DIGITAL THEATRE+

VIRTUAL LEARNING LESSON PLAN
DRAMA/THEATRE

FRANKENSTEIN
BY MARY SHELLEY

LESSON PLAN LENGTH: 60 MINUTES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the tension between the two central characters and therefore enhance their personal response to the novel

- Talk and eventually write fluently about the central relationship dynamic

- Feel confident to begin early stage analysis of the text having an awareness of its central narrative and themes

To teach this lesson, you will need:

- For the entire lesson – a video conference link for your chosen platform*

- For Exercise 3 – a prepared Google Doc (optional)

- For Exercises 4 and 5 – one email outlining instructions for both exercises and a prepared Google Doc with suggested scenarios

- For Exercise 7 – a prepared Google Sheet, with editing rights for all students

- For Exercise 8 – an email with instructions for group debates.

  (Tip: Press 'Share' to copy the link to your Doc and make sure to change the settings t 'Anyone with the link can edit'.)

Keeping students and teachers safe during remote education is essential. Please ensure any online platform you are using to communicate or coordinate with students is suitable for their age group and check privacy settings. For further information, see the NSPCC guidance.

A MONSTER IS...?

- Hold a video conference on your chosen platform. Assign consecutive numbers to each person in the group.

- Give students a minute to think about what comes to mind when they hear the word 'Monster'. Which one word do they think sums up 'Monster' best?

- Going in numerical order, ask each student to share their word. Identify common themes and ideas that emerge between the groups. Guide students to explicit links with the novel where appropriate.

ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to get the group to begin to build a picture in their mind of what this really means from a physical, emotional, spiritual point of view to support individual responses.

This task supports students in engaging with character and theme. By doing so, they can then begin to create and develop ideas for performance, with some students making specific connections to other examples of live theatre that they have seen.

For further resources to help you teach *Frankenstein*, including our full-length production and Practical Workshop Guide, visit www.digitaltheatreplus.com

EXERCISE 2
THE 'OTHER'

ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to encourage the group to begin to think at a deeper level about the feelings that can surface when rejected by individuals, groups, and society. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce brief contextual information about the period in which the novel was written.

- Now give students a couple of minutes to think about all the differences that make a 'monster' that they have previously identified. How is a 'monster' different from everyone else?

- Give them two minutes to write their responses on the video chat feature. What comes to mind when they think about being 'the other'? Modern examples, personal experiences and societal attitudes are all valid responses here.

- Get students to read each other's responses. Chair a discussion based on their responses, calling on individuals to share their thoughts if a conversation doesn't develop naturally. If many people try talking at once, you can mute everybody on the call, unmuting individuals as you call on them to speak.

- A key follow-up question will be how this might then link to a story about a creature who is rejected.

- Alternatively, you could ask students to individually prepare a short recorded video of themselves (no longer than two minutes each) responding to these questions and prompts.

- Put students into groups and ask them to share their video responses with other members of their group. Students should watch each other's videos and learn from each other. Does this reinforce their own opinions or change their minds on anything?

EXERCISE 3
FRANKENSTEIN: FACT FILE

- While still on a video call, and using the same numerical order as in Exercise 1, get each person to say what they think, know or feel in response to the phrase '*Frankenstein* is...?'

- Alternatively, a Google Doc with the heading '*Frankenstein* is...?' at the top. Share it with your entire class and ask them to respond to the phrase.

In addition to supporting continued creation and development of ideas, this is also an opportunity to consider any performances or renditions of the *Frankenstein* story (live theatre, TV, film etc). How have they differed? How has the misconception about who the monster is come about?

ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to surface central characters and key themes from the text with the group learning from each other as well as being teacher led. This is also a good way to deal with misconceptions as many students will think that the creature is called *Frankenstein*.

EXERCISE 4
LEADING AND FOLLOWING

ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to get the group to discuss the effect that one individual can have over an other and the feelings that are solicited when an individual feels robbed of choice.

- Share a Google Doc with your students with two or more scenarios to respond to. For example:

  o Scenario 1: The only restaurant in town has completely changed its menu. All items on the menu are now made from offal or insects.
  o Scenario 2: There's a new student in your class. They are instantly the most popular and admired person.

- Working individually, they will first be asked to respond to each scenario as themselves, in the way they would be most likely to if confronted with this situation in real life.

- Next, they **must** respond positively, whether they feel that way or not.

- Now ask students: Was how you would really react different from how you were forced to act? How does it feel to have your reactions controlled?

- Completing this activity and and the follow-up questions will give students the opportunity to reflect on what it feels like to be controlled.

EXERCISE 5

CONTROL

ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to understand and experience the pull and push between the two central characters.

- Following on from Exercise 4, students can work together in pairs.

- Students with opposing views to the scenarios should hold a written debate on a shared Google Doc for one of the scenarios. For example:

    - **Scenario 1: Student A is ordering Student B to paint a portrait for him/her. Student B doesn't want to do it, but doesn't have a choice.**
    Student A: [insert opinion]
    Student B: [insert opinion]

- Doing this and responding to the follow-up questions will give students the opportunity to reflect on the sense of tension and ongoing conflict between the two main characters.

- **Follow up question**:
    - How and to what extent would your different reactions create tension and conflict between the two of you?

EXERCISE 6

INTRODUCING THE PLOT: READING ALOUD

- Either read the following out to your students or get the students to read it aloud in their own time. They should use the insights they have gained from the previous exercises to inform their reading.

- Students could record themselves reading the piece to share with others if they would like to.

ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise to give the students a basic framework of the story but experience it through the prism of the previous exercises. Discussion should focus here on how all of the skills developed in the previous tasks can be used.

Victor Frankenstein creates the Creature. He is repulsed by what he has made and rejects him. The Creature goes off into the world alone and is treated unkindly by all he meets. The Creature comes across a poor family. Observing the family in secret, he becomes educated. He eventually approaches the family and is initially befriended by the blind father, but the man's son and daughter in law throw him out when they see him. Distraught, the Creature goes to find his maker Victor Frankenstein to ask for a wife. He tracks him down by killing Frankenstein's brother. A pact is made. Victor says that he will create a wife for the Creature if he promises to hide from the world with her. Victor creates a female, but when the Creature comes to see her, he plays a trick on him and destroys the female for fear that they will reproduce. The Creature takes his revenge by killing Frankenstein's wife. The Creature and Frankenstein live out the rest of their days locked together in a battle to the death.

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GETTING UNDER THE SKIN

- Create a Google Sheet with the same table on 10 different tabs. The following feelings should be used to name each tab:

  Fear, Love, Regret, Betrayal, Longing, Solitude, Rejection, Hate, Pride, Hope.

- On all of the ten tabs, each table should have three columns with the headings: **Student name**; **Victor**; **Creature**. Fill the first column with the names of all participating students for that particular feeling/tab – each student should contribute to at least two tabs.

- Share Your Google Sheet (making sure that you've granted editing access to everybody with the link) and ask students to complete each row where they see their name.

- Their task is to imagine that they are Victor (in the second column) and the Creature (in the third column) and write about what the given feeling makes them feel/think about, as the two characters.

The aim of this exercise for the students to develop a capacity for 360 thinking about the central characters and begin to consider the central themes of the text in advance of reading it. This is a task which could be repeated later on in the unit of work, this time asking students to include brief quotations or references to key moments in the text, to prepare for the closed book nature of the exam.

For example:

Regret (as Victor): 'I'm so, so annoyed with myself. Why did I create such a monstrosity? It was madness. I'm disgusted by it and wish I could turn back the clock...'

This task, as well as subsequent activities, continues to consolidate and develop ideas for scripted or devised performance. It also allows students to consider how to achieve specific intentions for an audience.

For further resources to help you teach *Frankenstein*, including our <u>full-length production</u> and <u>Practical Workshop Guide</u>, visit <u>www.digitaltheatreplus.com</u>

EXERCISE 8

IT'S A MATTER OF OPINION

ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is for the students to participate in a robust debate and build confidence to discuss the central issues of the text and context. This can inform intentions and allow students to continue developing creative ideas. Dramatic intentions for an audience may also be clarified as a result of this activity.

- Divide the class into two groups. Email one statement to one group and one statement to the other.

We are born pure and evil is the product of social forces.

We are born imperfect and require assistance from a higher source to overcome the sin of being born.

- Tell each group to discuss the statement they have been given.

- Having examined both sides of the argument, students should reach an agreed viewpoint and feedback to the rest of the group about their discussion and decision.

You may wish to allow students an opportunity to make notes on some of these discoveries at the end of the lesson or for homework.

Further activities to enhance your lessons can be found in your toolkit or in the **Practical Workshop Guide**. You can find more resources to help you teach *Frankenstein* and other texts at **www.digitaltheatreplus.com**.

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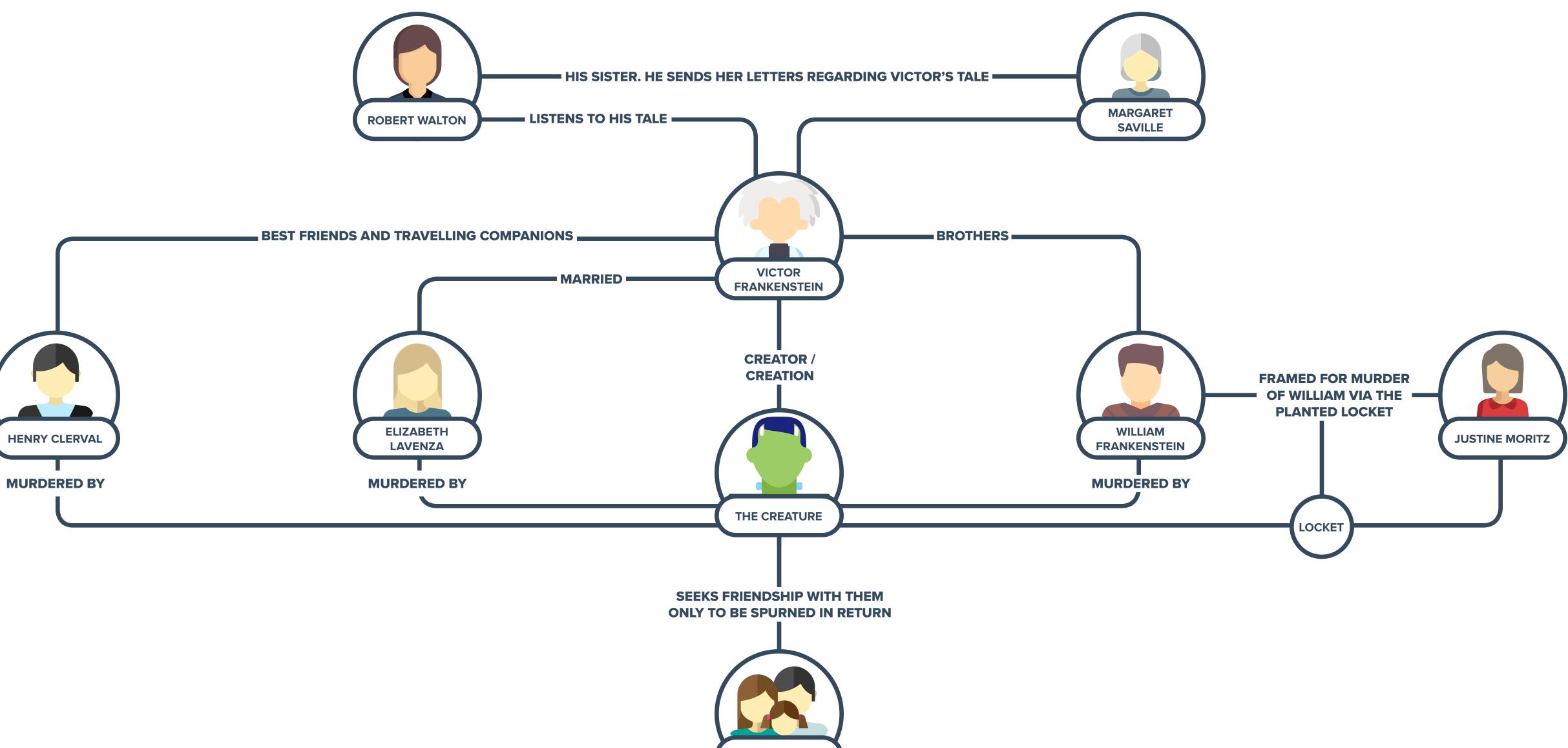**Manga Shakespeare**
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FRANKENSTEIN
RELATIONSHIP MAP

ROBERT WALTON —— HIS SISTER. HE SENDS HER LETTERS REGARDING VICTOR'S TALE —— **MARGARET SAVILLE**

LISTENS TO HIS TALE

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

BEST FRIENDS AND TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

BROTHERS

MARRIED

CREATOR / CREATION

HENRY CLERVAL

ELIZABETH LAVENZA

WILLIAM FRANKENSTEIN —— FRAMED FOR MURDER OF WILLIAM VIA THE PLANTED LOCKET —— **JUSTINE MORITZ**

MURDERED BY

MURDERED BY

MURDERED BY

THE CREATURE

LOCKET

SEEKS FRIENDSHIP WITH THEM ONLY TO BE SPURNED IN RETURN

DE LACEY FAMILY

QUESTIONS

1. Who is the Creature?

2. What is Victor's last name?

3. Who is the Creature's first fatality?

4. Who says "Be genius, I have a request"?

5. Who says "How does it feel to be in love"?

6. What is Victor's younger brother called?

7. Where do Victor and the Creature have their first conversation?

8. Where does *Frankenstein* take place?

9. How does the Creature learn language?

ANSWERS

1. Who is the Creature?

   Answer: A creation of Victor Frankenstein – made of body parts from the deceased

2. What is Victor's last name?

   Answer: Frankenstein

3. Who is the Creature's first fatality?

   Answer: Victor's younger brother, William

4. Who says "Be genius, I have a request"?

   Answer: The Creature

5. Who says – How does it feel to be in love?

   Answer: Victor

6. What is Victor's younger brother called?

   Answer: William

7. Where do Victor and the Creature have their first conversation

   Answer: On a Mountain Top

8. Where does *Frankenstein* take place?

   Answer: All over Europe

9. How does the Creature learn language?

   Answer: He learns to speak by reading letters and listening to others

The following questions have been written to deepen and expand your students' understanding of the text. They can be used for homework or to prompt classroom discussions.

- It is ethical to create clones?

- Why/how do we become the way we are?

- What does it mean to be human?

- What makes us human?

- Who is more human, Victor or the Creature?

- How does it feel to be trapped by circumstance?

- Is there power in being regarded as 'other'?

- What governs how we identify ourselves?

- Why do we so readily judge a book by its cover?

- Is it important to know where we come from?