

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Dracula

by Bram Stoker

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Dracula

Notes

Dracula is a Gothic thriller that has remained popular since its publication in 1897. The horrifying story addresses the universal concepts of good vs. evil and the redemptive forces of Christian beliefs. The novel, by its very structure, helps the student recognize and appreciate how literary devices such as dramatic irony and foreshadowing enhance a reader's interest and heighten suspense. While the vocabulary level is challenging, the electrifying story, which is quite different from film versions, continues to capture and enthrall a new generation of readers.

All references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classics edition of *Dracula*, copyright 2006.

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Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. infer information about characters and events when these meanings are not explicitly stated.
2. recognize how the structure of this episodic novel, written in the form of letters and diary entries, provides the reader with several points of view for an incident, heightens the suspense of the novel, and contributes to the novel's believability.
3. point out examples of foreshadowing and recognize how foreshadowing adds suspense to the story.
4. cite incidents from the story to support the following themes:
 - Good triumphs over evil.
 - Modern scientists must keep an open mind to recognize the existence of evil in the world, even if its existence can not be empirically proven.
 - Christian values and symbols are important tools to overcome evil.
 - The Christian promise of redemption applies to everyone.
 - Madness threatens the lives of the sane.
5. recognize instances of dramatic irony in the story and point out how this irony adds suspense to the story
6. discuss how the episodic structure of the novel contributes to the dramatic irony in the story.
7. recognize and give examples of simile's, metaphors, and allusion in the story.
8. cite incidents from the novel illustrating that this novel is an example of Gothic fiction.
9. understand that attitudes and beliefs of the characters reflect the era in which the story was written.
10. find passages in the story to illustrate Dracula's sexual/sensual qualities.
11. relate the extent of Dracula's powers and recognize his weaknesses; discuss how Stoker incorporates these strengths and weaknesses into the plot of the story.

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Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Why is it dangerous for Jonathan Harker to travel on the eve of St. George's Day?
2. What peculiarities does Jonathan observe about Count Dracula when he visits Castle Dracula for the first time?
3. How does Jonathan Harker, during his first visit to Castle Dracula, come to believe that he will be killed on June 29th?
4. Gothic fiction is characterized by the following:
 - a picturesque setting
 - a story dealing with the supernatural
 - conflict between good and evil
 - innocent, non-aristocratic females being corrupted by aristocratic males

Cite one incident from the story to illustrate each of the above points.

5. In what sense does Renfield's madness parallel Dracula's behavior?
6. List five of Dracula's powers and five of Dracula's weaknesses. Relate an incident from the story supporting each of your answers.
7. Dracula was written in 1897, so the values and beliefs of the characters reflect this era. Cite incidents from the story illustrating the view of 1897 society on each of the following topics: women, redemption, scientific advances, and superstitions.
8. At first Renfield seems to worship Dracula. What happens to change his opinion?
9. Describe Renfield's connection to Mina.
10. List Lucy's symptoms that lead Professor Helsing to the conclusion that she has been attacked by a vampire.
11. How does Mrs. Westenra unwittingly place Lucy in danger?
12. Why does Professor Helsing insist that Arthur accompany the group to Lucy's tomb? For what three reasons must Lucy be killed?

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Additional Topics to Discuss or Research

1. What is the meaning of the name *Demeter*, and why is it an appropriate name for the doomed ship?
2. In what ways is the original Dracula, as portrayed in this novel, different from the Hollywood version?
3. For what reasons is this novel an enduring classic today? Why is Dracula still terrifying to modern man?
4. Research the origins of the folklore concerning vampires, including Vlad the Impaler, the notorious 15th century ruler of what is now Romania, who reportedly killed hundreds of people.

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Chapter I – Jonathan Harker’s Journal (Kept in shorthand)

Vocabulary

abreast – side by side
afield – off track
alacrity – eagerness
battlements – the top edges of a castle wall
beetling – projecting
bestrewed – scattered onto
brigands – bandits
calèche – [*calash*] a lightweight carriage with a collapsible top
carafe – a glass pitcher
cleft – a crack, crevice
conveyance – a carriage, mode of transportation
diligence – a stagecoach
engendered – produced
forcemeat – ground meat, fish, or poultry that is heavily spiced and sometimes used in stuffing
goitre – a disease of the thyroid gland, a swelling of the neck
hay-ricks – haystacks
idolatrous – worshipping images (idols) that are not God
illumine – to light
impalpable – unseen, untouchable
imperative – mandatory, essential
imperious – overbearing, arrogant
implored – begged
import – meaning, significance
interminable – endless
missals – prayer books
modesty – decency
oleander – a type of flowered bush
oppressive – heavy
perforce – by or through necessity
polyglot – a book with many versions of the same text in different languages
prepossessing – pleasing; impressive
prodigious – impressive
prosecuting – pursuing
reticent – quiet, reserved, unwilling to speak
reverently – faithfully, religiously
salient – noticeable, striking
serpentine – winding

6. What does the Count like about Carfax? Other than Carfax, where does the Count plan to have homes in England?

7. Jonathan notes in his journal that the Count never eats. What other peculiarities does he observe about the Count?

8. Why does Jonathan believe that the “castle is a veritable prison”?

Chapter IX – Letter, Mina Harker to Lucy Westenra

Vocabulary

animation – liveliness
arbitrary – not determined by any law; random
bestow – to offer; to give
boudoir – a bedroom; private room
cessation – the act of stopping
cormorant – a type of large bird
demurred – objected
disassociated – separated
geniality – friendliness, kindness
indomitable – unconquerable
lethargic – sluggish
loathe – to hate
melancholy – gloom, sadness
ominous – threatening, doom-filled
pretense – make-believe
rallying – gathering; recovering
recuperative – healing
redoubled – duplicated
stupendous – amazing, spectacular
suavely – smoothly, graciously
suffused – spread through
vigorous – powerful and energetic
vocation – a job, occupation
whither – where
woebegone – sorrowful

1. Why does Jonathan give Mina his journal? What does Mina plan to do with the journal?

2. Jonathan is worried about the return of the brain fever. Which theme of this story does this incident support?
