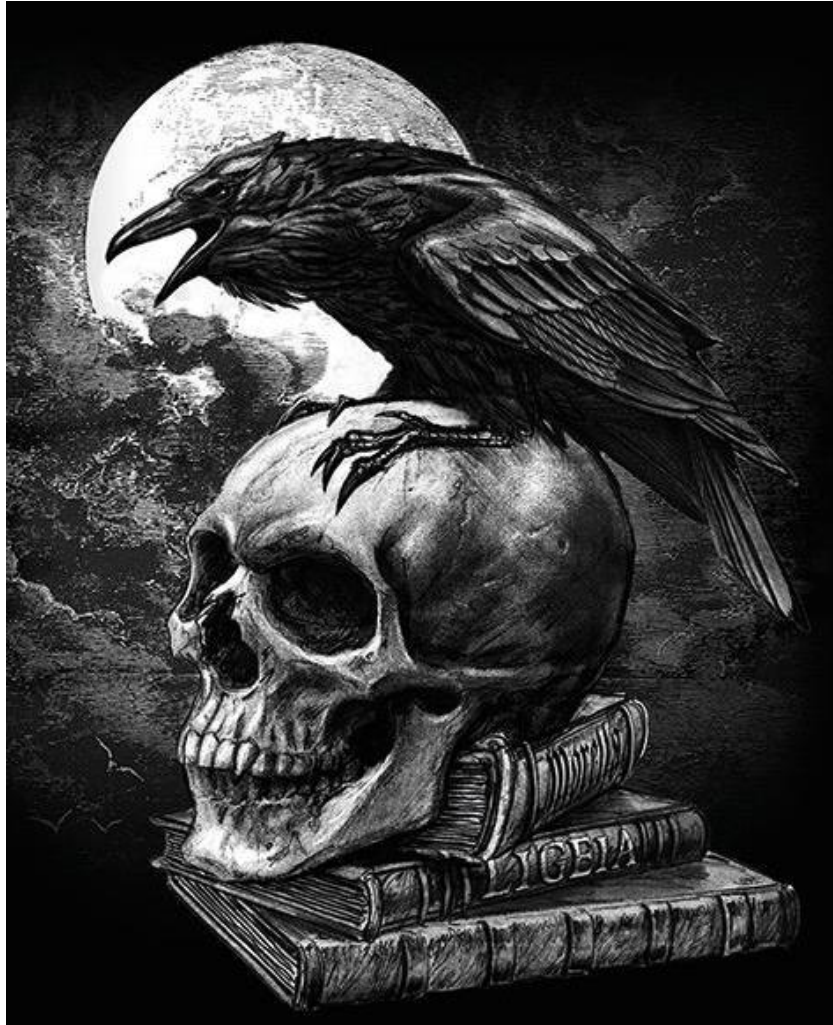


Year 8

# AN INTRODUCTION TO GOTHIC LITERATURE



Name: .....

English group: .....

This is a home learning booklet for pupils in Year 8. The activities are designed to be completed independently. Activities can be completed in the booklet, on paper or via Google Drive.

If you require additional support or have any questions you can contact your English teacher who will be able to answer your questions or send extra resources as needed.

You should aim to spend an hour a day, four times a week on the activities within this booklet.

## Lesson 1: An introduction to Gothic genre conventions

### The Gothic literary genre: When did it develop?

The English Gothic novel began with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1765). Contemporary readers found the novel electrifyingly original and thrillingly suspenseful, with its remote setting, its use of the supernatural, and its medieval trappings, all of which have been so frequently imitated that they have become stereotypes. The novel was so enormously popular that it was quickly imitated by other novelists, thereby initiating a genre. The genre takes its name from *The Castle of Otranto's* medieval—or Gothic—setting, as well as the subtitle; early Gothic novelists tended to set their novels in remote times like the Middle Ages and in remote places like Italy (Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, 1796) or the Middle East (William Beckford's *Vathek*, 1786).

Early novels in the gothic horror subgenre heavily feature discussions of morality, philosophy, and religion, with the evil villains most often acting as metaphors for some sort of human temptation the hero must overcome. The novels' endings are more often than not unhappy, and romance is never the focus. The battle between humanity and unnatural forces of evil (sometimes man-made, sometimes supernatural) within an oppressive, inescapable, and bleak landscape is considered to be the true trademark of a gothic horror novel.

The Victorian era (1837-1901) produced some of the most well-known examples of gothic horror with the publication of such novels as Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and novellas such as Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1871) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Although the genre was named after the gothic castles and crumbling medieval ruins so prevalent in early novels, many modern gothic novels have moved away from this traditional setting towards more contemporary locations, such as the haunted house featured in Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) or the Bramford apartment building in Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* (1967). As long as the environment invokes a disturbing sense of unease and/or terror within the reader, then a Gothic novel could be set in any location.

Most critics, literary historians, and readers see Gothic fiction as continuing to the present time; though it has undergone great changes, the themes, effects, and conventions of the earliest Gothic novels are alive and well, appearing in novels, movies, TV dramas and cartoons, and computer games.

**TASK: Read the information above and answer the following questions. Use your own words where you can.**

1. What is said to be the text that first began the Gothic tradition, and what year was it published?

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.....

2. Why did readers enjoy this novel? (try to use your own words in your answer)

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3. What does the following sentence from the text mean? *“The novel was so enormously popular that it was quickly imitated by other novelists, thereby initiating a genre”*

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.....  
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4. What are typical Gothic novel endings like?

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5. Which historical period produced many Gothic texts?

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6. What was the Gothic genre ‘named’ after?

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7. How have modern Gothic novels changed in terms of settings compared to the classic novels?

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8. What does a Gothic location have to do?

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9. How is the Gothic genre being continued in the modern day?

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10. Can you think of any Gothic novels/ TV shows/ Films that are from your lifetime?

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## GOthic FEATuRES

### **Atmosphere**

of mystery/suspense  
(unknown / disappearances)

### **Overwrought emotion**

(sentimental / anger / surprise /  
sorrow / terror)

### **Women in distress**

(terrified / fainting / screaming /  
sobbing / pensive / oppressed)  
sufferings very pronounced

### **Supernatural elements**

(ghosts / vampires / graveyards /  
witches)

### **Otherwordly elements**

(dreams / nightmares)

### **Romantic elements**

(unrequited love / lovers parted /  
powerful love)

+

## VOCABULARY

### **MYSTERY:**

Ominous  
Necromancer  
Prodigy  
Prophecy  
Talisman

### **FEAR/TERROR/SORROW:**

Dismal  
Dread  
Griefstricken  
Hopeless  
Wretched  
Afflicted  
Melancholy  
Fearful  
forlorn

### **SURPRISE**

#### **ANGER**

Choler  
Wrath  
Enraged  
Provoked  
Raving  
resentful

#### **HASTE**

Anxious  
Frantic  
Impetuous

**TASK: Read the following extract, then annotate it for the Gothic genre conventions. Use the Gothic features and vocabulary page to help you.**

**A letter in The Morning Chronicle describing a fog-bound London from the top of St Paul's Cathedral in 1850 by Henry Mayhew**

In the hope of obtaining a bird's-eye view of the port, I went up to the Golden Gallery that is immediately below the ball of St. Paul's. It was noon, and an exquisitely bright and clear spring day; but the view was smudgy and smeared with smoke. Clumps of building and snatches of parks looked through the clouds like dim islands rising out of the sea of smoke. It was impossible to tell where the sky ended and the city began; and as you peered into the thick haze you could, after a time, make out the dusky figures of tall factory chimneys plumed with black smoke; while spires and turrets seemed to hang midway between you and the earth, as if poised in the thick grey air.



**TASK: Now, annotate this extract for the Gothic conventions.**

**Extract from Picturesque Sketches of London Past and Present By Thomas Miller (1852): LONDON FOG**

The whole city seems covered with a crust, and all the light you can see beneath it appears as if struggling through the huge yellow basin it overspreads. You fancy that all the smoke which had ascended for years from the thousands of London chimneys had fallen down all at once, after having rotted somewhere above the clouds; smelling as if it had been kept too long, and making you wheeze and sneeze as if all the colds in the world were rushing into your head for warmth, and did not care a straw about killing a few thousands of people, so long as they could but lodge comfortably for a few hours anywhere. You blow like a grampus in a quicksand, with the keel of a seventy-four on his back, and get about as much fresh air as if you were in his situation: a pair of bellows with a hole in the side, through which you might cram your double fist, would make perfect music, when blown, compared to the noise of your own breathing. You seem as if you had swallowed six broken-winded horses; that they were inside of you alive and kicking; and, for the soul of you, you cannot get rid of one

You step gingerly along, feeling your way beside the walls, windows, and doors, whenever you can, until at last you tumble headlong into some cellar - perhaps on the shoulders of the little cobbler who is at work below, and who chances to have his sharp awl uplifted at the moment; or perhaps it is an underground coal-shed, and you alight on the back of the black-looking woman weighing coals, and double her up in her own scale - receiving, in return, a couple of black eyes from her husband. After a hearty drubbing, you escape once more into the street; and, as you cannot see a yard before you, break your shins over a milkman's can, and upset the contents on the greasy pavement; he tries to collar you, but your blood is now up, and you give him a "straight-armor," which sends him into the area, upsetting the fat cook as he falls. You then run for it, and come full butt against the "bow-window" of a respectable old gentleman, with whom you have a roll or two in the gutter, thankful that you did not fall on the other side, and stave in the shop-front. You shake yourself, and are glad that you are as you are; for a foot beyond where you fell there yawns an open grating, beneath which runs the huge sewer that empties itself into the Thames and you wonder how many have slipped in during the day.

- **Grampus** – a type of mammal similar to a dolphin or whale
- **Bellows** – an item used to blow air to stoke a fire
- **Cobbler** – a person who makes and mends shoes
- **Drubbing** - a thorough beating



**TASK: Write a short paragraph to summarise the key features and ideas linking to the Gothic genre based on what you have learned today. If you can, include some examples from the extracts you have looked at this will strengthen your responses.**

*HELP: Use these sentence starters if you need to and don't forget to use the key vocabulary list at the start of the booklet to help you.*

- The Gothic genre originated from...
- Typical Gothic genre conventions include....
- For example...
- In addition, another Gothic convention used is...
- This helps to create a \_\_\_\_ mood/ atmosphere
- Modern day Gothic genre is...

## Lesson 2: Understanding symbolic uses of language- pathetic fallacy

### Pathetic Fallacy:

*Definition:* the attribution of human feelings and responses to inanimate things or animals, especially in art and literature.

*This could include:*

- Weather
- Location/ setting
- Season/ time of day



Today we are going to focus on how Gothic writers use the weather, in particular, to create specific atmospheres, emotion and moods within their writing, and what this use of weather could symbolise.

**TASK: For each of the following images, jot some notes down on the following:**

- What mood/ atmosphere is created (calm/ tense/ on edge/ explosive, etc.)
- What emotions you could attribute to the image because of the weather
- What could be happening within this image



**TASK: For each of the following weathers, jot down any connotations that come into your minds:**

- Rain- drizzle
- Rain- downpour
- Wind- gentle breeze
- Wind- very gusty/ stormy
- Snow- blizzard
- Snow- light
- Hail/ ice
- Mist
- Fog
- Sunshine- warm
- Sunshine- incredibly hot
- Bright blue skies
- Grey, overcast skies
- Thunder and lightening
- Rainbows

**TASK: read this short extract from Jane Eyre. Annotate in as much detail as possible (single word analysis/ images and connotations/ emotions/ mood and atmosphere/ other ideas) but focus on the writer's use of pathetic fallacy.**

Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were the clear panes of glass, protecting, but not separating me from the drear November day. At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. Afar, it offered a pale blank of mist and cloud; near a scene of wet lawn and storm-beat shrub, with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast.

***Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte***

## Symbolism within literature:

Symbolism is used within writing to suggest/ hint at/ represent ideas, qualities, themes or state of mind. We often consider images when thinking about symbolism, such as:



**TASK: Consider HOW the writer, (Bronte) has used pathetic fallacy to develop her setting within her novel. You should use the PEE (point, evidence, explanation) paragraph structure to help you come up with some ideas, but you may bullet point if you find this easier. Use the question:**

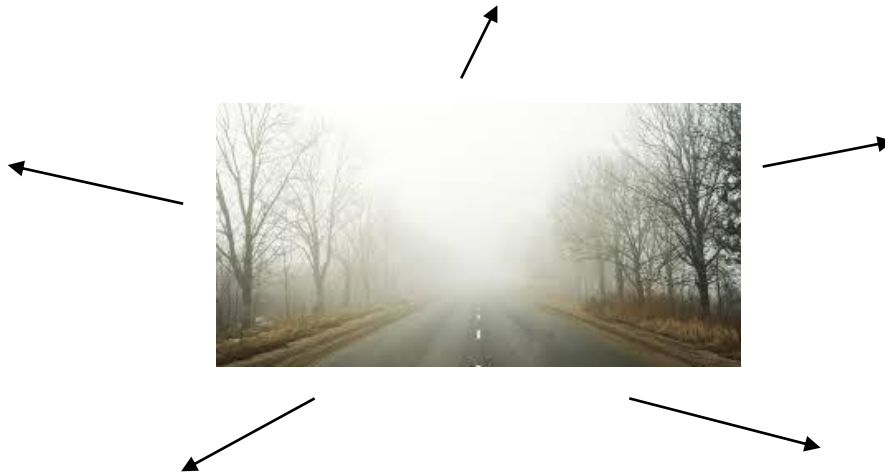
**“Explore how Bronte uses pathetic fallacy within this extract to symbolise the narrator’s state of mind.”**

**HELP: You should consider:**

- *What atmosphere/ mood is being created through use of pathetic fallacy within the extract*
- *Single word analysis*
- *Subject terminology*
- *Connotations of pathetic fallacy use*
- *What each use of pathetic fallacy is contributing to the extract*
- *Literally, metaphorically, symbolically*
- *What ‘hope’ is there within this extract and why?*
- *What ‘images’ are created within the extract and how do they suggest/ imply different emotions and how the narrator may be feeling?*

## Lesson 3: Deconstructing existing texts in order to develop an original piece-creative writing

**TASK: Write down your initial thoughts, connotations, ideas, images, emotions, etc. when you think of fog.**



**TASK: Read the following short poems and note down your initial response and ideas**

### From The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

*By T.S. Eliot*

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,  
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,  
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,  
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,  
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,  
And seeing that it was a soft October night,  
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

## Fog

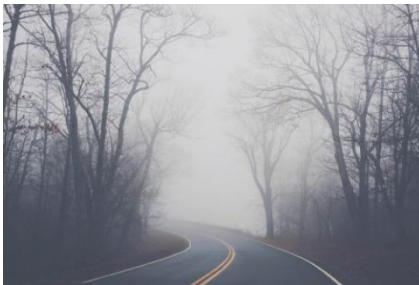
*By Carl Sandburg*

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.  
It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.



## Gray Fog *by Sara Teasdale*

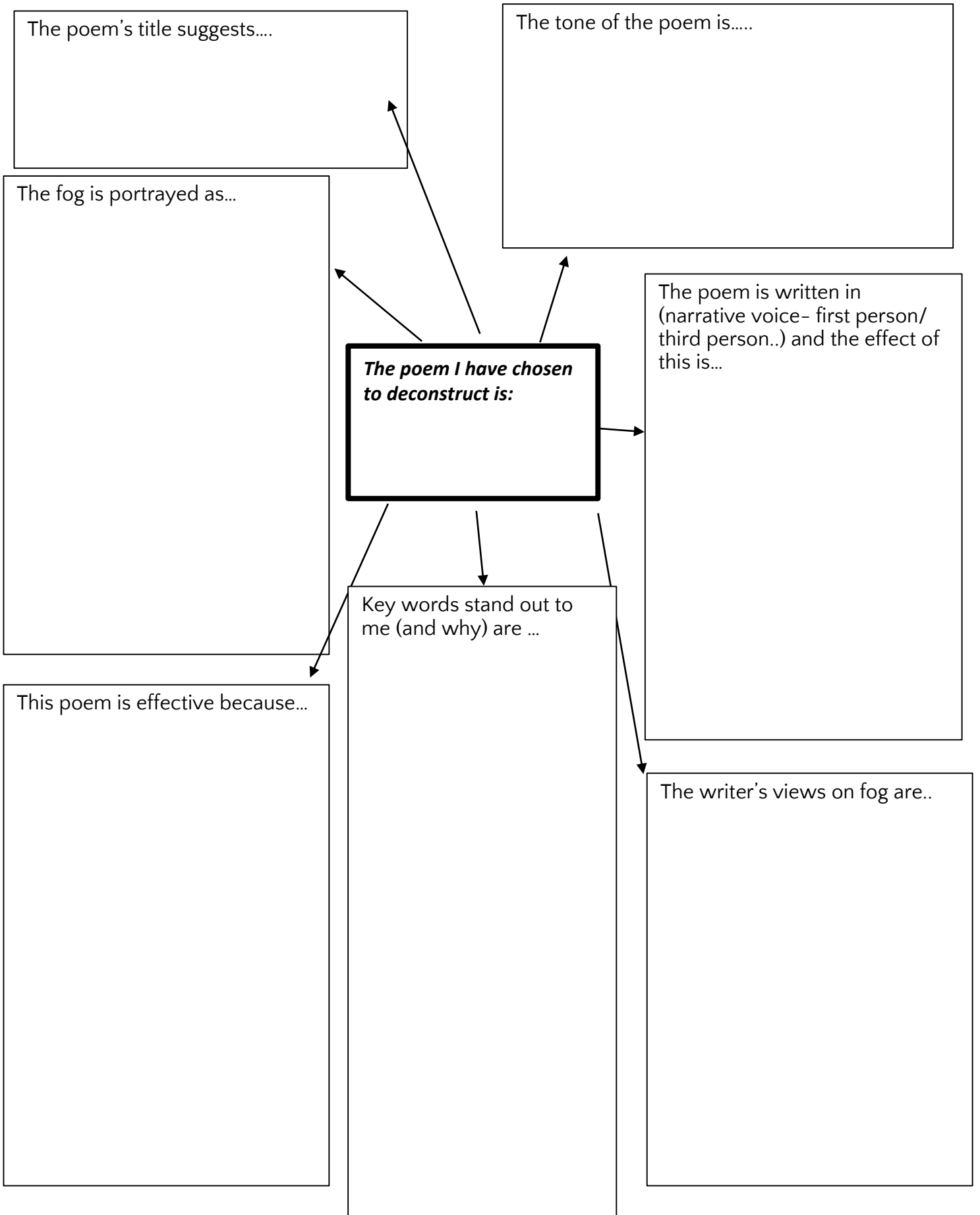
A fog drifts in, the heavy laden  
Cold white ghost of the sea—  
One by one the hills go out,  
The road and the pepper-tree.  
I watch the fog float in at the window  
With the whole world gone blind,  
Everything, even my longing, drowns,  
Even the thoughts in my mind.  
I put my head on my hands before me,  
There is nothing left to be done or said,  
There is nothing to hope for, I am tired,  
And heavy as the dead.



### Points to consider:

- What do these poems have in common?
- How does each writer portray the fog?
- What language or structure techniques do the writers use?
- Which poem do you find most effective and why?
- Which poem do you feel is the least effective and why?
- What mood or atmosphere is created by the fog?
- Is the fog portrayed as weather, or something else?
- Are there any similarities between the poems?
- What are the differences?

**TASK: Choose one of the poems and deconstruct it using the template below. This means you need to pick apart word by word (brick by brick) in order to understand how the writer created their poem.**





**TASK: Using these poems as inspiration, you are going to create your own poem about fog.**

*Help: Things to consider:*

- *Your poem does not have to be long*
- *It does not have to rhyme*
- *How do you want to portray the fog? As dangerous? Mysterious, uncontrollable, etc.?*
- *What narrative voice are you going to use?*
- *How does fog appear/ disappear (think speed- can you see it appearing?)*
- *What mood or atmosphere does fog create?*
- *What difficulties does fog bring?*
- *What does it look like?*
- *What does it feel like?*
- *How does fog move?*
- *What does fog do?*
- *What could you compare fog to? (an envelope, water, paint, etc.)*

**You can use the space within this box to plan your ideas/ write down inspiration from the poems.**

## Lesson 4: Creating a piece of descriptive writing in a gothic style.

**TASK:** for each of the following words, come up with a range of synonyms/ ambitious vocabulary/ phrases/ poetic devices (simile/ metaphor etc.)

*Help: Look at the picture to inspire you.*

- Sad
- Dark
- Empty
- Scary
- Quiet
- Walk
- Ground/ floor



**TASK:** Write a description based on this image. You can write in 1<sup>st</sup> person, but aim to make it as descriptive as possible (no big plot events/ speech)

*HELP: Use the words above/ 5 senses to get you started.*

### **Creative writing- creating an effective mood or atmosphere.**

Gothic writers must rely on the quality of their description in order to build mood, atmosphere and increase tension. Just like 'scary' films, you have to have the quieter, calmer 'spooky' parts, to make the larger events and jump scares more effective.

#### **TASK: Self- assessment:**

- 1) Highlight the sentence that you think is the most frightening within your work. Once you have done that, write the sentence in the box.**
- 2) Once you have written your sentence into the box below, annotate it to show how it is helping to create a frightening or spooky atmosphere.**

**Write your sentence in this box:**

### **EDINGLY- Sentence Variety.**

Sentence variety is increasingly important when it comes to creating particular moods or atmospheres within your writing. Without it, you can fall back on 'dangerous' words such as "I", "the", "Then" to start a sentence. Using these dangerous words too often means your writing becomes like a list of ideas, rather than one idea that is explored in detail.

**EDINGLY** is a quick and easy way to develop your sentence variety. Within a paragraph:

- Start a sentence with a word ending in ED
- Start a sentence with a word ending in ING
- Start a sentence with a word ending in LY.

Then, you simply mix and match to ensure you use EDINGLY throughout your writing.

**TASK: Re-write your sentence as many times as you can using EDINGLY to vary the start of your sentences. You may wish to change the order of some words, get rid of others completely, add new words, change the tense- this is ok! Editing work is the most powerful job a writer can do. Your end goal is to improve on it each time.**

## Lesson 5: Continuing to edit and proof-read work in order to improve its effectiveness.

### The power of one-word sentences/ paragraphs.

Sometimes, it is just as effective to write very short, one-word paragraphs in your writing. In a piece of writing approximately one page long, you should only ever do this once or twice- like anything, if you over-use a one-word paragraph, then it loses its effectiveness. One word that you should never use as a one-word paragraph is 'bang'. This is a very cliched way of writing and will not gain you any marks from the examiner.

**TASK: Re-read your writing created yesterday. Find at least one area where you could either change an existing sentence or add a one-word sentence into your writing. Write this on top of your original work, but make sure you are writing in a different colour so I can see your editing process.**

*HELP: Often, the most effective one-word sentences relate to the sense of hearing or references to light or dark. For example: Darkness. Groaning. Howls.*

### Interrogative sentences- questions.

A well-placed question within a piece of writing can also create a sense of curiosity, wonder and a sense of the unknown with your reader, and therefore increasing tension within description. If you are writing in first person (I) this is easier to do, but it can be done with any narrative voice. As with everything we have discussed, you should only ever use questions once or twice in a whole piece of writing to avoid it becoming repetitive.

#### Example:

*Fog began to envelop everything that stood in its way. Surely there was no escape now, was there? The church spires slowly disappeared, followed by the gates, followed by the cobbled path just meters in front of me...*

**TASK: Change an existing sentence or add in a new interrogative sentence form in order to build tension or to create wonder and curiosity within your writing. Make sure you are doing this using a different colour.**

### Simple sentences (one main clause/ one verb)

As with one-word sentences, simple declarative sentences (where you make a short statement) can be very effective.

#### Example:

*I looked around trying to escape this nightmare that I seemed to be trapped in. Fog surrounded me. Crying, I desperately tried to find a way to get somebody's attention, but it was no good. I was trapped.*

**TASK: Change an existing sentence or add a new one to your work using a different colour to ensure you have included a short, declarative simple sentence.**

### **Ambitious Vocabulary:**

It is important that you consider using ambitious vocabulary because you need to show the examiner that you have a large word bank to fall back on. However, if you change every other word, your writing can begin to sound 'fake' and too forced, meaning you don't gain marks for the ambitious words you do use as they lose their meaning.

**TASK: Look at your writing one last time. Identify no more than 5 individual words from the whole of your text. Use a thesaurus to improve these words using a different colour. Think carefully and ensure that your choice of word fits with the context of your writing.**

*HELP: Remember synonyms have similar meanings, but they don't mean the same thing. For example: 'sad' and 'distraught' are similar, but they have different 'strengths' and emotions connected to them so they couldn't be used to describe the same thing.*

**TASK: Once you have completed the editing process, write the sub-title: Gothic description final draft. Underneath this using a blue or black pen, re-write your descriptive writing based on the image below. You should consider the changes you have made so far, but also to include any other changes that you feel would benefit your work.**



## Lesson 6: Exploring writers' choices of language in order to shock the reader

Many Gothic novels aimed to shock and surprise the readers. Writers would often draw on events that were happening in the world at the time and twist and develop these into ideas that would frighten their readers.

**What was life like during the Victorian Era? You should consider:**

- Advancements in technology
- Role of religion
- Role of science/ scientific discoveries
- What life was like for someone with a disfigurement/ disability
- Impact of the industrial revolution
- Different social classes
- Belief in ghosts/ spirits/ supernatural

**TASK: Using technology (ipads/ Phones/ computers) or reference books, complete a research task to find out information about the bullet points above. You should write your notes in the box below. If you have trouble finding this information, contact your class teacher who will be able to send you some information to help.**

**TASK: Read this extract from Mary Shelley's novel, Frankenstein. This is the reader's first meeting with the monster that Victor Frankenstein had created. As you read, annotate key words with connotations, ideas and images that come into your head.**

**Mary Shelley's Frankenstein:**

*(Description of the creature)*

"It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld my man completed; with an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected instruments of life around me that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet, It was already one in the morning, the rain pattered dismally against the window panes, and my candle was nearly burned out, when by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open. It breathed hard, and with a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotion at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as *beautiful. Beautiful!* — Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was *of a lustrous black and flowing*; and his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriences only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips".

**TASK: re-read the Frankenstein extract and answer the following questions below:**

1) What examples of pathetic fallacy has Shelley included in this extract?

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2) Why do you believe Shelley set this scene within these examples of pathetic fallacy?

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3) Consider what you learned with your quick research task. How do you think the readers would have reacted to this description of the monster based on what their lives were like? (understanding of science/ religion/ disfigurements, etc.)

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4) Choose 3 key words from the text and explain how they have been used:

1) .....  
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2) .....  
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3) .....  
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## Lesson 7: To read and understand the key events of a short story.

**TASK:** You are going to read a short story by a famous Gothic writer called Edgar Allan Poe. The story is called: 'The Tell-Tale Heart'.

As you read, use the box below to either write down key words, or draw little sketches that follow the plot of the story so you end up with a summary of the plot.

## The Tell-Tale Heart

TRUE! -- nervous -- very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses -- not destroyed -- not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily -- how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture -- a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees -- very gradually -- I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded --with what caution --with what foresight --with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it --oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly --very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! --would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously --oh, so cautiously --cautiously (for the hinges creaked) --I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights --every night just at midnight --but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he has passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I *felt* the extent of my own powers --of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back --but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness, (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers,) and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out --"Who's there?"

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening; --just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief --oh, no! --it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself --"It is nothing but the wind in the chimney --it is only a mouse crossing the floor," or "It is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp." Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. *All in vain*; because Death, in approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel --although he neither saw nor heard --to *feel* the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little --a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it --you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily --until, at length a single dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye.

It was open --wide, wide open --and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness --all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over acuteness of the senses? --now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror *must* have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment! --do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me --the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once --once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound.

This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye -- not even *his* -- could have detected anything wrong. There was nothing to wash out --no stain of any kind --no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all --ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock --still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart, --for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled, --for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search --search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct: --it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definiteness --until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

No doubt I now grew very pale; --but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased --and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound --much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath -- and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly --more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men -- but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what could I do? I foamed --I raved --I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder --louder --louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly,

and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! --no, no! They heard! --they suspected! --they *knew!* --they were making a mockery of my horror! --this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! -- and now --again! --hark! louder! louder! louder! *louder!* --

"Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed! --tear up the planks! --here, here! --it is the beating of his hideous heart!"

### Vocabulary

<b>Foresight</b>	Thinking about the future	<b>Concealment</b>	Hiding
<b>Dissumulation</b>	A false appearance	<b>Waned</b>	To get less and less
<b>Vexed</b>	Troubled	<b>Scantlings</b>	Small amount
<b>Sagacity</b>	Good judgment	<b>Suavity</b>	Graceful, polite
<b>Hearkening</b>	Giving careful attention	<b>Bade</b>	Urge
<b>Awe</b>	Mixed feelings: fear, wonder	<b>Audacity</b>	Bold, daring
<b>Distinctness</b>	Unmistakable	<b>Reposed</b>	To lay at rest
<b>Over-acuteness</b>	Very keen	<b>Derision</b>	Contempt, ridicule

**TASK: Once you have read 'The Tell-Tale Heart', answer the questions below in full sentence. For the final question you should use the PEE (point, evidence, explanation) structure.**

1. How does the narrator describe his own personality?

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2. What impossible claims does the narrator make about his abilities?

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3. Which two adjectives does the narrator use to prove that he is not mad in the first paragraph?

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4. Why does the narrator decide to murder the old man?

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5. Find 2 pieces of evidence which suggest that the narrator is mad. Explain how your evidence shows this.

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6. Find an example of when the narrator talks directly to us, the reader. What effect does this have?

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7. How does the narrator describe the eye? Explain the effect this has on the reader.

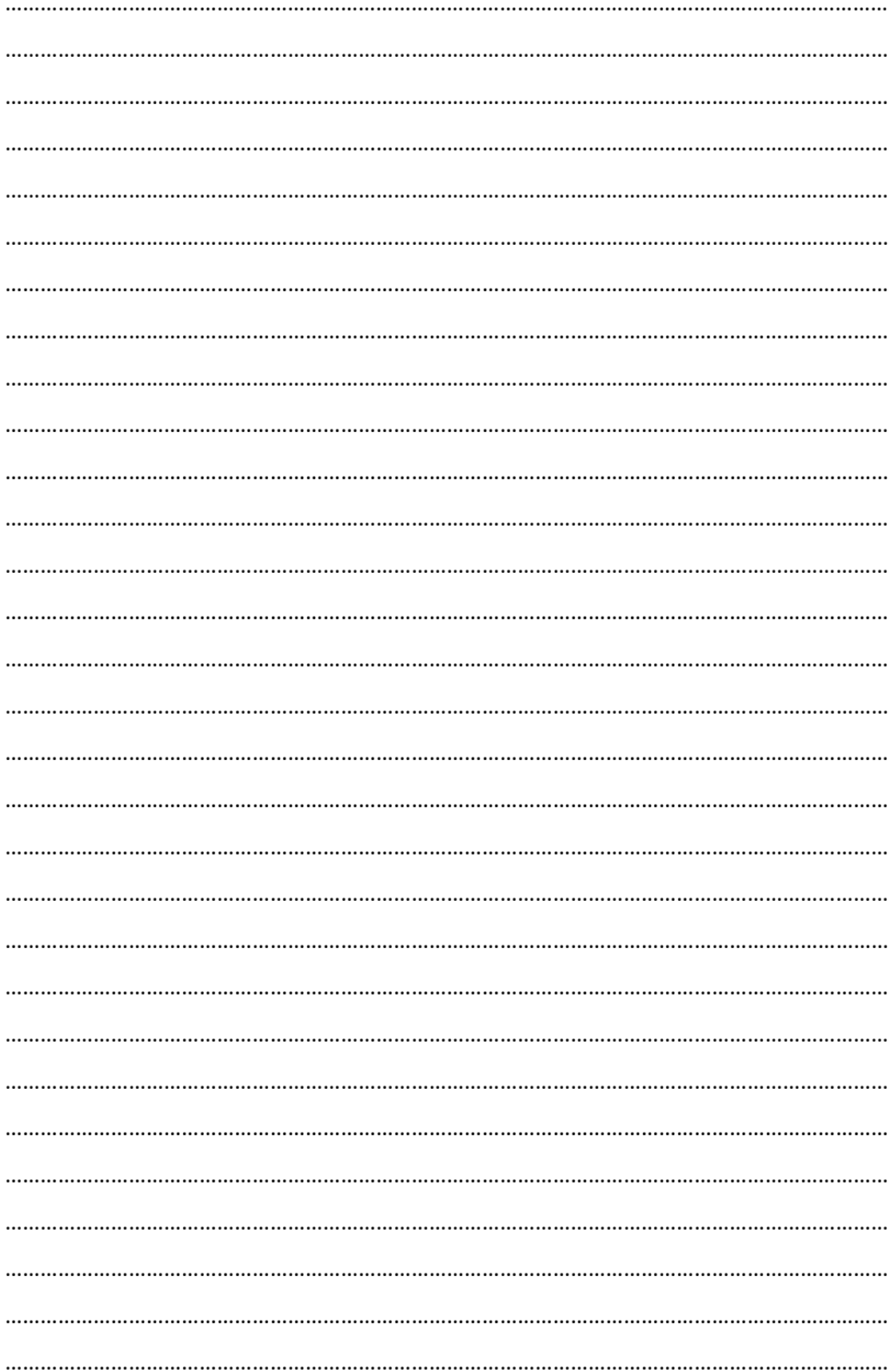
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8. How does the writer create an atmosphere of horror and tension? You may wish to comment on:

- The personality of the narrator
- His motives for killing the old man
- How he tries to convince us of his cleverness
- Any important words or phrases

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## Lesson 8: To understand the term unreliable narrator and how this could link to the Gothic genre.

### Recap points:

- What can you remember about the short story 'The Tell-Tale Heart'?
- What is unusual about the way the narrator speaks?
- If I was marking the short story as a piece of your creative writing, what would I likely say about the sentence structure?

### Narrative voices:

Different types of narrative voice	Example
<b>First person</b>	<p>A character within the story is telling the story. Some of the main personal pronouns used are <i>I, my, me, we</i>.</p> <p><i>I watched as the boat sank. I felt a mixture of relief and guilt. I turned to take the rudder, pushing away the thoughts that crawled like ants into my mind.</i></p>
<b>Second person</b>	<p>Not commonly used by writers. The personal pronouns <i>you</i> and <i>your</i> are used throughout.</p> <p><i>You watch as the boat slowly sinks. You feel relief mixed with guilt. You turn and take the rudder, pushing away the thoughts that crawl like ants into your mind.</i></p>
<b>Third person</b>	<p>The story is being told by the voice of someone who is not a character in the story. The main personal pronouns used are <i>she, he</i> and <i>they</i>.</p> <p><i>George watched as the boat slowly sank. He felt relief mixed with guilt. He turned to take the rudder, pushing away the thoughts that crawled like ants into his mind.</i></p>
<b>Third person omniscient</b>	<p>The story is being told by a voice who shows they know more than the characters in the story – the narrator is all knowing. The main personal pronouns used are <i>she, he</i> and <i>they</i>.</p> <p><i>George watched as the boat sank. He felt relief mixed with guilt. Six miles away a group of fishermen watched the horizon, looking for signs of the storm they could feel in the air.</i></p>

### **Unreliable narrator:**

As well as the narrative voices above, we also have to consider whether our narrator is reliable or not- in other words can we believe what they say? Are events happening exactly as they say, or have they been changed, exaggerated, forgotten, embellished, etc.?

A dictionary definition of the term **unreliable narrator** is a 'character' whose telling of the story is not completely accurate or **credible** due to problems with the character's mental state or maturity.

### **Examples of unreliable narrators could include:**

- A young child narrating
- An adult thinking back to an event that happened when they were very young
- A very elderly person
- Someone with maturity issues
- Someone with poor mental health (severe illness like schizophrenia)
- Someone who has been abused/ experienced trauma
- Someone placed into a position of pressure (confession/ interview/ peer pressure)

### **TASK: Can you think of any more examples?**

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### **Discussion point:**

Could we consider the narrator from 'The Tell-Tale Heart' to be an unreliable narrator? Why?

### **TASK: Answer the question: Explore how the narrator of 'The Tell-Tale Heart' could be defined as an unreliable narrator.**

### **HELP:**

- *Remember to use literally, metaphorically, symbolically*
- *Remember to use the WHY paragraph structure- look back at your traffic light strips*
- *Remember to analyse key language/ include subject terminology*
- *Focus on the writer (Poe) and why they have done this*
- *Consider the definition of an unreliable narrator and keep referring to the question*
- *Consider how the narrative voice seems 'different' to how we would speak.*
- *What is it about the narrator's words and actions that suggest we can't trust them completely?*
- *Why do you believe Poe chose to have an unreliable narrator for this grisly story?*

## Lesson 9: Creative Writing- Turning an unreliable narrative into a reliable narrative.

We have looked at the role of an unreliable narrator and how 'The Tell-Tale Heart' was a good example of this.

Over the next two lessons, you are going to take the plot of The Tell Tale Heart and turn it into a more reliable narrative- a news report based on the grisly events of the novel.

**TASK: Make a list below of all the responsibilities and 'ingredients' of a newspaper article.**

Newspaper articles should include:

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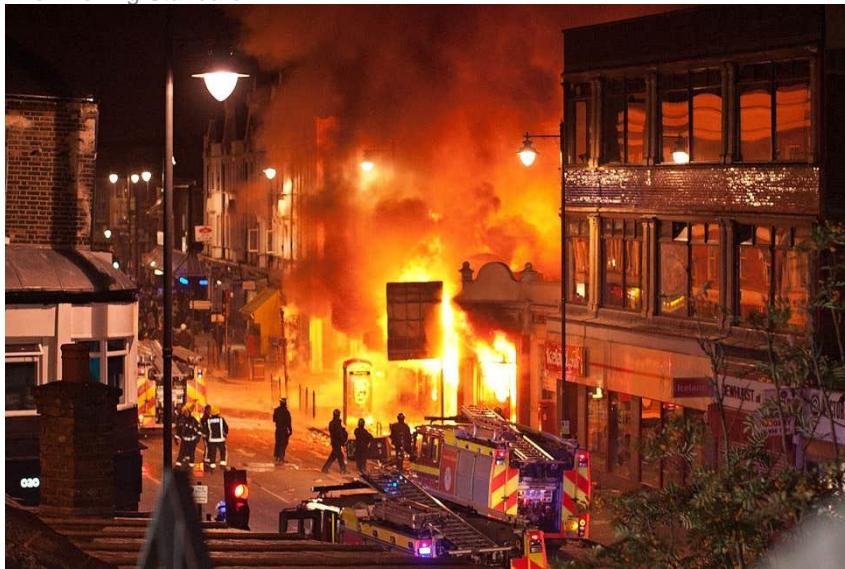
**TASK: Read the two newspaper articles. Make a note of the differences and similarities between them:**

Differences	Similarities

## Tabloid Newspaper Article

# London riots 'were fuelled by a warped sense of community spirit'

• CHLOE CHAPLAIN  
The Evening Standard



Riots: The violence broke out in Tottenham and spread across the UK ( *Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images* )

**The 2011 riots that started in Tottenham and swept across the UK were inflamed by a warped sense of community uniting against the police, psychologists have said.**

Traditional postcode rivalries dissolved as gangs united to form a "band of brothers" working together against a common enemy, research suggests.

Scientists have claimed that this togetherness, amidst the looting, violence and destruction, produced a feeling of euphoria that contributed to the disorder.

Dr John Drury, from the University of Sussex, led an investigation into the early phases of the riots in Tottenham Hale and Haringey.

Speaking at the British Science Festival at the University of Brighton, he said: "This riot saw traditional post-code rivalries melt away in the face of a common enemy in the police, and the emergence of a new shared identity. Our research shows for the first time how that happened.

"Police forces and others may feel that they understand how gang mentalities work but our findings show that at times like this, a fresh sense of community can break down existing loyalties.

what our research shows. We hope that those responsible for law enforcement and keeping communities safe will take stock."

The August 2011 riots were sparked by the death of Mark Duggan, a suspected gang member who was shot by police in Tottenham. Five people died, property suffered damage estimated at £200 million, and police made more than 3,000 arrests.

The psychologists studied YouTube videos and Google Street View images, looked at police reports and arrest records, and interviewed 41 rioters.

Dr Drury said: "If people are united for the first time then it's a basis for a sense of empowerment. If people all feel the same way and they expect others to feel that way, they expect to be supported and that gives them the confidence to take action."

He said a turning point came when the police chose not to respond to one of their cars being torched, generating a feeling that the police were weak and encouraging rioters to move onto other targets offices and shops.

And among rioters there was a shared sense of grievance over heavy-handed police tactics such as "stop-and-search" which provoked a desire for revenge, Dr Drury added.

Havok: A sense of euphoria 'fuelled the violence' (Dan Istitene/Getty Images)

"The emotions changed from anger to euphoria," he said. "Seeing the police defeated led to expressions of joy."

After the riots ended there was some evidence that the rivalry between gangs in different districts was not as strong as it used to be. One rioter who was interviewed said: "I saw the community coming together ... usually it's post-code gangs and that lot, like Hornsey, they have differences with Wood Green. But then again, when the riots came, I saw Wood Green and Hornsey people just walking past each other like it was nothing. Now, it's like I don't see a problem with any kind of area."

Dr Drury acknowledged that critics might reject the association of rioting with community spirit.

He added: "Our task is simply to understand and explain. Some of it might be shocking, but this is what we find."

## Broadsheet Newspaper Article

# Tottenham riots: a peaceful protest, then suddenly all hell broke loose

**Shops looted, vehicle torched and police injured in full-scale riot that spread across north-London suburbs**

**Paul Lewis**



Fire rages through a building in Tottenham, north London, on Saturday night during the worst riots since Brixton. Photograph: Lewis Whyld/PA

Asked if the Metropolitan police were slow to respond to the Tottenham riots, commander Adrian Hanstock replied: "No, not at all." That account, given outside Scotland Yard on Sunday morning, did not correlate with events that had unfolded several miles away in north London hours earlier.

What began as a gathering of around 200 protesters demanding answers over the death of Mark Duggan, who was shot dead by police on Thursday, culminated 12 hours later in a full-scale riot that saw brazen looting spread across north-London suburbs.

By 5.00am, at Tottenham Hale retail park, teenagers were still emerging from shops into the dawn sunshine, stuffing bags and trolleys with stolen goods and running into back streets.

Some officers had apprehended a handful of looters; others had their phones out and were taking pictures of a burnt-out car.

At exactly the same time, looting was taking place nearly two miles away, on Wood Green high street, where approximately 100 people had spent hours burning cars and breaking into high-street shops. Some were even filling suitcases.

As for police – who had claimed to have "contained" disturbances six hours earlier – there was none in sight.



By Sunday night police said there had been 55 arrests, and 26 police officers injured. Yet what marked the weekend's disturbances were not the number of people hurt but the scale of property destruction.

Throughout the borough, shops, pubs, banks and even residential properties had been ransacked and torched.

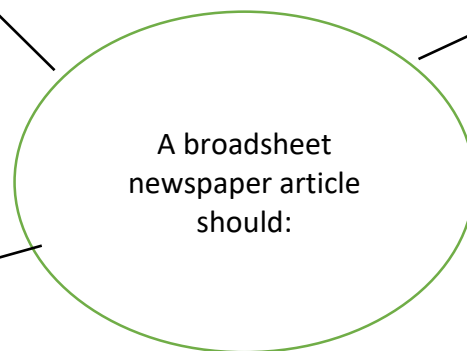
Firefighters struggled to contain a blaze at an Aldi supermarket and another fire in a building just a few hundred yards away, housing a carpet store. Both were huge fires that – apart from the rioting – would have made significant news events in themselves.

These were by all accounts the worst disturbances of their kind since the 1995 Brixton riots. Shocked residents emerging this morning to see the scorched, debris-strewn streets asked two questions. Why had the riot started? And how did it spread?

**Task: Creating a spider diagram below, compile a list of everything that you should consider and include when writing an article for a broadsheet or tabloid newspaper. You have been given some examples to get you started.**

Factual information such as correct times, names, dates

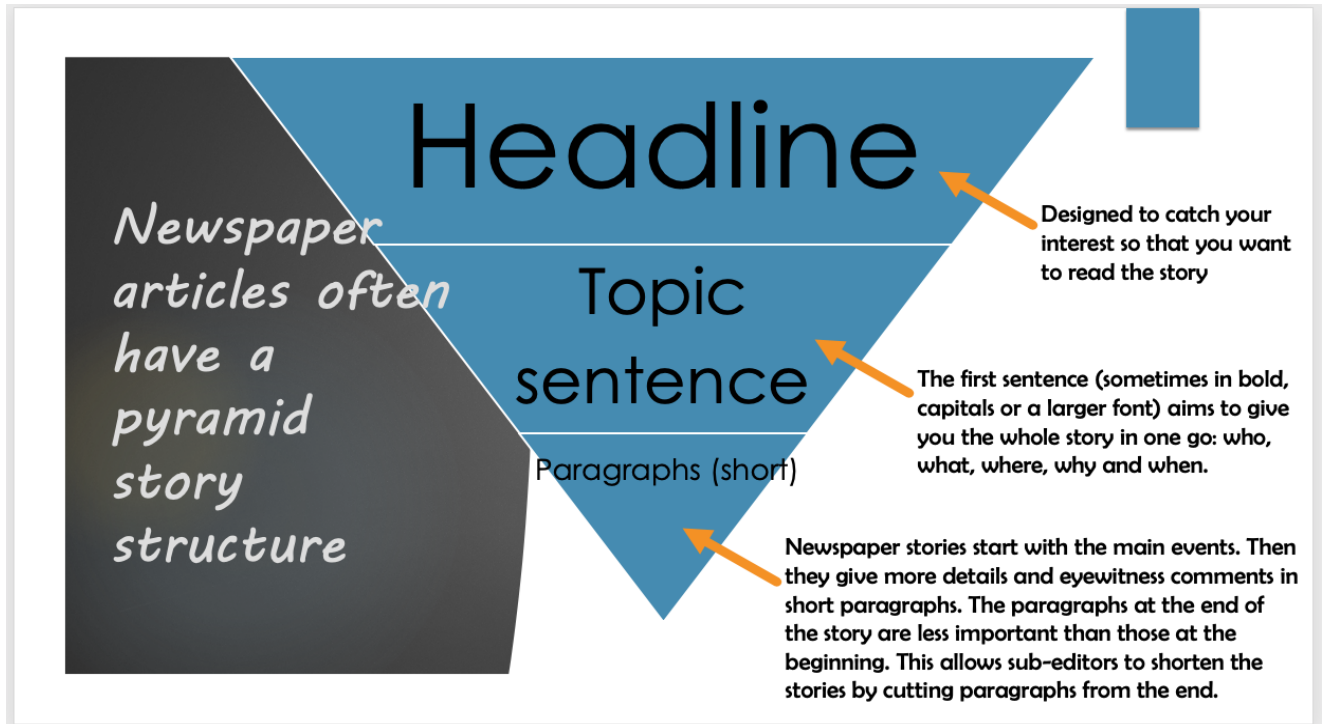
No accusations- everything written must be true or clearly stated that it is alleged



Reliable witness statements

**Newspaper articles:**

- Follow very similar structures no matter what the article topic is about
- Have summaries and subheadings within them
- Include overviews- 5Ws (Who, What, Where, When, Why)



## Lesson 10/ 11- writing a newspaper article

You are going to work on your newspaper article and produce a draft article by the end of today's lesson. **Next lesson, you will be writing your final article.**

### HELP:

- You should refer to the sample newspaper articles for the structure, type of language used and style of writing
- Look back in this booklet at the structure of a news article (McDonald's example)

### Your newspaper article should:

- Focus on the story of The Tell-Tale Heart, by Edgar Allen Poe.
- Be written in the style of either a broadsheet (more serious) or a tabloid (more gossip/ informal)
- Cover the 5Ws of a newspaper article- Who What Where When Why
- Should include any witness statements (refer to the text for this)
- Should include details from the story
- Should demonstrate your imagination as well- you may wish to add or embellish original ideas

### Your newspaper article style should be:

- Unbiased- you should not take sides
- Remember your role is to tell the world the news- reporting what happened
- Cannot blame anyone- always use words such as 'allegedly', 'supposedly'
- Don't refer to the murderer, instead, refer to 'the accused' or 'the man thought to be responsible'
- Clear, simple and factual (you don't find metaphors and similes in a news article)

<b>Content and organisation: (your ideas and WHAT you write about)</b>	<b>Technical Accuracy (SPaG) HOW you write</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Appropriate writing style- article</li><li>○ Content- ideas, 5Ws</li><li>○ Structure- like an article?</li><li>○ Choice of vocabulary- appropriate but still ambitious in places?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sentence variety (length and openers)</li><li>● Paragraphing</li><li>● Capital letters/ punctuation</li><li>● Spelling and grammar</li></ul>

## Lesson 12 and Lesson 13: To produce fact files about the role of women within Victorian society.

**TASK: Over the next couple of lessons to produce a detailed fact-file about the role of women in Victorian society.**

THIS LESSON: Use technology or reference books to collate as much information as possible/ rough notes. **If you have trouble finding this information, contact your class teacher who will be able to send you some information to help.**

NEXT LESSON: Use your notes and present them neatly in a fact file/ poster/ presentation

*HELP: What you should include within your research:*

- 1) What is different about the role of women in 2019 compared to the Victorian era?
- 2) What jobs/ roles were women generally supposed to have/ do?
- 3) Who generally had control over a woman's life?
- 4) Could women vote?
- 5) Consider fashion differences between Victorian era/ modern day?
- 6) What was the ideal in terms of beauty within the Victorian era?
- 7) What happened if a woman was believed to have mental health issues?
- 8) What was the role of marriage?
- 9) What was the average age of getting married?
- 10) What was the average age of having children?
- 11) What was the risk of having children?
- 12) What other 'jobs' did women have (and why) such as prostitution?
- 13) How were women of colour/ disability/ disfigurement treated?
- 14) How did upper class women get treated?
- 15) How did women in poverty get treated?
- 16) What were mental asylums? How does this link to women?
- 17) Anything else you think is significant about the way women had to live their lives in the Victorian era.

**You may choose to present your work as:**

- a large collection of posters (you need to aim for at least 2x A3 sizes of paper as a minimum)
- a fact file- at least 2-3 A4 pages long
- a Google Slides presentation
- a speaking and listening presentation
- a selection of images with accompanying notes

**Consider: You will need to display your work so information must be completed, presented clearly and easy to read.**

## Lesson 14- To read and understand a short story- The Yellow Wallpaper.

- Read the short Gothic story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman called 'The Yellow Wallpaper'.
- As you read, consider your research about Victorian women, and what you learned during this task.

### The Yellow Wallpaper

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity--but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and PERHAPS--(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)--PERHAPS that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression--a slight hysterical tendency--what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites--whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to "work" until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it DOES exhaust me a good deal--having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus--but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a DELICIOUS garden! I never saw such a garden--large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and coheirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid, but I don't care--there is something strange about the house--I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a DRAUGHT, and shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.

But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself--before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.

I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.

He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. "Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear," said he, "and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time." So we took the nursery at the top of the house.

It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls.

The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is stripped off--the paper--in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide--plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.

The color is repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long.

There comes John, and I must put this away,--he hates to have me write a word.

We have been here two weeks, and I haven't felt like writing before, since that first day.

I am sitting by the window now, up in this atrocious nursery, and there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please, save lack of strength.

John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious.

I am glad my case is not serious!

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing.

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no REASON to suffer, and that satisfies him.

Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way!

I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!



Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able,--to dress and entertain, and order things.

It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby!

And yet I CANNOT be with him, it makes me so nervous.

I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wall-paper!

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wall-paper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on.

"You know the place is doing you good," he said, "and really, dear, I don't care to renovate the house just for a three months' rental."

"Then do let us go downstairs," I said, "there are such pretty rooms there."

Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down to the cellar, if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain.

But he is right enough about the beds and windows and things.

It is an airy and comfortable room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim.

I'm really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper.

Out of one window I can see the garden, those mysterious deepshaded arbors, the riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees.

Out of another I get a lovely view of the bay and a little private wharf belonging to the estate. There is a beautiful shaded lane that runs down there from the house. I always fancy I see people walking in these numerous paths and arbors, but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try.

I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me.

But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well, John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fireworks in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it KNEW what a vicious influence it had!

There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down.

I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere. There is one place where two breadths didn't match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other.

I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy store.

I remember what a kindly wink the knobs of our big, old bureau used to have, and there was one chair that always seemed like a strong friend.

I used to feel that if any of the other things looked too fierce I could always hop into that chair and be safe.

The furniture in this room is no worse than inharmonious, however, for we had to bring it all from downstairs. I suppose when this was used as a playroom they had to take the nursery things out, and no wonder! I never saw such ravages as the children have made here.

The wall-paper, as I said before, is torn off in spots, and it sticketh closer than a brother--they must have had perseverance as well as hatred.

Then the floor is scratched and gouged and splintered, the plaster itself is dug out here and there, and this great heavy bed which is all we found in the room, looks as if it had been through the wars.

But I don't mind it a bit--only the paper.

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing.

She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!

But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows.

There is one that commands the road, a lovely shaded winding road, and one that just looks off over the country. A lovely country, too, full of great elms and velvet meadows.

This wall-paper has a kind of sub-pattern in a different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

But in the places where it isn't faded and where the sun is just so--I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design.

There's sister on the stairs!

Well, the Fourth of July is over! The people are gone and I am tired out. John thought it might do me good to see a little company, so we just had mother and Nellie and the children down for a week.

Of course I didn't do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now.

But it tired me all the same.

John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall.

But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother, only more so!

Besides, it is such an undertaking to go so far.

I don't feel as if it was worthwhile to turn my hand over for anything, and I'm getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.

Of course I don't when John is here, or anybody else, but when I am alone.

And I am alone a good deal just now. John is kept in town very often by serious cases, and Jennie is good and lets me alone when I want her to.

So I walk a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit on the porch under the roses, and lie down up here a good deal.

I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wall-paper. Perhaps BECAUSE of the wall-paper.

It dwells in my mind so!

I lie here on this great immovable bed--it is nailed down, I believe--and follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics, I assure you. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I WILL follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of.

It is repeated, of course, by the breadths, but not otherwise.

Looked at in one way each breadth stands alone, the bloated curves and flourishes--a kind of "debased Romanesque" with delirium tremens--go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity.

But, on the other hand, they connect diagonally, and the sprawling outlines run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing seaweeds in full chase.

The whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction.

They have used a horizontal breadth for a frieze, and that adds wonderfully to the confusion.

There is one end of the room where it is almost intact, and there, when the cross lights fade and the low sun shines directly upon it, I can almost fancy radiation after all,--the interminable grotesques seem to form around a common centre and rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction.

It makes me tired to follow it. I will take a nap I guess.

I don't know why I should write this.

I don't want to.

I don't feel able.

And I know John would think it absurd. But I MUST say what I feel and think in some way--it is such a relief!

But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.

Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much.

John says I musn't lose my strength, and has me take cod liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.

Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.

But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.

It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness I suppose.

And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head.

He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me.

There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wall-paper.

If we had not used it, that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.

I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here after all, I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see.

Of course I never mention it to them any more--I am too wise,--but I keep watch of it all the same.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.

Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

It is always the same shape, only very numerous.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder--I begin to think--I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

But I tried it last night.

It was moonlight. The moon shines in all around just as the sun does.

I hate to see it sometimes, it creeps so slowly, and always comes in by one window or another.

John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wall-paper till I felt creepy.

The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out.

I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper DID move, and when I came back John was awake.

"What is it, little girl?" he said. "Don't go walking about like that--you'll get cold."

I thought it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away.

"Why darling!" said he, "our lease will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before.

"The repairs are not done at home, and I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger, I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better, I feel really much easier about you."

"I don't weigh a bit more," said I, "nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away!"

"Bless her little heart!" said he with a big hug, "she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let's improve the shining hours by going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!"

"And you won't go away?" I asked gloomily.

"Why, how can I, dear? It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really dear you are better!"

"Better in body perhaps--" I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word.

"My darling," said he, "I beg of you, for my sake and for our child's sake, as well as for your own, that you will never for one instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy. Can you not trust me as a physician when I tell you so?"

So of course I said no more on that score, and we went to sleep before long. He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn't, and lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately.

On a pattern like this, by daylight, there is a lack of sequence, a defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to a normal mind.

The color is hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing.

You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back-somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream.

The outside pattern is a florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus. If you can imagine a toadstool in joints, an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions--why, that is something like it.

That is, sometimes!

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes.

When the sun shoots in through the east window--I always watch for that first long, straight ray--it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it.

That is why I watch it always.

By moonlight--the moon shines in all night when there is a moon--I wouldn't know it was the same paper.

At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candle light, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be.

I didn't realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind, that dim sub-pattern, but now I am quite sure it is a woman.

By daylight she is subdued, quiet. I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can.

Indeed he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal.

It is a very bad habit I am convinced, for you see I don't sleep.

And that cultivates deceit, for I don't tell them I'm awake--O no!

The fact is I am getting a little afraid of John.

He seems very queer sometimes, and even Jennie has an inexplicable look.

It strikes me occasionally, just as a scientific hypothesis,--that perhaps it is the paper!

I have watched John when he did not know I was looking, and come into the room suddenly on the most innocent excuses, and I've caught him several times LOOKING AT THE PAPER! And Jennie too. I caught Jennie with her hand on it once.

She didn't know I was in the room, and when I asked her in a quiet, a very quiet voice, with the most restrained manner possible, what she was doing with the paper--she turned around as if she had been caught stealing, and looked quite angry--asked me why I should frighten her so!

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

Did not that sound innocent? But I know she was studying that pattern, and I am determined that nobody shall find it out but myself!

Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be. You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was.

John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wall-paper.

I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was BECAUSE of the wall-paper--he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away.

I don't want to leave now until I have found it out. There is a week more, and I think that will be enough.

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wall-paper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw--not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper--the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here.

It creeps all over the house.



I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs.

It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it--there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like.

It is not bad--at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful, I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house--to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the COLOR of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even SMOOCH, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round--round and round and round--it makes me dizzy!

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern DOES move--and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern--it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.

I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

And I'll tell you why--privately--I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.

And though I always see her, she MAY be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.

If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, little by little.

I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.

There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes.

And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give.

She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.

John knows I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!

He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.

As if I couldn't see through him!

Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.

It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John is to stay in town overnight, and won't be out until this evening.

Jennie wanted to sleep with me--the sly thing! but I told her I should undoubtedly rest better for a night all alone.

That was clever, for really I wasn't alone a bit! As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her.

I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper.

A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.

And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me, I declared I would finish it to-day!

We go away to-morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before.

Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing.

She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.

How she betrayed herself that time!

But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me--not ALIVE!

She tried to get me out of the room--it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner--I would call when I woke.

So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down, with the canvas mattress we found on it.

We shall sleep downstairs to-night, and take the boat home to-morrow.

I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.

How those children did tear about here!

This bedstead is fairly gnawed!

But I must get to work.

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.

I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes.

I want to astonish him.

I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!

But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!

This bed will NOT move!

I tried to lift and push it until I was lame, and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner--but it hurt my teeth.

Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes and waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision!

I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misconstrued.

I don't like to LOOK out of the windows even--there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.

I wonder if they all come out of that wall-paper as I did?

But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope--you don't get ME out in the road there!

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to.

For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why there's John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can't open it!

How he does call and pound!

Now he's crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

"John dear!" said I in the gentlest voice, "the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!"

That silenced him for a few moments.

Then he said--very quietly indeed, "Open the door, my darling!"

"I can't," said I. "The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!"

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

**TASK: Once you have read 'The Yellow Wallpaper, answer the questions below in full sentence.**

1. How does the speaker describe the house where she resides?

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2. What is the profession of the speaker's husband?

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3. What is wrong with the speaker's health?

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4. How does the speaker describe her room?

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5. How does the speaker feel about the wallpaper in the room?

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6. What does the speaker think she can see in the wallpaper?

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7. What does the woman behind the wallpaper do that bothers the speaker?

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8. What does the speaker compare the wallpaper to when it is night?

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9. Why does the speaker begin to fear her husband?

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10. Why do you think John and Jennie are worried about the wallpaper?

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11. What does the speaker want to do to get rid of the smell of the wallpaper?

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12. What did the speaker do with the key to her room?

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13. What was the speaker doing when she was "creeping"?

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14. What happened to the speaker's husband at the end of the story?

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15. What has happened to the speaker's frame of mind at the end of the story?

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**Extension Task:**

**Complete a reading assessment based on 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'**

**This is an optional task for you to complete. You should ensure you use PEEL (point, evidence, explanation, link) to respond. The link could be towards the historical and social context (refer back to your research on Victorian women) or to another text (The Tell Tale Heart or any of the poems from earlier in this unit)**

You have a choice of two questions:

- 1) Explore how Charlotte Perkins Gilman includes traditional Gothic features within her short story, The Yellow Wallpaper.

**OR**

- 2) Explore how Charlotte Perkins Gilman presents the role of women in Victorian society within her short story, The Yellow Wallpaper.

**Help: As you read:**

- You should consider the question that you would feel most confident answering.
- You can highlight the copy of the text that you have been given
- You can make as many annotations as you wish
- You should flick back through the booklet and your notes to remind yourself of past notes made on role of women and traditional Gothic features