

Gothic Workshop

October 2019, Sevres

- We started off sharing different experiences and approaches to the topic. There were roughly equal numbers of people teaching the whole course on their own or sharing the teaching of the cohort with another teacher(s). This had an impact on how people organised and planned their teaching, including how far in advance they needed to focus in terms of course design.
- People found the resources on the ASIBA website shared by different colleagues very helpful to get started.
- Challenges of the programme: we discussed different strategies to teach longer novels
 - Reading over the summer: Reading logs/ quiz or multiple choice test at the rentree
 - Taking photos of the book in different locations on holiday
 - 3 images from the text - create a collage and do a mini presentation
 - Story boards
 - Recording/ videoing responses - podcast version of a reading log. This tends to be easier to gauge a sense of engagement
 - Key extracts - selecting key moments or passages for close textual analysis
 - Create a gothic wall in the classroom to add to
 - Use padlet for the same purpose online
 - Create a bookmark with the key features of the gothic to use when reading both texts
 - Looking at gothic archetypes first and then use these as a comparison for the texts
- Everyone felt that the 'ideal' way to teach the topic would be all three texts in parallel; however, the amount of planning needed to do this was prohibitive, especially at the start.
- Most people seem to start with the poems and use these as a springboard to draw up a list of gothic features. There was a discussion about the change to the programme with the poems as a whole text now. People felt that the poems will now take longer to teach.
- We discussed Gothic stylistic features:
 - Plot-based
 - First person narrative
 - Fragmented/ embedded narrative
 - Unreliable narrators
 - Experimental narrative modes- letters, journals etc.
 - Preface/ prefatory note - claim as to the text's authenticity
 - Symbolism
 - Pathetic fallacy
 - Foreshadowing - omens/ portents
 - Melodrama
 - Sensationalism

- Lurid descriptions
- Motif of windows/ doors - liminal and also perspective
- Mirroring characters
- Doppelgangers - doubles/ opposites/ foils

We finished the discussion looking at the distinction between the HOW and the WHY - the tools vs the purpose. We discussed the overlapping between the political/ religious contexts of the gothic and Romanticism.