Teaching *Frankenstein*
This is a collection of the best lessons and ideas found on the internet.

#1
Decision Making Lesson Plan for *Frankenstein*
Adapted from article by Trent Lorcher
at [http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/38412.aspx](http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/38412.aspx)

Procedures
At the end of chapter 16, Frankenstein’s monster demands that Victor make him a mate. In chapter 17, Victor deliberates whether or not to do it. It’s time for your students to make that decision.

**Step 1:** Define the character’s goals. Successful people understand the importance of visualizing the desired result before beginning the quest. Discuss with your class what results Victor wants.

- **Victor wants to protect his family, to not get caught, and to end the monster’s destructive ways.**

**Step 2:** List four possible decisions Victor could make along with the pros and cons. This can be done as a whole class discussion, a small group discussion, or an individual assignment.

- **Choice #1 - Make the mate.**
  - **Pros** - The monster will stop killing Victor's family. Victor will relieve the guilt of abandoning his creature. The monster will go away and never be heard from again.
  - **Cons** - The monster could be lying and two monsters could cause more damage to humankind. What if the monster wants children? A race of monsters could destroy humankind. The monster's mate may not even like the monster.

- **Choice #2 - Refuse to make the monster.**
  - **Pros** - There aren’t two monsters to contend with. Two wrongs don’t make a right. See the cons above.
  - **Cons** - The monster will kill Victor's family and kill people in anger.

- **Choice #3 - Agree to make the monster and not actually do it.**
  - **Pros** - This buys Victor some time, time to devise an alternative plan. It also gets the monster away from his family and gives them time to relocate.
  - **Cons** - Imagine how angry the monster will be when he finds out he's been tricked. Victor will have to associate with dead body parts once again.

- **Choice #4 - Agree to make the monster and while pretending to make it, gather up a posse to hunt him.**
  - **Pros** - The monster is strong, but is he capable of fending off hundreds of angry villagers? Victor wouldn't even have to admit he made the thing. He could just say he found the creature in the mountains.
Cons - It is likely the monster would tell his tale and get Victor in trouble. It is also possible that the monster could kill hundreds of villagers, murder Victor's family, and torture Victor.

Step #3 - Force students to make a decision based on their goals. Be sure they include the reason why.

- I would make choice #4. It's the only one that allows for all of Victor's goals to be achieved.

Step #4 - Assign a four-paragraph persuasive essay. The thesis statement should directly state the recommended decision.

#2

Adapted from article by Trent Lorcher at [http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/38412.aspx](http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/38412.aspx)

Teaching Allusions

Important Definitions

Before teaching allusions, make sure students understand what an allusion is and what its strengths and weaknesses are.

- allusion - a figure of speech that makes a reference or representation of or to a well-known person, place, event, literary work, or work of art
- An allusion allows an author to make a powerful point without having to actually explain it.
- When using an allusion, the author assumes that the reader is familiar with the item being alluded to.
- An allusion is ineffective if the reader is not familiar with the item being alluded to.
- Publishers use footnotes or side notes to help modern readers understand allusions that may no longer be common knowledge.
- An "allusion" is not the same as an "illusion".

Procedures

Teaching *Frankenstein* requires a knowledge of British Romanticism and selected writings. Familiarizing students with the period will make teaching *Frankenstein* and teaching allusions more effective.

1. Read or summarize *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge. There are numerous allusions to it in the novel.
2. Read or summarize the story of Zeus and Prometheus. The full title of the novel is *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*.

3. Instruct students to copy the above information on allusions.

4. Make a chart on the board:
   - The chart should contain three columns with the following headers:
     1. Example of Allusion
     2. Explanation of the Allusion
     3. Purpose of the Allusion
   - The chart should contain 5-10 rows.

5. Instruct students to find allusions from the novel and copy them down in column 1.

6. Instruct students to explain the allusion in column 2.

7. Instruct students to analyze the purpose of the allusion in column 3.

8. Have students write a paragraph or essay analyzing allusion. It can be a timed-writing assignment or a formal academic writing assignment.
   - Why does Shelley make so many allusions to *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*?
   - How does Shelley's use of allusions help you understand the loneliness of the monster?
   - Compare Dr. Frankenstein to Prometheus.

**Frankenstein Allusions: Rime of the Ancient Mariner**

This *Frankenstein* study guide analyzes how these allusions contribute to major themes in *Frankenstein*.

Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" tells the story of an ancient mariner who kills an albatross and brings upon himself and his ship's crew a curse. The ancient mariner travels the world, unburdening his soul, telling his story to whomever needs to hear it. Shelley alludes to the poem several times.

Robert Walton in *Frankenstein* is similar to the Wedding Guest from "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," with Victor Frankenstein playing the role of the mariner. As the mariner feels compelled to share his story to one who needs to hear it, so does Victor. The explicit theme in "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," that love conquers all, is a clue as to how the tragedy that occurs in Frankenstein's life could have been avoided.

**Frankenstein Allusions: The Creation of Adam and Eve**

The monster appeals to Frankenstein's sympathy by comparing himself to Adam:

1. "Oh Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due. Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel." (94).
The monster’s petition evokes sympathy, highlighting the guilt of his creator. These pleas highlight the irresponsibility of Victor Frankenstein and emphasize Victor’s guilt. If Frankenstein would only have loved his creation, the tragedy could have been avoided.

"But it was all a dream; no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone. I remembered Adam's supplication to his Creator. But where was mine?" (127).

The monster reminds Victor, once again, of his duty. Victor had become as a god, and must therefore act with mercy. The monster brings up Eve to emphasize his loneliness and to preface his request for a mate.

"Sweet and beloved Elizabeth! I read and re-read her letter, and some softened feelings stole into my heart and dared to whisper paradisiacal dreams of love and joy; but the apple was already eaten" (186).

The roles are reversed. It is Dr. Frankenstein who compares himself to Adam. The monster’s desire to make Victor as miserable as he is approaching completion.

Frankenstein Allusions: Prometheus

The full title of the novel, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, emphasizes the theme of Victor as an overreacher, one who ascends further than his ability. In Greek mythology, Prometheus created man. As a modern Prometheus, Victor creates a new species. Prometheus feels love for his creation (unlike the modern Prometheus) overreaches and steals fire from Zeus. Zeus punishes Prometheus by chaining him to a rock for eternity and sending an eagle to eat his liver daily.

Much like Prometheus suffers eternally, so must Victor Frankenstein.

#3


**Title - Frankensteiens Intro**

**By - Amy Lepore**

To introduce Mary Shelley's novel, I try to tie in the students' daily lives with the ideas of the novel. To do this, I write eight of the major themes that occur in the novel on the board. These themes include but are not limited to: beauty, revenge, pursuit of knowledge, ambition, science, conflict with parent and child, friendship, nature. I ask the students to reflect on their experiences and to jot down some ideas about each theme, and then to decide if the theme/idea is good, bad, or a combination of both. This stimulates some really heated discussion.
Sometimes I pull in the newspaper as part of this introduction and ask the kids to find examples of good, bad, and a combination of both for each of these themes. Then, in groups, I have the kids draw two columns on their papers. In the first, they are to list at least three "facts" that they know about the novel. In the second, they predict how Shelley will teach a moral lesson or make some observation about life using these facts. Newspapers would also be helpful in this part of the lesson.

Finally, I give the students a list of features that are characterized as "romantic" and discuss Shelley's life. I share with them that the novel was written as a result of a challenge to write a ghost story. We read together parts of her intro to the novel where she describes how she came up with the idea of the novel.

It's all a very interesting day, and the kids feel like they have a vested interest in the novel. At the end of the novel, I revisit the eight themes listed above. I ask the kids to work either alone or in small groups to create a theme poster. Choosing one of the themes, they are to find at least five passages in the text that refer to that theme, photos, art, words, etc. that fully illustrate the theme in question. The final poster should wholly show how Shelley makes use of the theme throughout the novel. The student/group then presents it to the class.

#4

A general collection of ideas

- Write a poem from the monster’s point of view. (check out William Trowbridge poetry on King Kong)
- Make predictions about what the monster will do in the remaining chapters.
- Find examples of literary devices used by Shelley and then imitate the writing.
- Create a diary entry from Victor’s point of view immediately following the creature’s “birth.”
- Find or create a song that could work as the soundtrack for a film adaptation.
- Choose a piece of art or music from the Romantic Period. Show or play an excerpt of the piece and explain how it exemplifies the characteristics of the Romantic Period.
- Choose a movie that demonstrates Gothicism. Play it for the class and explain its Gothic characteristics.
- Create a do-it-yourself manual on how to create your own creature, based specifically on descriptions of Victor’s creation.
- Create a page from Victor Frankenstein’s lab journal. Include doodles, random thoughts, etc. and at least three direct references from the text.
- Find a newspaper, magazine article, news clip, etc. on a current bioethical issue. Write a personal response from the Creature’s perspective.
#5
Possible Research Topics connected to the novel
The Life of Mary Shelley
Cloning
Science Fiction genre
The Romantic Period
Gothic Horror
Victorian England
Women in Victorian Society
Prometheus and other allusions in Frankenstein
The Meaning of “Gothic” – Past and Present
Sublime Nature
Dangerous Knowledge in Frankenstein
Monstrosity in Frankenstein
Passive Women in Frankenstein
Edgar Allan Poe
Other (must be approved by teacher)

#6
Discussion Questions

Some scholars have used Frankenstein as a central piece in their argument against the development of cloning technology. Others argue that the problem was not with Victor Frankenstein’s scientific methods but with his responses to his creation—that we should develop cloning technology, but use it wisely. Debate whether the novel is either “for” or “against” cloning. Support your argument with passages from the book.

One of the tragedies of Frankenstein is the refusal of other characters in the novel to recognize the monster as a full human being. Brainstorm a list of the qualities that make us human. Which of these qualities does the monster have? Which does he not have?

Discuss the role that nature plays in Shelley’s novel. Include examples that support your answer.

Analyze Mary Shelley’s use of setting throughout the novel. Why, for example, does she use the Arctic as the setting for Victor Frankenstein’s final confrontation with his creation?

When Frankenstein was first published in 1818, it had mixed reviews. Not everyone understood or enjoyed it. Today, however, we think of the book as a classic. Speculate about why some important pieces of literature aren’t treasured right away, while others that are immediately popular eventually fade away.

Compare Victor Frankenstein with the monster he created. In what ways are their life experiences similar? In what ways are they different?
Additional Resources:

http://www.sangfroid.com/frank the text online

http://www.vocabulary.com/VUctfrankenstein.html Vocabulary list from the novel, grouped by chapters.

http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/frankenstein Discovery Education lesson creating a mock trial with characters from the novel. Also contains set of discussion questions.

http://www.netpoets.com/cgi/poems.cgi?c=0&p=191&f=print Copy of the poem The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

http://www.virtualsalt.com/lit/franidea.htm A unique set of questions and ideas for analyzing both the film and novel.

http://web.quipo.it/frankenstein/mythofprometheus.htm a quick look at the Prometheus myth as it has be adapted through time

http://reason.com/archives/2004/03/18/its-alive Article with links to more articles on cloning