

Year 9 – Autumn 1 – The Gothic

Origins of Gothic	Key Themes	Key Vocabulary
<p>The term gothic was first coined in 1764 by English author Horace Walpole in his novel <i>The Castle of Otranto</i>, which he subtitled 'A gothic story'.</p> <p>The novel was set in a haunted house where the protagonist is plagued by supernatural occurrences.</p> <p>Walpole used the word gothic because it refers to medieval buildings like castles and churches where a lot of gothic fiction is set.</p> <p>Gothic literature became immensely popular in England and Germany during the 18th and 19th Century with many other genres borrowing its conventions.</p> <p>Gothic fiction is all about creating terror in the reader, using fear to create suspense.</p>	<p>The supernatural</p> <p>The unknown</p> <p>Mystery</p> <p>Isolation</p> <p>Monster</p> <p>Evil</p> <p>Death/Murder</p> <p>Remote settings</p> <p>Darkness</p> <p>Psychological breakdown</p>	<p>Mysterious</p> <p>Malevolent</p> <p>Deathly</p> <p>Abandoned</p> <p>Supernatural</p> <p>Isolated</p> <p>Alchemy</p> <p>Galvanism</p> <p>Solicitor</p> <p>Monstrous</p> <p>Vampirism</p> <p>Nightmare</p> <p>Suspense</p>

Key Gothic Authors

Edgar Allan Poe (1809 – 1849)

An American writer, editor, and literary critic. He was the first well-known American writer to try to earn a living through writing alone, resulting in a financially difficult life and career. Poe's best known fiction works are Gothic, a genre that he started writing for simply because it was very popular at the time.

Mary Shelley (1797 – 1851)

Shelley came from a very educated family. Both her parents were philosophers. In 1814, Shelley ran away with one of her father's friends, the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley – who was married at the time. They travelled around Europe together and married after the death of his wife in 1816. She spent many years travelling all over Europe. As well as Gothic fiction, she wrote biographies and travelogues, and edited a lot of work by other writers.

Bram Stoker (1847 – 1912)

Born in Dublin, Ireland. He was the third of seven children. Although he gained a degree in Mathematics from Trinity College, he pursued an interest in the theatre and became a critic, writing reviews for newspapers. In 1890, he visited the coastal town of Whitby and its Gothic abbey inspired him to write *Dracula*. The story was also inspired by his Hungarian friend, Armin Vambery, who told him dark, supernatural stories about the Carpathian Mountains. Stoker spent several years researching European folklore and stories of vampires whilst working on 'Dracula'. The novel was published in 1897.

Stylistic Features	Gothic Conventions
<p>Pathetic Fallacy – When the weather reflects the tone/mood of the scene.</p> <p>Antagonist – The villain of the story.</p> <p>Epistolary Narrative – A story told in a series of letters.</p> <p>Motif – A dominant or recurring idea.</p> <p>Cryptid – A creature whose existence is disputed due to insubstantial evidence.</p> <p>Abstract Noun – An idea, quality, or state rather than a solid object, e.g. truth, danger, happiness.</p> <p>Interrogative Sentence – A sentence which asks a question.</p> <p>Olfactory Imagery – Imagery to describe a smell.</p>	<p>Abandoned houses, supposedly uninhabited Isolated, bleak settings.</p> <p>Majority of the story takes place at night/in darkness</p> <p>Supernatural entity that wants revenge</p> <p>Death of a character or those close to a character</p> <p>Rational protagonist who doesn't believe in the supernatural</p> <p>Presence of evil/religious imagery</p> <p>Inhuman or monstrous antagonist</p> <p>Use of tension and suspense to create fear</p>