

Name: _____

Date: _____

Important Other _____

Team: _____

Gothic Literature

Gothic Literature IS Related to **Romanticism!**

The Romanticism is not “romance” as you think, rather it was

An *intellectual, artistic* and *philosophical* movement that included:

- Art/painting
- Music
- And Literature!

The Romantic Movement

Begins and enjoys popularity in Europe and America **1770-1860**.

Was a reaction to and against the Industrial Revolution, Age of Enlightenment, and the new scientific approach towards nature.

Valued: extreme emotions, intuition, nature, imagination, and expression (**over**-instead of rational logic sought by the Enlightenment).

Romantic Literature:

Romantic literature valued the tenets (_____) of Romanticism.

RL allowed for *improbable events* and *fanciful ideas* that realistic fiction didn't allow.

(Knights, fairies, dragons, magicians, and magic swords are *part* of the Romantic tradition).

Gothic Literature's Relationship to Romanticism

1. Their time periods overlap (Romanticism 1770s-mid-1800s, and Gothic roughly 1764-1898).
2. Gothic is a *subset* and *natural offshoot* of the Romantic movement.
3. Romantic and Gothic literature BOTH honor emotions, imagination, and nature, and allow for supernatural events.
4. If Romanticism is the *LIGHT*... Gothic Literature is the *DARK*...

Gothic Literature:

Gothic literature fills a legitimate human need to be frightened and to safely explore the darker sides of our personalities that cannot be acted upon in society.

Definition: A **fiction genre** from 1764-1898 that combined Romanticism and horror. It relied heavily on setting, mood or atmosphere (and, like Romantic literature) extreme emotions, intuition, nature, imagination, expression, and improbable or supernatural events. Gothic literature is typified by particular **elements**. (more later)

First Gothic Novel: *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764 written by Horace Walpole, (under a pseudonym). A short novel; set forth as a “translation of an Italian story;” features a **castle**, a mysterious and violent **death** and **ill-fated marriage** during the Crusades.

GOthic ELEMENTS!

1. **Gothic architecture** – castles, monasteries, abbeys, wine cellars, grottos, dungeons, catacombs/graves, ruins, and secret: panels; doors; tunnels or passages.
Actual features - stained glass, narrow, long pointed windows, vaulted ceilings, pointed arches, turrets, the gargoyle (the mascot of Gothic literature), spires, flying buttresses, and in general a strong sense of “vertical” building or structure, and more.
2. **Rugged terrain** – the story may also feature cliffs, rocky shores, caves, underground tunnels, caverns, lonely moors, or uninhabited mountains, desolate forests or other rugged locales. *The terrain works *with* the architecture to build a complete setting.
3. **Weather:** Cold, gloom, harsh winter, winds, rain, fog, storms all are likely in the Gothic novel or story. Weather contributes to
 - Setting
 - Imagery and visual impact
 - The atmosphere/mood that is so important to this genre
 NOTE: Weather is part of nature, and can be used to affect the characters and the plot.
4. **The power of nature to transform or affect emotion:** weather, natural settings, isolated and unforgiving climates and locales affect the novels’ characters, and often turn the plot towards new, darker directions (modern ex.: Stephen King, *The Shining*).
As you might expect, the transformative power of nature in Gothic literature is usually dark and destructive, driving a character towards madness or evil actions.
5. **Setting:** traditionally in the 1800s, in isolated exotic European locales. Gothic literature is **still** written today, and has been set in the deep American south, New England, and other unexpected places!

ELEMENTS 1-5 CREATE THE ATMOSPHERE AND MOOD ESSENTIAL FOR GOTHIC LIT.

6. A creature that incites fear, pity, or dread. Examples: deformed beings, vampires, werewolves. Specific examples: Hop Frog, Quasi Modo, Frankenstein's creature, and more.

7. Features high/intense emotion: dread, terror, anguish, horror, hysteria, mania, or torment.

**As a result, Gothic can tend toward melodrama, and even parody or self-parody.* While some Gothic literature is terrifying, at least some has a sense of humor

8. Darkness of the human soul made manifest in the world. The ugliness within (in the heart, soul, or mind) escapes out into the world. Examples may include:

- Madness and the slow descent into insanity
- Murder, violence, torture
- Unnatural acts against man/family or God

9. Focus on the Mysterious or Supernatural.

Examples:

- The occult/rituals/ceremonies
- Dark/unholy family secrets
- The sins of the previous generation returning to punish the next.
- Hauntings/spirits
- Curses
- The otherworldly/undead
- Doppelgangers (untrustworthy double)
- A prophecy or vision
- Inexplicable death/disappearance

10. The Use of Foreshadowing

- Lights going off or on
- Wind blowing out candles or moving curtains
- The man who shows up and *warns* the main characters
- Doors suddenly lock
- Rain/wind picks up in intensity
- Sudden thunder and lightning/ gusts of wind
- Clanking chains
- Glass breaking
- Unexplained footsteps
- Murmurs, sighs; cries or distant voices; crazed laughter???
- Wolves howling/baying
- Doors creaking
- Doors slamming shut
- Rusty hinges

11. "ANIMALS as evil" goes back to Biblical times, and can be found in Shakespeare. Still, the use of animals has come to be a classic *Gothic element*.

- These include: raven, crow, cat, bat, rat, owl, toad, frog, wolves, hyenas, coyotes, snakes, etc.
- They have historically served as *companions (familiars)* to witches, as the "devil in disguise," or as evil omens in storytelling.

- Poe and others have written about and used such animals in their writing.

Gothic Motifs Include:

The heavy use of darkness, shadows, cold, isolation, gloom, dread, decay or ruin. These contribute to setting and atmosphere.

In a GOTHIC STORY, You May Meet . . .

- A disfigured man/woman hidden away
- Non- or near human creatures
- An overreaching mad scientist
- A raging and cruel tyrant
- Women abandoned or in distress
- A circus performer
- A cannibal
- The suicidal lover
- The devil himself!
- Vampires, monsters, werewolves, demons, hellhounds, wolves, witches!

Writers Inspired or Influenced by Walpole

Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein*, 1818

Edgar Allan Poe: *The Tell Tale Heart* and numerous other works

Bram Stoker: *Dracula*, 1897

Many OTHER forms of fiction are still influenced by Walpole's novel, Gothic literature and GOTHIC ELEMENTS.

These include but are not limited to:

- GHOST STORIES,
- HORROR,
- DETECTIVE/CRIME NOVELS,
- SUSPENSE,
- THRILLERS,
- AND MORE!

Big Idea:

Gothic literature and architecture earned its name by being different from what was considered “*the norm*” of the time period in which it emerged.