

Summer Preparatory
Supplemental Reading
English 10 Honors
Frankenstein

Assignment: Prepare for a Socratic Seminar on Frankenstein

Complete the following questions on a separate piece of paper. Answer each question with a complete paragraph (use cited evidence, a main idea sentence and explain your examples/evidence, and don't forget to conclude your answers). Use textual support for each answer. Remember that seminar is not an opportunity to convince the class of your intelligence but for everybody to come to a greater understanding of ideas in a piece of writing by following a question "down the rabbit hole." Socratic Seminars are named so after Socrates, a famous philosopher, so be as "philosophical" as possible.

How to prepare

- Read the text thoroughly, marking pages you feel may be helpful to you.
- Take notes when necessary. Annotations can be extremely beneficial.
- Re-read the text when necessary, considering preparatory questions that may have been raised.
- Brainstorm themes relevant to the text.
- Brainstorm character traits and motivations of key figures in the text.
- Create questions.

The following questions are those which you should answer. Do not worry about right or wrong answers. Seek thought provoking responses which will further discussion.

1. Who is the true villain of the novel? Is there even a true villain?
2. The monster says, "All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, whom am miserable beyond all living things!" Consider this quote as the condemning statement of mankind that it is, within the larger context of the novel. The juxtaposition of the monster with the rest of humanity provides a great contrast to humanity. What vision of mankind does Shelley want us to have as readers? Is it the fault of mankind that the monster has turned evil? Do we, as part of mankind, have a responsibility to the outcasts of society? Who are the outcasts?
3. We see two stark examples of moral failure in Victor Frankenstein and the monster. How do their ideas of right and wrong get in the way of being successful members of society?
4. What responsibility do you feel the creator bears for his creation and for the actions of his creation? Consider this question on many levels – God and man, God and angels, man and his children, man and his inventions, etc.
5. One of the novel's tragedies is the inability of characters to recognize the humanity of the creature. What qualities make us human? Which of these qualities does the creature possess? What qualities does he not have?
6. Scholars sometimes use Frankenstein as an argument against scientific technology that creates life forms; others argue that it is not technology itself but the use to which it is put that presents an ethical problem. What is Shelley's position? What is your position?
7. Explain the novel's popularity. What makes the novel a classic? How is the story appropriate for today and our society?
8. Does Shelley want us as readers to believe that we should have forbidden knowledge after having read her novel? Why or why not?
9. What is the relationship between nature and nurture? Which is more important?
10. Why is important to be loved and to show love?
11. Where do our definitions of good and evil come from? What qualifies a person as "good" or "bad"? Is "evil" ever justifiable? Are there instances when "good" can actually be considered evil?
12. Discuss the role of sickness in the novel. Victor often seems to fall ill after traumatic events. Is this a means of escape, and, if so, is it effective? Is there another explanation for his recurring illness?
13. Predict what Walton will do now that he has heard the entire story of Frankenstein and his monster. How will he change, if at all?
14. How does Shelley's *Frankenstein* change how you look at or approach the world?
15. Write two philosophical questions of your own to pose to the group.