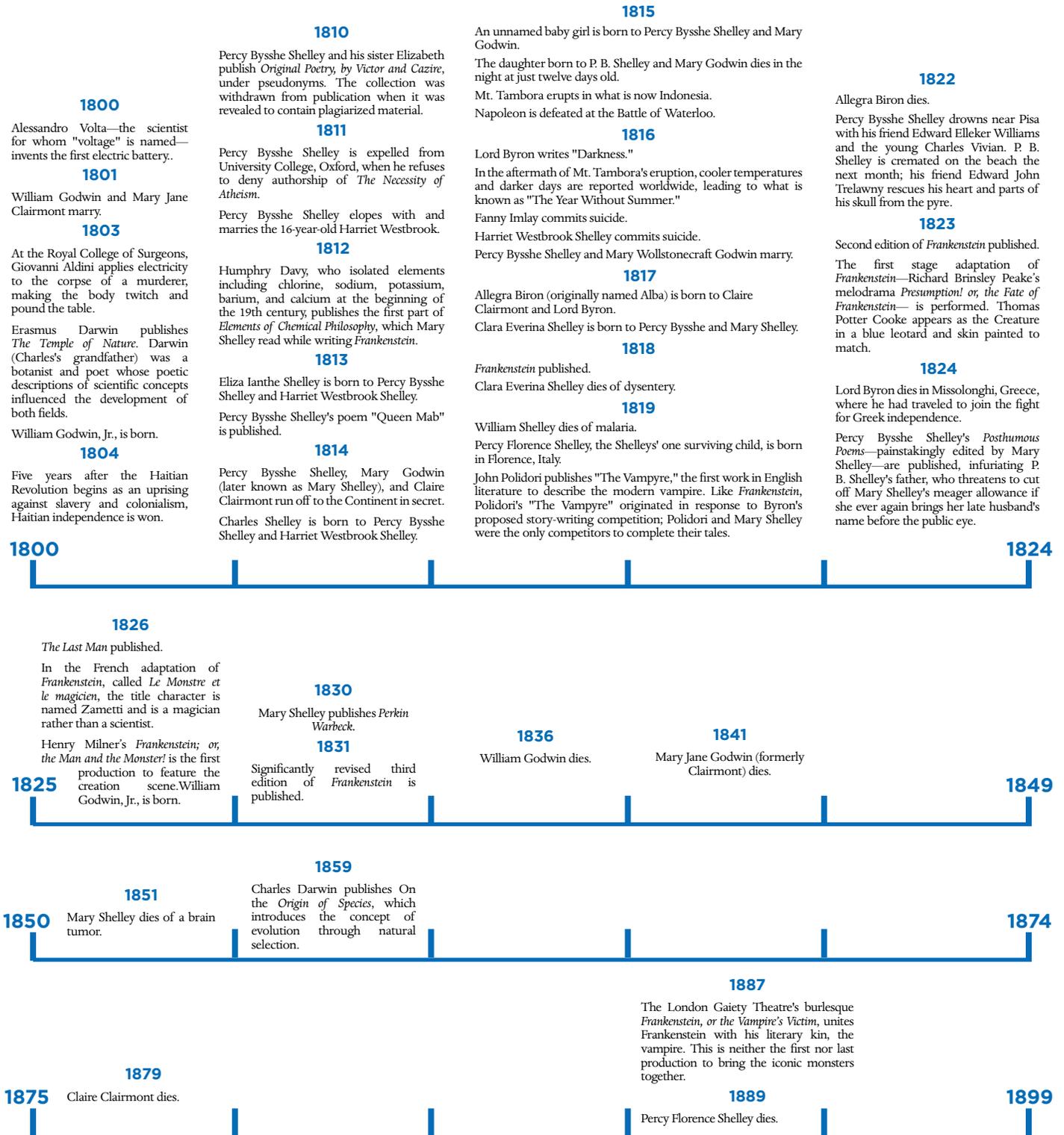
#### **ADA LOVELACE (1815–1852)**

Raised under her mother's strict supervision, Ada Byron (1815–1852), better known as Ada Lovelace, never knew her father—and was kept as far removed from his poetic and personal reputation as possible. She was a brilliant mathematician who wrote algorithms to be carried out by a hypothetical computer, and she is often considered the first computer programmer.

## FRANKENSTEIN TIMELINE, 1600–1799



## FRANKENSTEIN TIMELINE, 1800s





## GUIDE TO FILM ADAPTATIONS WITH TIMESTAMPS

### THREE KEY SCENES

Below are three key scenes in the *Frankenstein* novel that were also adapted for four different film versions. Choose one or more for the class to read, view, and analyze. Page number citations are from the 2007 Penguin edition of *Frankenstein*. For further reading, please see 'Section Four: *Frankenstein* on Stage and Screen; Other Adaptations' in the curriculum.

### SCENE: THE CREATION

1. Have students read the Creation scene in the novel (***Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus - Novel***) Volume 1 Chapters 4 & 5, Chapter 4 (building the monster), Chapter 5  
*"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"* (58).

2. Have students choose one (or more) film adaptation(s) to compare to the text:

#### ***Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster (1931)***

- Start Time: 00:14:10
- End Time: 00:25:18
- Run Time: 11 Minutes, 8 Seconds

#### ***The Bride of Frankenstein (1935)***

- Start Time: 00:57:13
- End Time: 01:10:03
- Run Time: 12 Minutes, 50 Seconds

#### ***Young Frankenstein (1974)***

- Start Time: 00:40:52
- End Time: 00:58:15
- Run Time: 17 Minutes, 23 Seconds

#### ***Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1994)***

- Start Time: 00:38:57
- End Time: 00:50:23
- Run Time: 11 Minutes, 26 Seconds

## SCENE: THE CREATURE AND CHILD

1. Have students read the scene involving the monster and the child in the novel (***Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus - Novel***) Volume 2, Chapter 8 (or Chapter 16 if the copy doesn't have volumes listed)

*"I was scarcely hid, when a young girl came running towards the spot where I was concealed, laughing, as if she ran from some one in sport. She continued her course along the precipitous sides of the river, when suddenly her foot slipt, and she fell into the rapid stream. I rushed from my hiding-place, and with extreme labour from the force of the current, saved her, and dragged her to shore. She was senseless; and I endeavoured, by every means in my power, to restore animation, when I was suddenly interrupted by the approach of a rustic, who was probably the person from whom she had playfully fled. On seeing me, he darted towards me, and tearing the girl from my arms, hastened towards the deeper parts of the wood. I followed speedily, I hardly knew why; but when the man saw me draw near, he aimed a gun, which he carried, at my body, and fired" (142-143).*

2. Have students choose one (or more) iconic film adaptation(s) to compare to the text:

### ***Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster (1931)***

- Start Time: 00:47:42
- End Time: 00:50:23
- Run Time: 2 Minutes, 53 Seconds

### ***Young Frankenstein (1974)***

- Start Time: 01:04:52
- End Time: 01:06:32
- Run Time: 1 Minute, 40 Seconds

### ***Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1994)***

- Start Time: 01:14:44
- End Time: 01:18:08
- Run Time: 3 Minutes, 24 Seconds

## SCENE: THE WOMAN ON THE BED

1. Have students read of Elizabeth's fate.

**(*Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus - Novel*)** Volume 3, Chapter 6 (or Chapter 23 if the copy doesn't have volumes listed)

*"She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down, and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair. Every where I turn I see the same figure - her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier" (199).*

2. Have students choose one (or more) iconic film adaptation(s) to compare to the text:

### ***Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster (1931)***

- Start Time: 00:54:12
- End Time: 00:55:30
- Run Time: 1 Minute, 18 Seconds

### ***Young Frankenstein (1974)***

- Start Time: 01:32:42
- End Time: 01:35:23
- Run Time: 2 Minutes, 41 Seconds

### ***Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1994)***

- Start Time: 01:39:42
- End Time: 01:41:12
- Run Time: 1 Minute, 30 Seconds



Have students compare and contrast their chosen scenes with the novel. What is similar? What is different? How does viewing a scene affect the audience differently than reading a scene? Does the artistic license of the director impact how you interpret the scene and its characters? Please compare and contrast, explaining your ideas.

## RELATED FILMS

### NOTE FOR TEACHERS:

This supplement expands on curriculum **Section Four: Frankenstein on Stage and Screen; Other Adaptations**. It contains an alternate discussion focus for the James Whale film and additional film suggestions related to Frankenstein with discussion points and activities.

### 1. *Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster* (James Whale/1931/71 minutes)

While the Creature is never precisely described in Mary Shelley's novel, it can be argued that Boris Karloff's portrayal of the Creature continues to be the dominant visual image to this day. This can be attributed to various creative decisions on Karloff's part as an actor, but is also in large part due to the makeup. Jack P. Pierce, who went on to provide makeup for other horror films such as *Dracula*, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *The Wolf Man*, and *Phantom of the Opera*, worked for weeks with Karloff to combine Pierce and Whale's ideas and create the look of the movie's monster. However, contemporary viewers may struggle to find the 1931 film as scary today as it was to its original audiences. It is theorized that "...horror like humor is a cultural construct redefined by each new generation."<sup>1</sup>

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

-  Once the students have read the novel, have them reflect on whether they find the story frightening. Do the ideas presented in the book feel outdated or too familiar?
-  Have the students screen *Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster*. Ask students to discuss cinematic elements that may have been terrifying to a 1931 audience. Are these techniques still used today in film? What do you think defines a horror/scary movie? Do any modern films remind them of Whale's film?
-  Ask students to reimagine a scene from the 1931 film. Develop a performance style for the Creature or the bride from the 1935 sequel. Include elements such as costume design or effects makeup. For example, will their version speak? How will he/she move? How will they depict the otherness of the Creature?

<sup>1</sup> Single, Lori Leathers. "Reading Against the Grain: The U.S. Reception of Branagh's "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein." *Studies in Popular Culture*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (October 1998), p.5.

## 2. *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Kenneth Branagh/1994/123 minutes)

In the 1994 film *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, director and star Kenneth Branagh attempted to adapt the novel more faithfully than the 1931 Whale film. Despite innovative makeup, modern special effects, and the inclusion of novel elements such as the Robert Walton storyline, the film is generally considered to be a flop.<sup>2</sup> It is criticized for lacking the iconic power of either the original novel or the Whale film.

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

-  Ask the students to discuss the idea of adaptation. What are some of their favorite literary adaptations (to film)? Why are they successful? How do the films differ from the books?
-  Ask students to debate the idea of the “book is always better than the movie.” Are there exceptions to this? What are examples?
-  Compare *The Bride of Frankenstein* and *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* and their attempts to add Mary Shelley as a character to her own novel. In *Bride*, Elsa Lanchester plays a double role as Mary Shelley/The Bride. In the Branagh film, the character of Elizabeth is updated to resemble Branagh's version of Mary Shelley's personality. After Elizabeth is murdered, she is reanimated as a second Creature (using other body parts from the character of Justine) and is ultimately so distraught to find out what's been done to her that she commits suicide. Ask students to discuss how they might add Mary Shelley to an adaptation of the novel.

<sup>2</sup> Single, Lori Leathers. “Reading Against the Grain: The U.S. Reception of Branagh's “Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.” *Studies in Popular Culture*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (October 1998), p.1.

### 3. *The Iron Giant* (Brad Bird/1999/86-90 minutes)

The film *The Iron Giant* “tells the tale of an artificial being that, in precise contrast to Frankenstein’s monster, receives the proper nurturing and moral education from a warm-hearted surrogate parent...”<sup>3</sup> This animated film tells the story of an interstellar robot who crashes on Earth with no memories or programming and is adopted by a human boy, Hogarth. Like the Creature of Shelley’s novel, the robot is a blank slate. *The Iron Giant* “...matches Shelley’s novel almost point for point in terms of the monster’s education and emotional development, with each deviation remaining explicitly within the bounds of how, in [director] Bird’s understanding, Shelley’s monster might have ended up.”<sup>4</sup> This contemporary reimagining features an absent creator, but unlike Mary Shelley’s novel, imagines a scenario where characters reminiscent of the de Lacey family actually accept the Creature. The character of the Iron Giant is a destructive machine built for war. But, due to his education from Hogarth, the giant is able to override his programming and protect his new human family.

#### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Before viewing *The Iron Giant*, ask the students to reflect on the Creature’s lack of parenting and discuss how this influenced the development of his character.
- ⚡ Ask students to consider nature vs. nurture. Do they think the Creature’s true nature was violent? Or is it a product of his lack of nurturing by Victor Frankenstein?
- ⚡ Now view *The Iron Giant* and ask students to draw parallels between the two “monster” characters.
- ⚡ If students have also viewed other film adaptations, such as James Whale’s, ask them if they see any similarities between *The Iron Giant* and other Frankenstein film adaptations. Where are they similar? Where do they deviate? Is the Iron Giant more similar to one adaptation over another?

<sup>3</sup> Miller, T.S. “Frankenstein without Frankenstein: ‘The Iron Giant’ and the Absent Creator.” *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2009, p. 385-405.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 386.

**4. Reimaginings: *Frankenweenie* and *Edward Scissorhands* (Tim Burton/1984/29 minutes) (Tim Burton/2012/87 minutes) (Tim Burton/1990/105 minutes)**

Director Tim Burton has paid tribute, or **homage**, to the *Frankenstein* story in his films, often including strong visual references to the work of James Whale. The most direct example of this is his 1984 live action short *Frankenweenie*. Set in suburbia, this film reimagines the *Frankenstein* story by making the Creature the reanimated dog of a young boy. The short was one of Burton's first projects while working as an animator for Walt Disney Pictures. Clearly a project that stuck with Burton, he was able to expand the short in 2012 into an animated feature-length film for none other than Walt Disney Pictures.

Burton regularly includes elements of his suburban upbringing in his films. Oftentimes, these visual representations of Burton's suburbia are parodies of Burbank, California, where Burton was raised. A prime example of this is the 1990 film *Edward Scissorhands*. While Burton himself likens this film to a fairy tale, and scholarship around the film highlights particular elements of *Beauty and the Beast*, there are similarities and visual representations that bear strong resemblance to *Frankenstein* as well.<sup>5</sup> Edward is a man-made being left only partially complete after his creator dies unexpectedly. Edward's otherness is represented by his hands, which are scissor blades.<sup>6</sup> This film depicts a scenario where Edward is initially kindly cared for by his creator. Upon his creator's death and absence, he is then taken in by a sympathetic family and continues his discovery of the outside world. However, Edward's journey is ultimately circular; although embraced by some members of the community, he is ostracized by others and eventually targeted, prompting the town's residents and "...the housewives in *Edward Scissorhands* [to] turn into the villagers in *Frankenstein*..."<sup>7</sup>

**DISCUSSION PROMPTS:**

-  Ask students how they feel about the Creature being a dog in *Frankenweenie*. How does a dog's inability to talk reflect other adaptations of the Creature?
-  Can they provide examples of characters in different films that are labeled "monster" or evil but who they also find sympathetic?
-  Discuss the idea of "**parody**," an imitation of a style with deliberate exaggeration for comic effect. How does the 1984 short *Frankenweenie* parody imagery and scenes from the 1931 *Frankenstein*?
-  Can you think of other literary adaptations or horror films that also have parodies? What are those films? What cinematic elements are similar among these parody examples?
-  While Johnny Depp still has visible scars, his character in *Edward Scissorhands* is more attractive than most adaptations of *Frankenstein*. How does this affect the plot in both stories? If the creature in the novel had been "beautiful," would his life have been different?

<sup>5</sup> Ray, Brian. "Tim Burton and the Idea of Fairy Tales," *Fairy Tale Films*, 200-201.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, Gavin. "Punching Holes in Reality: Tim Burton interviewed by Gavin Smith." *Film Comment*, vol. 30, no. 6, November-December 1994, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Gavin, p. 63.

## WOLLSTONECRAFT AND GODWIN WRITING SUPPLEMENT

### MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT'S *VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN*

#### NOTE FOR TEACHERS:

This selection is a concise summary of Wollstonecraft's main arguments—(1) that it is unfair to deny women an equal education and then ridicule them for being uneducated, and (2) that the education of women will benefit all of society by making them more capable mothers. It might provide an opportunity to discuss how ideas of education and feminism feature in *Frankenstein*.

#### (Excerpt is from the author's introduction to her work)

“The education of women has, of late, been more attended to than formerly; yet they are still reckoned a frivolous sex, and ridiculed or pitied by the writers who endeavour by satire or instruction to improve them. It is acknowledged that they spend many of the first years of their lives in acquiring a smattering of accomplishments; meanwhile strength of body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire of establishing themselves,—the only way women can rise in the world,—by marriage. And this desire making mere animals of them, when they marry they act as such children may be expected to act:—they dress; they paint, and nickname God's Creatures.—Surely these weak beings are only fit for a seraglio! Can they be expected to govern a family with judgment, or take care of the poor babes whom they bring into the world?

If then it can be fairly deduced from the present conduct of the sex, from the prevalent fondness for pleasure which takes place of ambition and those nobler passions that open and enlarge the soul; that the instruction which women have hitherto received has only tended, with the constitution of civil society, to render them insignificant objects of desire—mere propagators of fools!—if it can be proved that in aiming to accomplish them, without cultivating their understandings, they are taken out of their sphere of duties, and made ridiculous and useless when the short-lived bloom of beauty is over, I presume that rational men will excuse me for endeavouring to persuade them to become more masculine and respectable.”

#### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- ⚡ Wollstonecraft challenged her readers with a new way to raise daughters that would affect both men and women. What are changes Mary Wollstonecraft suggests for the education of women and why? Do students think any of her criticisms of women's education still apply today?
- ⚡ Do students think the book *Frankenstein* contains feminist ideas? Discuss why or why not. Encourage students to examine how an absence of women is significant to the plot and characters. For example: What might have been different if Victor's mother had lived? What if the Creature had a mother or mother figure? How might the plot change if Elizabeth had gone to school with Victor?

## WILLIAM GODWIN'S *POLITICAL JUSTICE*:

### NOTE FOR TEACHERS:

This excerpt is the most representative of *Political Justice* as a whole —and also more accessible than much of his other writing. It suggests a number of fruitful possibilities for discussion, such as the relationship between the individual and the state (which could connect to Justine's false conviction and execution), or the notion of progress (which could connect to Victor Frankenstein's early habit of "look[ing] backward" for scientific knowledge), and the relationship between social interaction and the pursuit of knowledge (which could connect to the Creature's moral and intellectual development, and the effect of his encounters with cruelty on his still-developing consciousness). The bolded section could be used on its own if time is limited.

### BOOK 1, CHAPTER 4:

...[I]t may reasonably be doubted whether error could ever be formidable or long-lived, if government did not lend it support. The nature of mind is adapted to the perception of ideas, their correspondence and difference. In the right discernment of these is its true element and most congenial pursuit. Error would indeed for a time have been the result of our partial perceptions; but, as our perceptions are continually changing, and continually becoming more definite and correct, our errors would have been momentary, and our judgments have hourly approached nearer to the truth....

**A system of government, that should lend no sanction to ideas of fanaticism and hypocrisy, would presently accustom its subjects to think justly upon topics of moral worth and importance. A state, that should abstain from imposing contradictory and impracticable oaths, and thus perpetually stimulating its members to concealment and perjury, would soon become distinguished for plain dealing and veracity. A country, in which places of dignity and confidence should cease to be at the disposal of faction, favour and interest, would not long be the residence of servility and deceit.**

These remarks suggest to us the true answer to an obvious objection, that might otherwise present itself, to the

conclusion to which these principles appear to lead. It might be said, that an erroneous government can never afford an adequate solution for the existence of moral evil, since government was itself the production of human intelligence, and therefore, if ill, must have been indebted for its ill qualities to some wrong which had previous existence.

The proposition asserted in this objection is undoubtedly true. All vice is nothing more than error and mistake reduced into practice, and adopted as the principle of our conduct. But error is perpetually hastening to its own detection. Vicious conduct is soon discovered to involve injurious consequences. Injustice therefore by its own nature is little fitted for a durable existence. But government "lays its hand upon the spring there is in society, and puts a stop to its motion." It gives substance and permanence to our errors. It reverses the genuine propensities of mind, and, instead of suffering us to look forward, teaches us to look backward for perfection. It prompts us to seek the public welfare, not in innovation and improvement, but in a timid reverence for the decisions of our ancestors, as if it were the nature of mind always to degenerate, and never to advance.

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

-  Discuss the excerpt in the context of the events of the time—especially the French Revolution. [See timeline supplement for more information.] How would this argument affect readers debating the merits of democratic governments versus monarchies?
-  "Vicious conduct is soon discovered to involve injurious consequences." The Creature experiences cruelty and gradually becomes a murderer. How does the Creature's turn to violence relate to Godwin's arguments about the role of government for its citizens?

## EDMUND BURKE'S REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

### NOTE FOR TEACHERS:

Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* was the first response to Edmund Burke's defense of the collapsed French monarchy. This passage relates directly to the Wollstonecraft and Godwin selections as Burke argues for the value of distinctions between men and women, kings and servants, and so on. It can also connect to ideas in *Frankenstein* as the Creature experiences life outside the established social hierarchies.

### (\*Burke's Reflections is not divided into sections or chapters.)

...[T]he age of chivalry is gone.—...All the pleasing illusions which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

On this scheme of things, a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder

of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father, are only common homicide; and if the people are by any chance, or in any way gainers by it, a sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny....

But power, of some kind or other, will survive the shock in which manners and opinions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert antient institutions, has destroyed antient principles, will hold power by arts similar to those by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of *Fealty*, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form the political code of all power, not standing on its own honour, and the honour of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle.

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

 Burke's *Reflections* sparked a literary "pamphlet war" between writers about the French Revolution and the questions it brought up related to political systems and institutions. Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* texts began as replies to Burke. Some scholars argue that the heart of the debate was the understanding of democracy— and whether it would ultimately tend toward savagery or toward civilization. Wollstonecraft argued for civilization and Burke for savagery.

- Where do students see these arguments play out in *Frankenstein* if at all?
- Where do they see them playing out in today's world?

For further exploration of this material, [read this article from the British Library:](#)

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS READING: LITERATURE | GRADE 9-10

#### **Key Ideas and Details:**

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1**

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2**

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3**

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

#### **Craft and Structure:**

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5**

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS READING: LITERATURE | GRADE 11-12

#### **Key Ideas and Details:**

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1**

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2**

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3**

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

**Craft and Structure:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5**

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7**

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

WRITING | GRADE 9-10

**Text Types and Purposes:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1**

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**Production and Distribution of Writing:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7**

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9**

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

WRITING | GRADE 11-12

**Text Types and Purposes:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1**

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**Production and Distribution of Writing:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7**

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8**

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

SPEAKING & LISTENING | GRADE 9-10

**Comprehension and Collaboration:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A**

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C**

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D**

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

**Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5**

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS  
SPEAKING & LISTENING | GRADE 11-12

**Comprehension and Collaboration:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A**

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C**

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D**

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2**

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

**Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4**

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5**

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS  
SCIENCE & TECHNICAL SUBJECTS | GRADE 9-10

**Craft and Structure:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.4**

Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to *grades 9-10 texts and topics*.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.6**

Analyze the author's purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text, defining the question the author seeks to address.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

SCIENCE & TECHNICAL SUBJECTS | GRADE 11-12

**Craft and Structure:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.4**

Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to *grades 11-12 texts and topics*.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.6**

Analyze the author's purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text, identifying important issues that remain unresolved.

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS)

NATURE OF SCIENCE - CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS

- Science Is a Way of Knowing:
- Science is both a body of knowledge that represents a current understanding of natural systems, and the processes used to refine, elaborate, revise, and extend this knowledge
- Science knowledge has a history that includes the refinement of, and changes to theories, ideas, and beliefs over time.

Science Is a Human Endeavor

- Scientific knowledge is a result of human endeavor, imagination, and creativity.
- Technological advances have influenced the progress of science and science has influenced advances in technology.
- Science and engineering are influenced by society, and society is influenced by science and engineering.

Science Addresses Questions About the Natural and Material World

- Not all questions can be answered by science.
- Science and technology may raise ethical issues for which science, by itself, does not provide answers and solutions.
- Science knowledge indicates what can happen in natural systems—not what should happen. The latter involves ethics, values, and human decisions about the use of knowledge.
- Many decisions are not made using science alone, but rely on social and cultural context to resolve issues.