

MAKING NEW WORDS YOUR OWN

Lesson 5 **CONTEXT: Literary Traditions and Beyond** *The Gothic Tradition: Tales of the Mysterious*

The Gothic novel has been popular with readers for more than two centuries. Terrifying supernatural forces were important in the early Gothic novels. As the form developed, the terror became a result of psychological forces rather than supernatural ones. Today, the word Gothic is used for any novel that has a mood of terror and gloom. Some writers of classic Gothic tales are Horace Walpole (1717–1797), Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823), Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855), Emily Brontë (1818–1848), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864), and Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849).

In the following exercises, you will have the opportunity to expand your vocabulary by reading about Gothic novels. Below are ten vocabulary words that will be used in these exercises.

agitation	apparition	cope	moor	palatial
aloof	benefactor	genealogy	obsession	plaintive

EXERCISE 1 *Mapping*

Directions. In the item below, a vocabulary word is provided and used in a sentence. Take a guess at the word's meaning and write it in the box labeled **Your Guess**. Then look the word up in your dictionary and write the definition in the box labeled **Definition**. In the **Other Forms** box, write as many other forms of the word, such as adjective and noun forms, as you can think of or find in your dictionary.

Then, following the same procedure, draw your own map for each of the nine remaining vocabulary words. Use a separate sheet of paper.

1.

agitation

→

Often the Gothic novel involves a character who feels great **agitation** for no apparent reason. The cause of these disturbing emotions may not be revealed until the end of the tale.

↓

Your Guess:

↓

Other Forms:

←

Definition:

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EXERCISE 2 *Context Clues* 

Directions. Scan the definitions in Column A. Then think about how the boldface words are used in the sentences in Column B. To complete the exercise, match each definition in Column A with the correct vocabulary word from Column B. Write the letter of your choice on the line provided; then write the vocabulary word on the line preceding the definition.

COLUMN A

_____ 11. word: _____

n. a violent shaking; an emotional disturbance or excitement; the arousal of public interest in social or political issues

_____ 12. word: _____

n. a ghost; a phantom; an appearance seen suddenly

_____ 13. word: _____

v. to deal with; to handle problems or difficulties

_____ 14. word: _____

n. a large, open area of land, often marshy with heather growing on it; *v.* to keep a boat in place with ropes or cables fastened to the shore; to fasten

_____ 15. word: _____

adj. like a palace; magnificent and grand

_____ 16. word: _____

adj. mournful; melancholy; sad; sorrowful

_____ 17. word: _____

n. a preoccupation; an idea, feeling, or impulse that a person cannot escape

_____ 18. word: _____

n. an account of the descent of a person or family from ancestors; lineage

_____ 19. word: _____

n. a person who has given help; a patron

_____ 20. word: _____

adj. cool or distant in relationships with others; indifferent

COLUMN B

- (A) Characters in Gothic novels often witness unexplainable events, such as the **agitation** of heavy curtains on a completely still night.
- (B) Like many characters in Gothic fiction, Emily de St. Aubert, the main character in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, comes to be uncertain about her **genealogy**. There is a mystery surrounding her family tree.
- (C) Her aunt's **obsession** with wealth almost proves to be Emily's undoing. She cares nothing for Emily's happiness; her only concern is her own ambitions.
- (D) Emily is terrified by the events that occur in Montoni's castle. The **palatial** estate hides many dark secrets.
- (E) Readers of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* often wonder whether the **apparition** Mr. Lockwood sees at the window is the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw or a product of his imagination.
- (F) Events in *Wuthering Heights* are set in motion when Mr. Earnshaw finds a little boy, Heathcliff, on the streets of Liverpool and decides to become his **benefactor**. He brings Heathcliff home to live with his family.
- (G) Together, Heathcliff and Catherine roam the **moors** of Yorkshire as children. They are not intimidated by the wild, marshy countryside or the harsh climate.
- (H) Jane Eyre is a capable young woman who has had to **cope** with much hardship during her unhappy childhood.
- (I) In *Jane Eyre*, Mr. Rochester seems **aloof**, but Jane is able to discover a warmer side to his personality.
- (J) *Jane Eyre* has something of the dark, gloomy, mysterious atmosphere we associate with the Gothic novel. But it can also be described as a **plaintive**, or melancholy, tale of people who must wait a long time and suffer many hardships before finding happiness.

EXERCISE 3 *Sentence Completion* 

Directions. For each of the following items, circle the letter of the choice that best completes the meaning of the sentence or sentences.

21. Gothic heroes need to be prepared to _____ with a variety of problems. The hero needs to know how to _____ a boat in a wild thunderstorm and how to scale the walls of a fortress.
 (A) cope . . . aloof
 (B) cope . . . moor
 (C) moor . . . cope
 (D) moor . . . aloof
 (E) obsess . . . moor
22. In Gothic tales, the _____ home that is the setting is often in a state of decay, providing the appropriate atmosphere for ghosts and other _____.
 (A) plaintive . . . benefactors
 (B) palatial . . . obsessions
 (C) palatial . . . apparitions
 (D) aloof . . . apparitions
 (E) plaintive . . . agitation
23. One interesting character who might appear in a Gothic tale is someone who appears to be the main character's _____ but who is actually using him or her for personal gain.
 (A) benefactor
 (B) apparition
 (C) agitation
 (D) obsession
 (E) genealogy
24. In Gothic tales that revolve around who is the rightful heir to an estate or fortune, mysteries about _____ play an important role.
 (A) agitation
 (B) apparitions
 (C) obsessions
 (D) benefactors
 (E) genealogy
25. Sometimes a character's emotional _____ may be a result of his or her unhealthy _____ or fixation.
 (A) obsessions . . . agitation
 (B) agitation . . . obsession
 (C) agitation . . . palace
 (D) obsessions . . . apparition
 (E) benefactor . . . obsession
26. The lonely young woman who has been allowed limited contact with the outside world is often a touching and _____ character.
 (A) aloof
 (B) palatial
 (C) agitated
 (D) plaintive
 (E) obsessed
27. The sudden appearance of a strange _____ is likely to produce _____ in anyone.
 (A) benefactor . . . genealogy
 (B) benefactor . . . obsession
 (C) obsession . . . apparition
 (D) apparition . . . agitation
 (E) apparition . . . obsession
28. The _____, unemotional character makes an interesting contrast with the warm, highly emotional character.
 (A) aloof
 (B) palatial
 (C) plaintive
 (D) genealogical
 (E) obsessive
29. An _____ with _____ and other elements of the supernatural could be an unhealthy preoccupation.
 (A) agitation . . . apparitions
 (B) agitation . . . benefactors
 (C) apparition . . . genealogy
 (D) obsession . . . genealogy
 (E) obsession . . . apparitions
30. The main character in a Gothic novel must _____ with many things that he or she doesn't completely understand.
 (A) moor
 (B) appear
 (C) cope
 (D) agitate
 (E) complain

