

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Dracula
by Bram Stoker

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I. Jonathan Harker's Journal

1. *Dracula*, published in 1897, is an excellent example of the type of novel, or genre, called Gothic horror. A Gothic novel is gloomy and has elements of the grotesque and/or the supernatural. Many examples of these elements can be found in this chapter. List ten phrases or sentences which are good examples of gloom, melancholy, grotesqueness, or the supernatural and the page on which it is found. Be sure to put the exact words you take from the novel in quotation marks. The following is an example:

1. "a dog howling all night"

2. The description of Harker's coach ride through the Carpathian Mountains to Castle Dracula is filled with frightening events and images. One of the strangest events describes the eerie dog howls, which seem to travel on the night wind as Harker's coach travels through the mountains. Imagine that you had taken that exact same night ride. Complete the following dialogue that you might have with a friend describing your feelings about the ride:

You: Never, never, have I felt so...

II. Jonathan Harker's Journal

3. There are many words and expressions in this chapter which show that this novel does not take place in modern times. Two examples of this are when the words "caleche" and "traps" are used. After you have read this chapter, leaf through it and find ten words or phrases which indicate that this novel is written in the late 1800's. After you have written your list, look the meaning for each word in a dictionary and write it beside the word on your list.

Response Journal

4. Harker's journal entry of May 8 tells of strange happenings when he is shaving that morning. Count Dracula comes into the room unseen in Harker's large mirror, and, subsequently, Harker is unable to see him in the mirror at all, even though he is directly behind him. Harker cuts himself shaving, and Count Dracula lunges at his throat. The Count then warns him to "...take care how you cut yourself. It is more dangerous than you think in this country." Harker does not write in his journal what he thinks Count Dracula means by this. Write the thoughts that Harker might have had about this if he had included them in his journal.

III. Jonathan Harker's Journal

5. Harker feels that he is a prisoner in the castle. He also feels that an "unnatural, horrible net of gloom and mystery...seems closing around me." Complete the following paragraph, which tells of the things you have read so far that would account for why Harker feels that way:

I think Harker is feeling trapped and frightened with good reason. Count Dracula has told him he can only go where he is allowed in the castle. He also...

6. Harker describes seeing three lovely young women in his room who want to kiss him. Suddenly, a furious Count Dracula appears and sends them away, telling them, "This man belongs to me!" He also tells them "...that when I am done with him you shall kiss him at your will." Do you think this really happened to Harker in the novel, or is he recounting a dream in his journal? Write a one-page-long essay telling which you think it is, giving reasons for your answer.

IV. Jonathan Harker's Journal

7. The chapters in *Dracula* thus far have been comprised of entries into a journal kept by Jonathan Harker. The title of the work you are doing with writing assignments based on this novel is called "A Student Response Journal." Journal keeping is a record of daily happenings. Putting yesterday's date at the top of the page, write a journal entry of your own. In your journal entry, write down all the events of interest in your life which happened yesterday, from the time you woke up until you went to sleep, and how you felt about them.

8. Harker's situation is becoming worse and worse. He has been locked in his room; all paper, including his notes, has been taken from him. He hears wailing sounds in the castle and a woman screaming for Count Dracula to give her back her child. Harker is in such despair he himself sits down and cries. He tries to kill Count Dracula. He then plans to try to escape, and is willing to die trying. Looking back over Harker's behavior from the beginning of the novel, what would you, if you were Harker, have done differently so as not to have ended up in the predicament he is in? Write your answer in complete sentences, explaining why you feel as you do about Harker's behavior.

V. Letters Lucy and Mina

9. Mina, Harker's fiancée, and Lucy are very good friends. Their letters to each other are warm and friendly. The two letters from Lucy to Mina tell a great deal about Lucy. Write a complete description of the kind of person you think Lucy is from reading her letters. Use complete sentences in your character portrait. Describe her feelings about Mina, her personality, what is going on in her life, what her problems are, and whether or not you would like to have her for a friend and why.

Response Journal

10. Point of view is an important part of the structure of a novel, because it shows the interpretation of events from one person's perspective, as opposed to that of another person. Sometimes the point of view is said to be in the third person, meaning that it is from the view of a narrator outside the novel. When a person narrates events happening to him or her, we learn about the action from the first person point of view. You have now read five chapters of *Dracula*. Make a list of the chapter names. After leafing through the chapters, write beside each the names of all the characters whose point of view is written from in that chapter.

VI. Mina Murray's Journal

11. The tone and content of Mina's journal entries certainly differs from that of her fiancé, Harker's. In this entry, we find her quoting an old former sailor who is answering her questions about sea bells and a legend about a "White Lady" at the Whitby Abbey. She has rendered the sailor's conversation in dialect, which is the way a person speaks that is particular to the region where he or she lives. Rewrite the old sailor's dialect conversation in modern English, beginning with "I wouldn't fash masel' about them miss." and ending with "...I lack belly-timber sairly by the clock."
12. Dr. Seward, who loves Lucy and is in charge of a mental hospital, is also keeping a journal of sorts, called a diary. A diary is used more for keeping objective observations and factual matters than a journal, but is nevertheless a record of events. Reread the entries in Dr. Seward's diary in which he describes one of the patients, Renfield, in the mental hospital. Complete the following conversation you might have with a friend in which you sympathetically describe what is happening to Renfield:

Dr. Seward doesn't seem as if he should be taking care of this poor man, Renfield. He writes about being "disgusted" with him and also "scolding" him. This doesn't...

VII. Cutting from “The Dailygraph,” 8 August

13. Whitby, a seacoast town in northeast England where Mina has been spending the summer, is the setting for the mysterious events of this chapter. The author, Bram Stoker, uses three different forms of writing to convey the action and other information to the reader in this chapter: a report in a newspaper, a record of a ship’s log, and a journal entry. Each is written from a different point of view. Using the three headings below, tell who wrote the section and what you found out about the story in each one of the sections:

The Dailygraph Newspaper Stories:

The Log of the Demeter:

Mina Murray’s Journal Entry:

14. Adjectives, as you know, are words which enhance the meaning of nouns they describe. In the stories from *The Dailygraph* in this chapter, many vivid adjectives are used to describe the great storm which happened on August 8 off the coast of Whitby. Below is a list of underlined adjectives which mean the same as those used in the stories to describe the nouns, but are not nearly as effective. Beside each word in the list write the adjective from the story and the page on which you found it. The first one is an example.

1. important eminence commanding
2. cheery French air
3. protective light
4. smelly mist
5. huge dog
6. wrapped cords