

## FRANKENNOTES

## MARY SHELLEY *Frankenstein*

Imagine that you have been hired by a textbook company to create a companion for *Frankenstein*. Your target audience is the AP Literature class of the future, who will be reading this text. You will **BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE CHAPTER** and will **PREPARE AN ENTRY** for the **FRANKENNOTES** publication. Your entry should follow the structure that I have provided, but your information may differ according to the specific qualities or elements within your chapters. (Please remember that the example provided is not intended to be perfect. I have exemplars available for you to review.) You should use the Jerrold Hogle (of the University of Arizona) essay as a place to start thinking about your analysis. (This essay should not be included in your literature review!)

You should do independent **RESEARCH FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION**. You will also look for literary criticism to support your analysis. One of the elements of your outline should be a **LITERATURE REVIEW**. You will prepare a **BIBLIOGRAPHY** of the literary scholarship that you found useful. (Remember, a bibliography is not a Works Cited list. This should be created separately.) Your bibliography should contain four entries; these entries should correspond to the literature review. You may include more.

Finally, you will **PREPARE A BRIEF, TYPED QUIZ**. The questions must be thoughtful considerations of the text. The purpose of your quiz should be to pinpoint the most significant elements within your chapters and should require that students have paid close attention to their reading and have taken good notes. The questions should NOT be designed to trick or confuse, nor should they be obvious to someone who has not read. All quizzes must be worth 10 points, but they may be in any format that you wish. Provide an answer key. I will select questions from these quizzes to include in my quizzes to the class.

### **SOME QUICK GUIDELINES:**

- Staple your project together, but PAPERCLIP the quiz to the back separately.
- Include a title page. The title should identify the volume and chapter that you cover.

- I. **Summary:**
- II. **Characters:**  
**Character name:** brief description of who she (or he) is or how she changes  
  
**Next character:** and so on
- III. **Literary Devices:**  
**Irony:** provide a brief quote and explanation  
  
**Motif**  
  
**Etc.**
- IV. **Historical References or Allusions:**  
**Paradise Lost**  
  
**Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner**
- V. **Themes/Issues:**

**Literature Review:** On a separate, attached page, provide a brief, one paragraph summarization of each of the essays that you read. These will be the same essays in your bibliography.

**Provide a works cited list.**

**The bibliography should appear last.**

**(Please note: The sample below is not to be considered complete. Be sure to look at student samples available in the classroom.)**

## Letter I

### I. Summary:

Walton is writing home to assuage his sister's fears about his expedition to the Antarctic. He reveals his tremendous ambition.

### II. Characters:

**R. Walton:** He is the narrator. His ambition is to "discover the wondrous power that attracts the needle" and to understand the mysteries of the universe! But, on the more human side, he wishes also to discover a passage through the South Pole, thereby conferring "inestimable benefit... on all mankind to the last generation" (8). His education is "neglected" and his father forbade the sea-faring life he has chosen.

**Mrs. Saville:** Walton's sister who is apparently concerned about the trip Walton is taking. She has "evil forebodings" (7).

### III. Literary Devices:

**Romanticism:** The Romantics emphasized emotion over reason. Walton considers himself a man of science, reason.

In Romantic literary criticism, Shakespeare is highly regarded. Walton believes, "I might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated"(9).

**The Gothic novel:** This is "a type of fiction written in imitation of medieval romances. The principal aim... was to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery and horror in both atmosphere and events" (Abrams 40).

**Setting:** Walton is moving into ever more isolated regions characterized as "the seat of frost and desolation." The journey begins at places symbolic of possible redemption: St. Petersburg and Archangel. The isolated, cold, gothic setting is a device of **Romantic** literature. Men in Shelley's day had begun to explore – and disappear into -- the Arctic. It is dehumanized and cold, an appropriate place for the emotionless V. Frankenstein.

**Foreshadowing:** Walton recognizes his sister's misgivings about this expedition. His letter is, in part, his way of justifying the journey.

The South Pole is also the setting of *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

**Epistolary novel:** The structure of such a novel is to "portray characters whose method is 'writing to the moment'" (Brunnell 38)

**Frame tale:** This is structurally similar to the play-within-the-play (*Hamlet's Mousetrap*) and is a common feature in Romantic literature.

*Frankenstein* is a blending of the two: the creature tells his story to Victor, who tells both the creature's and his own stories to Walton, who writes their stories and his own to his sister. Whew!

**IV. Allusions:**

***Paradise Lost:*** Walton is on a forbidden and ambitious journey to gain knowledge. Walton wants to “ascertain the secret of the magnet” as Eve wants the knowledge of the tree that will, as Walton says, “elevate me to heaven”(8). Like Eve, Walton acknowledges death as a likely result of the quest.

Walton describes his years as a poet as a “Paradise of my own creation.”

***Rime of the Ancient Mariner:*** Walton is headed to the “icy climes” just as the mariner’s boat is pushed to the land of “mist and snow” (l.51).

**V. Themes and Issues:**

Walton’s **hubris** is at issue here. Readers will begin to notice the parallel to V. Frankenstein. Walton is not chosen without purpose.

Charlene Brunnell, "All the World's a Stage: Dramatic Sensibility in Mary Shelley's Novels"