

8.01: Dracula



Subject-specific vocabulary

1	Gothic fiction	(n) a genre of literature that is characterised by themes of mystery, terror, gloom and romance
2	epistolary	(adj) written as a series of letters
3	connotation	(n) an idea or feeling that a word creates that is additional to its literal meaning
4	antagonist	(n) the character who opposes the protagonist
5	dramatic irony	(np) when the audience is aware of the importance of a character's words or actions, but the character is not
6	conjunctive adverbial	adverbs of one or more word that act as conjunctions, linking sentences or clauses.
7	semantic field	(n) a group of words or phrases that are connected by topic or meaning
8	participle phrase	a modifying phrase that uses the participle form of a verb (-ing or -ed) to describe a noun
9	simile	(n) a literary method where a writer describes a person or thing as being similar to someone or something else
10	metaphor	a comparison in which a person, object or action is used to represent or symbolise another person, object or action
11	extended metaphor	(n) a metaphor that unfolds across multiple lines or even paragraphs of a text
12	foreshadowing	(n) when the writer gives advance hints of what is to come later in the story
13	cliffhanger	(n) a moment of suspense when characters are left in a difficult situation without offering any resolution
14	allusion	(n) an expression that refers to another person or thing
15	juxtaposition	(n) two things placed closely together for a contrasting effect
16	symbolism	(n) when a writer takes an action, object, place, person, animal or word and gives it a much more metaphorical meaning

Character and tone vocabulary

17	ominous	(adj) giving a sense that something bad is going to happen
18	grotesque	(adj) repulsively ugly or distorted, especially in a comical or frightening way
19	macabre	(adj) disturbing because of an association with death or causing a fear of death
20	foreboding	(n) a feeling that something bad will happen
21	insidious	(adj) something dangerous or unpleasant gradually and secretly causing harm
22	malignant	(adj) evil in nature
23	possessed	(adj) completely controlled by something (such as an evil spirit)
24	redemption	(n) the act of being saved from sin or evil
25	prodigious	(adj) unnatural or extreme in extent or size

Thematic vocabulary

26	supernatural	(adj) beyond scientific explanation or human logic
27	The 'New Woman'	A feminist ideal that became popular in the late 19th century and influenced feminism in 20th century.
28	gender	(n) socially-constructed perceptions of how men and women are expected to behave
29	patriarchal	(adj) A patriarchal society, family, or system is one in which the men have all or most of the power and importance.

Academic vocabulary

30	archetype	(n) a perfect or typical example of a particular kind of person or thing that has all of their, or its, most important characteristics
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1. Context
<p>Author: Bram Stoker (1847-1912)</p> <p>Nationality: Irish</p> <p>Other notable works: <i>‘The Jewel of Seven Stars’, ‘The Lair of the White Worm’</i></p> <p>Dates: written between 1891-1897, published in 1897</p> <p>Era: Victorian, late 19th Century</p> <p>Genre: Gothic, horror</p> <p>Set: Transylvania, Romania; London; Whitby, North Yorkshire</p> <p>Form: Epistolary</p>
<p>Author biography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bram Stoker was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1847. Studied maths at Trinity College and graduated in 1867. Joined the Irish civil service and also worked as a freelance journalist and drama critic. Married an actress, Florence Balcombe, and had one son, Noel. Moved to London where he moved in literary circles, which included figures such as Oscar Wilde, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Alfred Lord Tennyson. His early novels and short stories did not achieve much success. His greatest literary achievement came with the publication of <i>Dracula</i> in 1897. The novel was not an immediate popular success but is now regarded as a classic. <i>Dracula</i> has been in print continuously since its first publication and has inspired countless films and other literary works. <p>Social, Historical & Literary context</p> <p>Vampires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vampire legends have been a part of popular folklore in many parts of the world since ancient times. From the Middle Ages to the modern era, reports of corpses rising from the dead with supernatural powers achieved widespread acceptance. The <i>Dracula</i> family is based on a real fifteenth-century family. Most famous vampire was The Prince of Wallachia, Vlad Dracula, or Vlad the Impaler as he was commonly known. Count Dracula is supposed to be a descendant of Vlad, and not the prince himself. <p>The Gothic genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The word ‘gothic’ was first applied to Horace Walpole’s novel: <i>The Castle of Otranto ‘A Gothic Story’</i>, published in 1764. The gothic genre became popular in the late 18th and 19th centuries, during a time of great discovery and change. Scientific discoveries were prompting people to question their previously held beliefs. People were prepared to suspend reason in search of new meaning. Gothic novels emphasised mystery, horror and the uncanny. Typical characteristics of the gothic genre are: castles, crumbling buildings, gloomy/remote locations, dark forests, damsels in distress, villains. Themes explored include: good versus evil; morality; beauty versus the grotesque; the struggle between reason and imagination. Gothic fiction shared some of the ideals of Romanticism which focused on the “sublime” power of nature.

2. Key Characters
<p>Count Dracula: <i>a mysterious Transylvanian nobleman. Lives in an old, crumbling castle in the Carpathian Mountains.</i></p>
<p>Abraham Van Helsing: <i>a Dutch professor, described as one of the most advanced scientists of his day.</i></p>
<p>Jonathan Harker: <i>a solicitor whose firm sends him to Transylvania to complete a real estate business deal with Dracula. Engaged to Mina Murray.</i></p>
<p>Mina Murray: <i>Jonathan Harker’s fiancée. She works as a schoolmistress.</i></p>
<p>Lucy Westenra: <i>Mina’s best friend. She is a beautiful and lively young woman.</i></p>
<p>Arthur Holmwood: <i>Lucy’s fiancé and friends with Seward, Morris and Harker. Arthur is the son of Lord Godalming and inherits that title upon his father’s death.</i></p>
<p>John Seward: <i>a talented young doctor, and a former student of Van Helsing’s. Seward is the manager of an insane asylum. A suitor for Lucy.</i></p>
<p>Quincey Morris: <i>a straight talking American from Texas. Another suitor for Lucy.</i></p>
<p>Renfield: <i>a patient at Seward’s mental asylum.</i></p>
<p>Mrs. Westenra: <i>Lucy’s mother.</i></p>

3. Key Terminology	
Gothic fiction	Refers to a style of writing that is characterised by elements of fear, horror, death, and gloom and extreme emotions.
epistolary novel	A novel written as a series of documents, usually in the form of letters. Although newspaper clippings, diary entries and other documents can be used e.g. police reports, doctors notes.
literary Conventions	Defining features of particular literary genres, such as novel, short story, ballad, sonnet, and play.
characterisation	A literary device in which in an author builds up a character in a narrative.
setting	The time and place in which the story takes place in a piece of literature. Setting can establish the mood or atmosphere of a scene or story.
tone	The choice of writing style the writer employs to convey specific feelings, emotions or attitudes.
mood	The feelings or atmosphere perceived by a reader in a piece of literature, established by the writer's methods e.g. through language or setting.
symbolism	The use of symbols to express ideas or qualities.

4. Key Vocabulary	
	Definition
insidious	Something dangerous or unpleasant gradually and secretly causing harm.
redemption	The action of saving, or being saved from sin, error or evil.
stertorous	noisy and laboured breathing
supernatural	A manifestation or event attributed to some force beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature.
superstition	A widely held but irrational belief in supernatural influences, especially as leading to good or bad luck.
asylum	An institution for the care of people who are mentally ill.
aquiline	Describing a person's nose as hooked or curved like an eagle's beak.
pallor	an unhealthy pale, appearance
prodigious	Unnatural or abnormal
malignant	Evil in nature or effect; malevolent.
macabre	Used to describe something that is strange or disturbing as it is connected with death or gruesome acts.
melodramatic	Showing much stronger emotions than are necessary or usual for a situation.
grotesque	Repulsively ugly or distorted, especially in a comical or frightening way.
Feminism	The belief that women should be allowed the same rights, opportunities and power as men.
New Woman	A feminist ideal that became popular in the late 19 th century and influenced feminism in 20 th century.
repulsion	A feeling of intense distaste or disgust.

3. Key Terminology

motif	A dominant or recurring idea in an artistic work.
exposition	Refers to part of the story used to introduce background information about events, settings, characters etc. to the reader.
rising action	A related series of incidents in a literary plot that build toward the point of greatest excitement/interest.
climax	The point of highest tension in a narrative.
falling action	Occurs immediately after the climax, when the main problem of the story has been resolved.



1. Context

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Other notable works: 'The Jewel of Seven Stars', 'The Lair of the White Worm'

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Genre: Gothic, horror

Set: Transylvania, Romania; London; Whitby, North Yorkshire

Form: Epistolary

Author biography

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Social, Historical & Literary context

Vampires

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