

# English Literature A Level

## Transition Work

You will be studying “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Bronte as one of your main texts next year.

As a way of preparing yourselves, we would like you to complete the following tasks.

### 1 Research Victorian Literature.

Produce a mind-map that gives an overview of Victorian Literature. You could start your search at [www.online-literature.com/periods/victorian.php](http://www.online-literature.com/periods/victorian.php) or, for a more informal approach, you could look at <https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literary-movements/victorian-literature>

You should consider the following;

Context    Society

Important Events    Important Figures

Writers and Poets    Novels and poems

Political/Scientific and Technological Developments etc.

### 2. Read Wuthering Heights chapters 1-3

(This can be accessed free online at:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/768/768-h/768-h.htm> After reading Chapter 1, collect quotations about Heathcliff (as described by Lockwood) and write a brief summary of Heathcliff’s character so far which will enable you to discuss this in your group upon your return.

- a) After reading Chapter 2, consider how you, as a reader, view Lockwood. Is he a reliable narrator? Present your ideas in note form.
- b) Research the Gothic genre and make notes on typical features/key texts in that genre. (see next page for hints)
- c) After reading Chapter 3, complete the attached ‘Gothic Grid’ worksheet.
- d) Read the outline of the first assessment on the third page.

If you would like to find out more, there are various documentaries on the Bronte sisters and Victorian life that can be accessed on Youtube, for example, “In Search of the Brontes” and “Victorian Era Documentaries”.

Also, if you are looking for some summer reading, why not try “Far from the Madding Crowd” by Thomas Hardy, “Pride and Prejudice” by Jane Austen or “Hard Times” by Charles Dickens to really get a taste of Victorian Literature. Have a lovely holiday ☺

“Gothic Literature is a genre of novel that was popular in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century and is characterised by an atmosphere of mystery and horror, and with a pseudo-medieval setting.” (Oxford English Dictionary)

Some of the features of Gothic Literature are:

- Settings: wild and remote, with old castles, gloomy dungeons, monasteries
- The supernatural: ghosts, dreams, danger and death
- Atmosphere: claustrophobic and sinister, with turbulent or gloomy weather
- Mood: fear of imprisonment, strong emotions, desire for self-expression and freedom

Emily Bronte’s “Wuthering Heights was first published in 1847. Chapter 3 uses gothic conventions to create conditions for Mr Lockwood’s encounter with the ghost of the older Cathy. Read this chapter and write a brief summary of its plot and narrative.

The examples of gothic features below focus on Mr Lockwood’s confrontation with the ghost, which begins about half way through the chapter. Read these examples and answer the questions about them and then find more from the rest of the chapter.

Chapter 3	Questions
<p>Setting: the bed where Lockwood is to sleep is enclosed in a wooden closet, with oak doors and squares cut out to form windows inside a locked room.</p> <p>“I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple.”</p>	<p>How does this last detail make Mr. Lockwood’s isolation complete?</p>
<p>Supernatural effects: “my fingers closed on the fingers of a little ice-cold hand! The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm but the hand clung to it.”</p>	<p>Following this, identify the ways Lockwood tries to make Cathy’s ghost let him go.</p>
<p>Atmosphere: “the branch of a fir tree that touched my lattice as the blast wailed by, and rattled its dry cones against the panes”</p>	<p>What literary technique does Bronte use to make the weather sound more frightening?</p>
<p>Emotions: “a most melancholy voice sobbed, ‘Let me in – let me in!’....still it wailed. ‘Let me in!’ and maintained its tenacious gripe, almost maddening me with fear.”</p>	<p>Following this, how does Lockwood express his fear and what is the consequence?</p>

In addition, we will be setting our first assessment three weeks in to the autumn term. This will take the form of an unseen prose analysis. We will be presenting you with an extract from a Gothic text (see the 2 texts attached for similar examples which you should read/annotate) and will be asking you to analyse this in essay form.

Therefore, you will need to be ready to:

- Identify and discuss the Gothic features that are present in the text
- Suggest possible contextual points
- Analyse the way in which the writer has used language and structure to create effect
- Present alternative viewpoints/possible comparisons to other texts.

See you in September.

## The Castle of Otranto (1764), by Horace Walpole

As it was now evening, the servant who conducted Isabella bore a torch before her. When they came to Manfred, who was walking impatiently about the gallery, he started and said hastily, "Take away that light, and begone." Then shutting the door impetuously, he flung himself upon a bench against the wall, and bade Isabella sit by him. She obeyed trembling. "I sent for you, lady," said he, — and then stopped under great appearance of confusion. "My lord!" — "Yes, I sent for you on a matter of great moment," resumed he, — "Dry your tears, young lady — you have lost your bridegroom. — Yes, cruel fate! and I have lost the hopes of my race! — but Conrad was not worthy of your beauty." — "How! my lord," said Isabella; "sure you do not suspect me of not feeling the concern I ought. My duty and affection would have always — " "Think no more of him," interrupted Manfred; "he was a sickly puny child, and heaven has perhaps taken him away that I might not trust the honours of my house on so frail a foundation. The line of Manfred calls for numerous supports. My foolish fondness for that boy blinded the eyes of my prudence — but it is better as it is. I hope in a few years to have reason to rejoice at the death of Conrad."

Words cannot paint the astonishment of Isabella. At first she apprehended that grief had disordered Manfred's understanding. Her next thought suggested that this strange discourse was designed to ensnare her: she feared that Manfred had perceived her indifference for his son: and in consequence of that idea she replied, "Good my lord, do not doubt my tenderness: my heart would have accompanied my hand. Conrad would have engrossed all my care; and wherever fate shall dispose of me, I shall always cherish his memory, and regard your highness and the virtuous Hippolita as my parents." "Curse on Hippolita!" cried Manfred: "forget her from this moment as I do. In short, lady, you have missed a husband undeserving of your charms: they shall now be better disposed of. Instead of a sickly boy, you shall have a husband in the prime of his age, who will know how to value your beauties, and who may expect a numerous offspring." "Alas! my lord," said Isabella, "my mind is too sadly engrossed by the recent catastrophe in your family to think of another marriage. If ever my father returns, and it shall be his pleasure, I shall obey, as I did when I consented to give my hand to your son: but until his return, permit me to remain under your hospitable roof, and employ the melancholy hours in assuaging yours, Hippolita's, and the fair Matilda's affliction."

"I desired you once before," said Manfred angrily, "not to name that woman: from this hour she must be a stranger to you, as she must be to me; — in short, Isabella, since I cannot give you my son, I offer you myself." — "Heavens!" cried Isabella, waking from her delusion, "what do I hear! You! My lord! You! My father-in-law! the father of Conrad! the husband of the virtuous and tender Hippolita!" — "I tell you," said Manfred imperiously, "Hippolita is no longer my wife; I divorce her from this hour. Too long has she cursed me by her unfruitfulness: my fate depends on having sons, — and this night I trust will give a new date to my hopes." At those words he seized the cold hand of Isabella, who was half-dead with fright and horror. She shrieked and started from him. Manfred rose to pursue her, when the moon, which was now up and gleamed in at the opposite casement, presented to his sight the plumes of the fatal helmet,

which rose to the height of the windows, waving backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner, and accompanied with a hollow and rustling sound. Isabella, who gathered courage from her situation, and who dreaded nothing so much as Manfred's pursuit of his declaration, cried, "Look! my lord; see, heaven itself declares against your impious intentions!" — "Heaven nor hell shall impede my designs," said Manfred, advancing again to seize the princess. At that instant the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting, uttered a deep sigh, and heaved its breast. Isabella, whose back was turned to the picture, saw not the motion, nor knew whence the sound came, but started, and said, "Hark, my lord! What sound was that?" and at the same time made towards the door. Manfred, distracted between the flight of Isabella, who had now reached the stairs, and yet unable to keep his eyes from the picture, which began to move, had however advanced some steps after her, still looking backwards on the portrait, when he saw it quit its panel, and descend on the floor with a grave and melancholy air. "Do I dream?" cried Manfred returning, "or are the devils themselves in league against me? Speak, infernal spectre! or, if thou art my grandsire, why dost thou too conspire against thy wretched descendant, who too dearly pays for — " Ere he could finish the sentence the vision sighed again, and made a sign to Manfred to follow him. "Lead on!" cried Manfred; "I will follow thee to the gulph of perdition." The spectre marched sedately, but dejected, to the end of the gallery, and turned into a chamber on the right hand. Manfred accompanied him at a little distance, full of anxiety and horror, but resolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped to with violence by an invisible hand. The prince, collecting courage from this delay, would have forcibly burst open the door with his foot, but found that it resisted his utmost efforts. "Since hell will not satisfy my curiosity," said Manfred, "I will use the human means in my power for preserving my race; Isabella shall not escape me."

## Dracula (1897), by Bram Stoker

### *Jonathan Harker's Journal Continued*

5 May.--I must have been asleep, for certainly if I had been fully awake I must have noticed the approach of such a remarkable place. In the gloom the courtyard looked of considerable size, and as several dark ways led from it under great round arches, it perhaps seemed bigger than it really is. I have not yet been able to see it by daylight.

When the caleche stopped, the driver jumped down and held out his hand to assist me to alight. Again I could not but notice his prodigious strength. His hand actually seemed like a steel vice that could have crushed mine if he had chosen. Then he took my traps, and placed them on the ground beside me as I stood close to a great door, old and studded with large iron nails, and set in a projecting doorway of massive stone. I could see even in the dim light that the stone was massively carved, but that the carving had been much worn by time and weather. As I stood, the driver jumped again into his seat and shook the reins. The horses started forward, and trap and all disappeared down one of the dark openings.

I stood in silence where I was, for I did not know what to do. Of bell or knocker there was no sign. Through these frowning walls and dark window openings it was not likely that my voice could penetrate. The time I waited seemed endless, and I felt doubts and fears crowding upon me. What sort of place had I come to, and among what kind of people? What sort of grim adventure was it on which I had embarked? Was this a customary incident in the life of a solicitor's clerk sent out to explain the purchase of a London estate to a foreigner? Solicitor's clerk! Mina would not like that. Solicitor, for just before leaving London I got word that my examination was successful, and I am now a full-blown solicitor! I began to rub my eyes and

pinch myself to see if I were awake. It all seemed like a horrible nightmare to me, and I expected that I should suddenly awake, and find myself at home, with the dawn struggling in through the windows, as I had now and again felt in the morning after a day of overwork. But my flesh answered the pinching test, and my eyes were not to be deceived. I was indeed awake and among the Carpathians. All I could do now was to be patient, and to wait the coming of morning.

Just as I had come to this conclusion I heard a heavy step approaching behind the great door, and saw through the chinks the gleam of a coming light. Then there was the sound of rattling chains and the clanking of massive bolts drawn back. A key was turned with the loud grating noise of long disuse, and the great door swung back.

Within, stood a tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere. He held in his hand an antique silver lamp, in which the flame burned without a chimney or globe of any kind, throwing long quivering shadows as it flickered in the draught of the open door. The old man motioned me in with his right hand with a courtly gesture, saying in excellent English, but with a strange intonation.

"Welcome to my house! Enter freely and of your own free will!" He made no motion of stepping to meet me, but stood like a statue, as though his gesture of welcome had fixed him into stone. The instant, however, that I had stepped over the threshold, he moved impulsively forward, and holding out his hand grasped mine with a strength which made me wince, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed cold as ice, more like the hand of a dead than a living man. Again he said.

"Welcome to my house! Enter freely. Go safely, and leave something of the happiness you bring!" The strength of the handshake was so much akin to that which I had noticed in the driver, whose face I had not seen, that for a moment I doubted if it were not the same person to whom I was speaking. So to make sure, I said interrogatively, "Count Dracula?"

He bowed in a courtly way as he replied, "I am Dracula, and I bid you welcome, Mr. Harker, to my house. Come in, the night air is chill, and you must need to eat and rest. "As he was speaking, he put the lamp on a bracket on the wall, and stepping out, took my luggage. He had carried it in before I could forestall him. I protested, but he insisted.

"Nay, sir, you are my guest. It is late, and my people are not available. Let me see to your comfort myself. "He insisted on carrying my traps along the passage, and then up a great winding stair, and along another great passage, on whose stone floor our steps rang heavily. At the end of this he threw open a heavy door, and I rejoiced to see within a well-lit room in which a table was spread for supper, and on whose mighty hearth a great fire of logs, freshly replenished, flamed and flared.

The Count halted, putting down my bags, closed the door, and crossing the room, opened another door, which led into a small octagonal room lit by a single lamp, and seemingly without a window of any sort. Passing through this, he opened another door, and motioned me to enter. It was a welcome sight. For here was a great bedroom well lighted and warmed with another log fire, also added to but lately, for the top logs were fresh, which sent a hollow roar up the wide chimney. The Count himself left my luggage inside and withdrew, saying, before he closed the door.

"You will need, after your journey, to refresh yourself by making your toilet. I trust you will find all you wish. When you are ready, come into the other room, where you will find your supper prepared."

The light and warmth and the Count's courteous welcome seemed to have dissipated all my doubts and fears. Having then reached my normal state, I discovered that I was half famished with hunger. So making a hasty toilet, I went into the other room.

I found supper already laid out. My host, who stood on one side of the great fireplace, leaning against the stonework, made a graceful wave of his hand to the table, and said,

"I pray you, be seated and sup how you please. You will I trust, excuse me that I do not join you, but I have dined already, and I do not sup."

I handed to him the sealed letter which Mr. Hawkins had entrusted to me. He opened it and read it gravely. Then, with a charming smile, he handed it to me to read. One passage of it, at least, gave me a thrill of pleasure.

"I must regret that an attack of gout, from which malady I am a constant sufferer, forbids absolutely any travelling on my part for some time to come. But I am happy to say I can send a sufficient substitute, one in whom I have every possible confidence. He is a young man, full of energy and talent in his own way, and of a very faithful disposition. He is discreet and silent, and has grown into manhood in my service. He shall be ready to attend on you when you will during his stay, and shall take your instructions in all matters."

The count himself came forward and took off the cover of a dish, and I fell to at once on an excellent roast chicken. This, with some cheese and a salad and a bottle of old tokay, of which I had two glasses, was my supper. During the time I was eating it the Count asked me many questions as to my journey, and I told him by degrees all I had experienced.

By this time I had finished my supper, and by my host's desire had drawn up a chair by the fire and begun to smoke a cigar which he offered me, at the same time excusing himself that he did not smoke. I had now an opportunity of observing him, and found him of a very marked physiognomy.

His face was a strong, a very strong, aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils, with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth. These protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed. The chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor.

Hitherto I had noticed the backs of his hands as they lay on his knees in the firelight, and they had seemed rather white and fine. But seeing them now close to me, I could not but notice that they were rather coarse, broad, with squat fingers. Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal.

The Count, evidently noticing it, drew back. And with a grim sort of smile, which showed more than he had yet done his protuberant teeth, sat himself down again on his own side of the fireplace. We were both silent for a while, and as I looked towards the window I saw the first dim streak of the coming dawn. There seemed a strange stillness over everything. But as I listened, I heard as if from down below in the valley the howling of many wolves. The Count's eyes gleamed, and he said.

"Listen to them, the children of the night. What music they make!" Seeing, I suppose, some expression in my face strange to him, he added, "Ah, sir, you dwellers in the city cannot enter into the feelings of the hunter." Then he rose and said.

"But you must be tired. Your bedroom is all ready, and tomorrow you shall sleep as late as you will. I have to be away till the afternoon, so sleep well and dream well!" With a courteous bow, he opened for me himself the door to the octagonal room, and I entered my bedroom.

