

8.1.2 Word Classes

Word Class	Definition	Example
Noun	Person, place, object or idea; Concrete nouns can be experienced with your senses; Abstract nouns are ideas (love, fear etc.)	Dracula is a vampire Jonathan Harker was filled with fear
Verb	Action word or state of being (to be, to make, to have are all verbs too)	I lay almost out of control, trembling and gasping
Adjective	A word that describes a noun	It was a yellow fog, a filthy, evil-smelling fog
Adverb	A word that describes a verb or adjective; there are adverbs of time, place and frequency	She tightly gripped the ledge out of total fear
Pronoun	A word that replaces a noun	They returned to the moors to investigate the mysterious death of Sir Charles
Connective	Words that connect phrases	They returned to the moors but found that there had been another murder
Preposition	Words that show the relationship/position of things	Crows swooped over the derelict house

8.1.3 Literary Techniques

Literary Technique	Definition	Example
Metaphor	A figure of speech in which a word/phrase is applied to an object or action which it is not literally applicable	'I, the true murderer, felt the never-dying worm alive in my bosom which allowed no hope or consolation'
Simile	A comparison that uses 'as' or 'like'	'The saintly soul of Elizabeth shone like a shrine-dedicated lamp'
Personification	Giving human qualities to something that is inhuman	Time flew and before we knew it, it was time for me to go home
Alliteration	Repetition of a letter or sound in a sentence; when the letter is 's', this is called sibilance	'The first feathery flakes of a snow shower '
Anaphora	Repetition of a word/phrase at the beginning of successive clauses	' It was the best of times, it was the worst of times'
Pathetic Fallacy	A type of personification; often used when the weather describes the characters feelings	Lightening danced across the sky
Motif	A recurring narrative element with symbolic significance	A repeated reference/visual of shattered glass (something in life is about to break)

8.1.4 Form and Structure

Gothic Conventions
Death and darkness
Supernatural beings/events
Curses and prophecies
Intense emotions
Mystery/terror/suspense
Illness – physical and mental/madness



Descriptive Techniques	Definition
Narrative structure	The structural framework that underlies the order and manner in which a narrative (story) is presented to a reader
Openings	A good opening captures the reader’s imagination
Narrative voice	The perspective the story is told from
Setting	Where the story is set/language that is used to describe this
Dialogue	A conversation between two or more people

8.1.5 Context

- The term ‘gothic’ comes from the Germanic tribe ‘the Goths’, who played a part in the fall of the Roman Empire.
- Medieval Europe (3rd-14th century) is sometimes referred to as the ‘Dark Ages’. Some believe that people lived in fear due to superstition and ignorance. Castles with gargoyles were built to ward off evil spirits, this architecture is known as ‘gothic’.
- Figures from The Age of Enlightenment (18th-19th century) believed that scientific progress was the only way to advance society, and great discoveries were made in this time. They tried to rid Europe of superstition and ignorance through promoting reason and logic. New fears around scientific advance begin in this time.
- Gothic writers are preoccupied with the supernatural because they believe that not everything has a scientific explanation.
- The gothic genre first emerged from the Romantic Movement. Writers used art and ideas from the Dark Ages, wild emotion and nature to contrast modern ideas about science and logic.
- Gothic writers challenged society’s expectations about propriety and emotion. To show wild emotion was seen as crass and uncouth, but not to the gothic writers, who often depicted passion and rage.
- Writers of Gothic fiction explored the role of the female characters: often in gothic texts, there are powerful female roles, which contrasted the contemporary society.
- American Gothic fiction generally takes place in a distinctly American setting and tends to be characterised by themes and anxieties that were especially important to American writing, such as religion, racial tension, nature and wilderness, and rationalism vs. the irrational.
- Gothic writers were very interested in the psychological exploration of characters, particularly in relation to themes of madness.