

Module Two: Analysis Overview



Module Two Schedule

	READ: <i>Frankenstein</i> (Letters 1-4; Chapters 1-9)
	LESSON 2A: "Defining Evidence & Analysis"
By Tuesday	ACTIVE READING ACTIVITY 2.1: Annotation & Textual Evidence Reflection
	LESSON 2B: "Close Reading <i>Frankenstein</i> "
By Wednesday	DISCUSSION ACTIVITY 2.2: Quote Analysis
	LESSON 2C: "Staging Analysis in Writing"
By Thursday	PEER REVIEW ACTIVITY 2.3: Submit Your Analysis to Critique (Submit)
By Saturday	PEER REVIEW ACTIVITY 2.3: Submit Your Analysis to Critique (Respond)
	READ: <i>MLA Template</i>
By Monday	SHORT PAPER 2: Textual Analysis

Active Reading Activity 2.1: Annotation & Textual Evidence Reflection

Requirements: 2 quotes from the novel (1-3 sentences each)
2 short paragraphs of commentary (approx 150 words each)

If you have been following directions, you have been annotating your copy of *Frankenstein*, marking interesting passages and taking notes for yourself as you go along. If you have been doing this faithfully, this assignment should take you less than 30 minutes.

For this writing activity, I would like for you to transcribe **two quotes from the novel** which have attracted your attention, along with **a short explanation** of *why*. Talk about what stands out for you in these quotes, and why you thought they were significant. You may even talk about what is confusing or difficult in the text – what you don't feel like you understand. Engage your quotes in an exploratory way, thinking of what kinds of larger issues are raised in the evidence you have isolated.

By compiling our observations about the novel in a discussion thread, we will assemble an archive of textual evidence. **Check back here when you are looking for passages from the novel that you can analyze for more formal assignments this week and in the future.**

Discussion Activity 2.2: Quote Analysis

Requirements: 1 short paragraph (approx. 150-200 words)

In this activity I have selected several quotes from the novel for our collective analysis. I have chosen these quotes because they represent different, important themes in the novel. Your post for this Discussion Activity has two requirements:

- It needs to contribute an original observation OR interpretation of a previous observation.
- It needs to acknowledge and, if possible, incorporate what has been said by others before.

I have provided both the context of the quote as well as a preliminary observation to get the activity started. What can you contribute?

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS: In order to keep this discussion-based activity organized, contribute your post by using the "reply" button that appears below the entry that you are responding to. This will keep your post connected to the proper thread and in conversation with others discussing the same things.

Quote #1: On Victor's Education

Context: This scene takes place as Victor explains his childhood and his early predilection for science. It is notable as one of the early scenes that seems to explain where his dangerous obsessions emerged and why they took hold of him.

"If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me, that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded, and that a **modern** system of science had been introduced, which **possessed much greater powers than the ancient**, because **the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical**; under such circumstances, I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside, and, with my imagination warmed as it was, should probably have applied myself to the more rational theory of chemistry which has resulted from **modern discoveries**. It is even possible, that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin" (Shelley 22).

- Here we can see the passage's investment in ideas about history and temporality. Victor's fatal error, here explained by the character himself, is not a scientific one, but a historical one. By failing to understand the all-important distinction between the "ancient" and the "modern," and by failing to see knowledge as progressing and becoming more and more "real," he creates monsters. This passage also both emphasizes the importance of this historical progress narrative, while also staging it as something elusive or other than obvious, since a smart man like Victor can seemingly miss it.

Quote #2: On the Family

Context: This scene takes place in the section of the text where the monster is relating his experience with the De Lacey family, and the education he receives through a crack in the wall of their house. This episode is

notable because it centers on the monster's growing sense of his difference from others. In this scene, he is taught one particular way that he is different from the people around him.

"Other lessons were impressed upon me even more deeply. I heard of the difference of the sexes; of the birth and growth of children; how the father doted on the smiles of the infant, and the lively sallies of the older child; how all the life and cares of the mother were wrapt up in the precious charge; how the mind of youth expanded and gained knowledge; of brother, sister, and **all the various relationships which bind one human being to another in mutual bonds.**" (Shelley 84)

- In this passage, the monster describes a very conventional representation of the family unit. What is most interesting about this is how the specific relationships of the family (mother, father, son, brother) are described as encapsulating all relationships built on "mutual bonds." This passage does not just describe a "natural" family, but it makes the family the basis of all forms of subsequent social relationships and responsibility.

Quote #3: On Horror Stories

Context: In this passage, Victor Frankenstein describes his idyllic childhood to Walton, at the top of his story. In this part of the story, Frankenstein reflects on his early predilections for science, which he attributes to his father. While his childhood is obviously happy, he does mention certain scenes (like his father's reaction to Agrippa) which forecast his later obsessions.

"In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that **my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors.** I do not ever remember to have trembled at a tale of superstition, or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. **Darkness had no effect upon my fancy;** and a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life..." (Shelley 30).

- It's funny that a story that would go on to become one of the most recognizable "supernatural horrors" begins with the protagonist decrying horror stories. Horror stories are described here as something that has a deleterious effect on "the mind" and "the fancy." At the same time, it suggests that had Frankenstein been taught to fear this "darkness" he probably would have avoided the churchyard and never created the monster. Horror stories are presented as both opposing reason and real education, while also being potentially necessary.

Peer Review Activity 2.3: SUBMIT YOUR ANALYSIS TO CRITIQUE

Requirements: 1 analysis paragraph (approx. 500 words)
2 responses to your peers (approx 150 words each)

SUBMIT: In your first short paper this week, your goal will be to select a piece of textual evidence from *Frankenstein* and perform an analysis of your own. But in this academic situation, “of your own” does not necessarily mean without any assistance or feedback. Though the writing itself should be all original in your own words, academic ideas and inquiries are often built collaboratively and with necessary feedback and support.

In this assignment, you will submit your preliminary analysis to your peer review group. Follow the steps in the Short Paper 2 prompt. The version you submit to this Peer Review Activity does not have to be totally polished or thought out. In fact, the point of this activity is that you incorporate or take inspiration from your peers’ contributions in the draft you will submit at the end of the week.

RESPOND: Provide each of the other members of your group with feedback, suggestions, additional observations, or alternative interpretations.

Sample: *I like your idea about X and I would connect it to...*
X is an interesting observation, but I think I would think about it differently...
Did you notice X? It seems to be important in your example...

Short Paper 2: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Format: Times New Roman font, 12pt size
Requirements: 1 inch margins on all sides
MLA Format

Suggested Length: 1 analysis paragraph (approx. 500 words)

In this paper, you will take your first stab at composing an analysis, one of the crucial components of any academic argument. Every discipline has its own privileged types of evidence and its own styles and methods of analysis which it uses to generate knowledge of all types. Since we are working within the discipline of English Literary Study, we will be using a “close reading” textual analysis for our first paper about Mary Shelley’s novel, *Frankenstein*. Your goals here are to utilize the “quote sandwich” approach that I have introduced in this week’s lessons and construct a detailed and complex analysis of ONE passage in the novel.



OBJECTIVES:

- I. **Format an Effective Analysis Paragraph.** Evidence-based reasoning is the foundation of all academic disciplines (although each discipline has its privileged types of evidence and forms of reason). Here, since you can't present the *entire* text for consideration, your job will be to present exemplary sections from the novel in support of your argument. To this end, this paper will require you to **focus almost exclusively on one small passage of the text** and effectively present both your evidence and subsequent analysis for your reader.

- II. **Practice Textual "Close Reading."** Simply put, "close reading" does what it says: *it reads closely*; it zooms in and subjects small passages to intense and prolonged scrutiny. It investigates all possible meanings of the passage and pays special attention to things like voice, metaphor, irony, and other forms of meaning-making. This method of textual analysis is widely used to avoid generalization and show how specific words and phrases work to generate unusual, hidden or conflicted messages.

DIRECTIONS:

1. **Pick any passage** that interests you or that stands out as somehow significant (and don't worry, almost any passage can be close read). *This passage should be no more than a few sentences.*
2. **Read the passage carefully, multiple times.** Annotate your selection and pick out important words or phrases that, you think, deserve some close attention.
3. **Start by making specific observations.** Consider the implications of particular word choices; if certain words, images, or concepts stand out to you, describe why. Consider how your passage constructs complex and specific meanings using these writing tools.
4. **Describe the implications of your observations as analytic points** – What kinds of connections, concepts, or meanings have you extracted from your evidence? How does your reading of this passage speak to thematic issues in the novel as a whole? What larger topics, questions, conflicts, or contradictions are being explained or expanded here – and how?
5. **Decide upon one or two main points** you want to make about the passage, based on your reading.

When close reading, be sure to look for:

- Important images
- Important characterizations, motivations, or character descriptions
- Words/phrases that connect to central themes
- Words/phrases with double meanings
- Tone, voice, emphasis
- Assumptions
- Conflicts: interpersonal, conceptual...



- Implied meanings, irony
- Humor
- Anything that catches your eye!

Any or all of these types of observations work well for your analysis, as long as you can explain its significance!