Units 24-28: Writing a Book Analysis—Allusions
Frankenstein

by Mary Shelley
Literature for Units 24-28
http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924105428902#page/n19/mode/2up

Unit 24 – Assignments

Allusions in *Frankenstein*

Allusion is defined as a reference to a historical figure or event, or to a literary work that is familiar to the reader. *Frankenstein* contains allusions to three popular works. In order to understand their importance; students must be familiar with these works.

- See your **ArtiosHCS** curriculum website at **www.ArtiosHCS.com** for links to summaries of these literary work:
  - "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
  - "Paradise Lost":
  - Greek Myth about Prometheus:
- In your reading journal, answer the following questions about each summary.
  - What is the subject of this story?
  - Who are the major characters?
  - What is the major conflict?
- Read the Assignment Background below, and answer the following questions in your reading journal:
  - How did Mary Shelley's dreams differ from her writing?
  - What topic discussed by Lord Byron and Percy Shelley particularly caught her interest?
  - What events led to the writing of *Frankenstein*?
  - What was Mary Shelley's reaction to her work?
- Write this statement in your reading journal: "Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist." We will return to this quote again as we study *Frankenstein*.

Unit 24 – Assignment Background

Introduction to *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley

The Publishers of the Standard Novels, in selecting *Frankenstein* for one of their series, expressed a wish that I should furnish them with some account of the origin of the story. I am the more willing to comply, because I shall thus give a general answer to the question, so frequently asked me—"How I, then a young girl, came to think of, and to dilate upon, so very hideous an idea?" It is true that I am very averse to bringing myself forward in print; but as my account will only appear as an appendage to a former production, and as it will be confined to such topics as have connection with my authorship alone, I can scarcely accuse myself of a personal intrusion.

It is not singular that, as the daughter of two persons of distinguished literary celebrity, I should very early in life have thought of writing. As a child I scribbled; and my favorite pastime, during the hours given me for recreation, was to "write stories." Still I had a dearer pleasure than this, which was the formation of castles in the air—the indulging in waking dreams—the following up trains of thought, which had for their subject the formation of a succession of imaginary incidents. My dreams were at once more fantastic and agreeable than my writings. In the latter I was a close imitator—rather doing as others had done, than putting down the suggestions of my own mind. What I wrote was

intended at least for one other eye—my childhood's companion and friend; but my dreams were all my own; I accounted for them to nobody; they were my refuge when annoyed—my dearest pleasure when free.

I lived principally in the country as a girl and passed a considerable time in Scotland. I made occasional visits to the more picturesque parts; but my habitual residence was on the blank and dreary northern shores of the Tay, near Dundee. Blank and dreary on retrospection I call them; they were not so to me then. They were the eyry of freedom, and the pleasant region where unheeded I could commune with the creatures of my fancy. I wrote then—but in a most common-place style. It was beneath the trees of the grounds belonging to our house, or on the bleak sides of the woodless mountains near, that my true compositions, the airy flights of my imagination, were born and fostered. I did not make myself the heroine of my tales. Life appeared to me too common-place an affair as regarded myself. I could not figure to myself that romantic woes or wonderful events would ever be my lot; but I was not confined to my own identity, and I could people the hours with creations far more interesting to me at that age, than my own sensations.

After this my life became busier, and reality stood in place of fiction. My husband, however, was from the first, very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage and enroll myself on the page of fame. He was forever inciting me to obtain literary reputation, which even on my own part I cared for then, though since I have become infinitely indifferent to it. At this time he desired that I should write, not so much with the idea that I could produce anything worthy of notice, but that he might himself judge how far I possessed the promise of better things hereafter. Still I did nothing. Travelling, and the cares of a family, occupied my time; and study, in the way of reading, or improving my ideas in communication with his far more cultivated mind, was all of literary employment that engaged my attention.

In the summer of 1816, we visited Switzerland, and became the neighbours of Lord Byron. At first, we spent our pleasant hours on the lake, or wandering on its shores; and Lord Byron, who was writing the third canto of "Childe Harold," was the only one among us who put his thoughts upon paper. These, as he brought them successively to us, clothed in all the light and harmony of poetry, seemed to stamp as divine the glories of heaven and earth, whose influences we partook with him.

But it proved a wet, ungenial summer, and incessant rain often confined us for days to the house. Some volumes of ghost stories, translated from the German into French, fell into our hands. There was the History of the Inconstant Lover, who, when he thought to clasp the bride to whom he had pledged his vows, found himself in the arms of the pale ghost of her whom he had deserted. There was the tale of the sinful founder of his race, whose miserable doom it was to bestow the kiss of death on all the younger sons of his fated house, just when they reached the age of promise. His gigantic, shadowy form, clothed like the ghost in Hamlet, in complete armour, but with the beaver up, was seen at midnight, by the moon's fitful beams, to advance slowly along the gloomy avenue. The shape was lost beneath the shadow of the castle walls; but soon a gate swung back, a step was heard, the door of the chamber opened, and he advanced to the couch of the blooming youths, cradled in healthy sleep. Eternal sorrow sat upon his face as he bent down and kissed the forehead of the boys, who from that hour withered like flowers snapt upon the stalk. I have not seen these stories since then; but their incidents are as fresh in my mind as if I had read them yesterday.

"We will each write a ghost story," said Lord Byron; and his proposition was acceded to. There were four of us. The noble author began a tale, a fragment of which he printed at the end of his poem of Mazeppa. Shelley, more apt to embody ideas and sentiments in the radiance of brilliant imagery, commenced one founded on the experiences of his early life. Poor Polidori had some terrible idea about a skull-headed lady, who was so punished for peeping through a key-hole—what to see I forget—something very shocking and wrong of course; but when she was reduced to a worse condition than the renowned Tom of Coventry, he did not know what to do with her, and was obliged to despatch her to the tomb of the Capulets, the only place for which she was fitted. The illustrious poets also, annoyed by the platitude of prose, speedily relinquished the uncongenial task.

I busied myself *to think of a story*—a story to rival those which had excited us to this task. One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature and awaken thrilling horror—one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart. If I did not

accomplish these things, my ghost story would be unworthy of its name. I thought and pondered—vainly. I felt that blank incapability of invention, which is the greatest misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations. *Have you thought of a story?* I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative.

Every thing must have a beginning, to speak in Sanchean phrase; and that beginning must be linked to something that went before. The Hindoos give the world an elephant to support it, but they make the elephant stand upon a tortoise. Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos; the materials must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself. In all matters of discovery and invention, even of those that appertain to the imagination, we are continually reminded of the story of Columbus and his egg. Invention consists in the capacity of seizing on the capabilities of a subject, and in the power of molding and fashioning ideas suggested to it.

Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. They talked of the experiments of Dr. Darwin (I speak not of what the Doctor really did, or said that he did, but, as more to my purpose, of what was then spoken of as having been done by him), who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. Not thus, after all, would life be given. Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.

Night waned upon this talk, and even the witching hour had gone by before we retired to rest. When I placed my head on my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision—I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handywork, horror-stricken. He would hope that, left to itself, the slight spark of life which he had communicated would fade; that this thing, which had received such imperfect animation, would subside into dead matter; and he might sleep in the belief that the silence of the grave would quench forever the transient existence of the hideous corpse which he had looked upon as the cradle of life. He sleeps; but he is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes.

I opened mine in terror. The idea so possessed my mind, that a thrill of fear ran through me, and I wished to exchange the ghastly image of my fancy for the realities around. I see them still; the very room, the dark *parquet*, the closed shutters, with the moonlight struggling through, and the sense I had that the glassy lake and white high Alps were beyond. I could not so easily get rid of my hideous phantom; still it haunted me. I must try to think of something else. I recurred to my ghost story, my tiresome unlucky ghost story! O! if I could only contrive one which would frighten my reader as I myself had been frightened that night!

Swift as light and as cheering was the idea that broke in upon me. "I have found it! What terrified me will terrify others; and I need only describe the spectre which had haunted my midnight pillow." On the morrow I announced that I had *thought of a story*. I began that day with the words, *It was on a dreary night of November*, making only a transcript of the grim terrors of my waking dream.

At first, I thought but of a few pages of a short tale; but Shelley urged me to develop the idea at greater length. I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely of one train of feeling, to my husband, and yet but for his incitement, it would never have taken the form in which it was presented. From this declaration I must except the preface. As far as I can recollect, it was entirely written by him.

And now, once again, I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper. I have an affection for it, for it was the offspring of happy days, when death and

grief were but words, which found no true echo in my heart. Its several pages speak of many a walk, many a drive, and many a conversation, when I was not alone; and my companion was one who, in this world, I shall never see more. But this is for myself; my readers have nothing to do with these associations.

I will add but one word as to the alterations I have made. They are principally those of style. I have changed no portion of the story, nor introduced any new ideas or circumstances. I have mended the language where it was so bald as to interfere with the interest of the narrative; and these changes occur almost exclusively in the beginning of the first volume. Throughout they are entirely confined to such parts as are mere adjuncts to the story, leaving the core and substance of it untouched.

M. W. S.
London, October 15, 1831.

Editions of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, displayed at Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, England, as part of Giorgio Sadotti's artwork *THIS THIS MONSTER THIS THINGS*

Unit 25 – Assignments

- Read the Assignment Background below.
- Read Letters 1–4 at the beginning of *Frankenstein*.
- In your reading journal, discuss how the letters allude to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."
- Read chapters 1-8 of *Frankenstein*.
- In your reading journal, make a chart with four columns.
    - Label the first three Romanticism, Gothic, and Epistolary. (We'll title the fourth one in Unit 26.)
    - Make notes of the elements of each genre that are found in *Frankenstein*.

Unit 25 –Assignment Background

Adapted for High School from:
The Beginning of the English Romantic Movement
by William Lyon Phelps
Romanticism

The word Romanticism is also often applied not to subject, but to method. Any poet, like Victor Hugo for example, who rebels against and ignores the rules of the Classicists, is thereby a Romantic poet. In looking for a definition of Romanticism, we first look at what Mr. Pater says, "The essential classical element is that quality of order in beauty . . . It is the addition of strangeness to beauty that constitutes the Romantic character in art. It is the addition of curiosity to the desire of beauty that constitutes the

romantic temper. The essential elements, then, of the Romantic spirit are curiosity and the love of beauty; and it is as the accidental effects of these qualities only that it seeks the middle age" (*Macmillan's Magazine, Vol. XXXV*).

Dr. F.H. Hedge declares that the Romantic feeling has its origin in wonder and mystery. "It is the sense of something hidden, of imperfect revelation. The peculiarity of the classic style is reserve, self-suppression of the writer. The Romantic is self-reflecting. To the Greeks the world was a fact, to us it is a problem. Byron is simply and wholly Romantic, with no tincture of classicism in his nature or works" (*Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. LVII). Dr. Hedge gave the essence of Romanticism as Aspiration. Prof. Boyesen writes, "Romanticism is really on one side retrogressive, as it seeks to bring back the past, and on the other hand, progressive, as it seeks to break up the traditional order of things. The conventional machinery of Romantic fiction; night, moonlight, dreams. Romantic poetry invariably deals with longing, not a definite desire, but a dim, mysterious aspiration" (Novalis and the Blue Flower, *Atlantic Monthly,* December 1875).

Though all the above definitions of Romanticism make a confusing variety of opinions, we cannot help seeing that there is something in them common to all. Romantic literature will generally be found to show three qualities: Subjectivity, Love of the Picturesque, and a Reactionary Spirit. By the first quality of subjectivity, I mean that the aspiration and vague longing of the writer will be manifest in his literary production; by the second, love of the picturesque, that element of Strangeness added to beauty, which Mr. Pater declares is fundamental; this may appear mildly, as where the writer is fond of ivy-mantled towers and moonlit water, or may turn into a passion for the unnatural and the horrible, as in tales of ghosts and of deeds of blood. And by the third is meant that the Romantic movement in any country will always be reactionary to what has immediately preceded; it may be gently and unconsciously reactionary, as in England, or proudly and fiercely rebellious, as in France. Recall the revolutions that occurred immediately before the Romantic Movement. Many of these poets and authors were writing of the beauty of nature as a remedy for the bloodshed they experienced. Turning away from society during this period was looked at as heroic, and men who left the mainstream were envied. This explains why the protagonists in Romantic literature appear as loners or as people who remove themselves from the company of others.

Gothic Literature

Emerging from the ideas found in Romanticism, Gothic literature gained in popularity around the same time. There are many common characteristics found in Gothic literature. The first is nature as a reflection of the destruction or isolation of man. Like their contemporaries, Gothic authors showed nature having the powers to heal; however, they also presented nature as having the ability to destroy. Many Gothic novels use the setting to enhance the isolation of their characters and as an antagonist for the characters. Nature is seen as a reflection of the internal struggle of the protagonist and shows the devastation of a fallen world.

The idea of man existing in a fallen world is another common characteristic in Gothic literature. Because the world is fallen, the protagonist in the story finds himself isolated from society. This isolation is either voluntary or is the result of the actions of the protagonist. The protagonist is tormented by the villain, who is the embodiment of evil. The villain is not evil in the beginning but becomes evil due to some flaw in his character or through the evil done to him.

The setting in Gothic novels usually involves a castle that is haunted or contains secrets: secret passages or rooms or family secrets. There is an underlying feeling of doom and suspense. The supernatural is present and adds to gloomy atmosphere created through the setting.

Epistolary Novel

An epistolary novel is one in which the story is told through a series of letters, diary entries, newspaper clippings, or other medium. A novel of this format is more realistic because it mimics real life.

Unit 26 – Assignments

- Read the Assignment Background below, then read Chapters 9-16 of *Frankenstein*.
- Title the fourth column in your reading journal "Tragedy." As you read the select chapters in this unit, make note of the elements of each genre on your chart.

Adapted for High School from:

Tragedy

by Ashley Horace Thorndike

We may begin very empirically with an element common to all tragedies and roughly distinguishing them from other forms of drama; noticed, indeed, in all theoretical definitions, though its importance is often blurred, and it receives only scant attention from Aristotle. He refers to the third part of the plot as "the tragic incident, a destructive or painful action, such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds, and the like." If his meaning of "a destructive or painful action" is extended to include mental as well as physical suffering, we have a definition of an indispensable element in tragedy and a conspicuous distinction from comedy.

This definition has had ample recognition in practice and in popular opinion, as in the 16th century idea of a tragedy as a play involving deaths, and in the present common conception of tragedy as requiring an unhappy ending. These uncritical opinions, however, introduce amendments that are not quite corollaries. The happy ending has never been completely excluded. Aristotle, while pronouncing in favor of the unhappy ending as best suited to producing tragic effect, recognized the possibility and popularity of a conclusion that limited punishment to the vicious. In modern times the salvation of the virtuous in tragedy has had warm defenders, including Racine and Dr. Johnson; and the essentiality of either an unhappy ending or of deaths has been generally denied. Evidently either is a natural but not inevitable accompaniment of suffering and disaster. A tragedy may permit of relief or even recovery for the good, or it may minimize the external and physical elements of suffering; but its action must be largely unhappy though its end is not, and destructive even if it does not lead to deaths.

We may derive from the "Poetics" something like the following: Tragedy is a form of drama exciting the emotions of pity and fear. Its action should be single and complete, presenting a reversal of fortune, involving persons renowned and of superior attainments, and it should be written in poetry embellished with every kind of artistic expression.

In one important respect, however, this definition falls short of describing Greek tragedy, and is still more inadequate for modern. Aristotle emphasized the action above the characterization and devoted much attention to the requirements of the plot. He did not, moreover, recognize the importance of the element of conflict, whether between man and circumstance, or between men, or within the mind of man. The Greek tragedies themselves had not failed to exhibit such conflicts; the medieval drama, notably in the moralities, emphasized moral conflict; and Renaissance tragedy, wherever it showed any independence, particularly in England and Shakespeare, took for its theme the conflict of human will with other forces.

After a time this modification of the classical tradition came to have a distinct place in literary theory. Hiegel gave it philosophical elaboration, and, in the Romantic Movement, when dramatists in different languages turned to Shakespeare for a model, they naturally assumed what may be called the Shakespearean definition. This important amendment to the tragic tradition may be briefly stated: The action of a tragedy should represent a conflict of wills, or of will with circumstance, or will with itself, and should therefore be based on the characters of the persons involved. A typical tragedy is concerned with a great personality engaged in a struggle that ends disastrously.

This will appear if we briefly consider the separate elements of the definition. First: Though the range of emotions has been greatly widened in modern tragedy in comparison with classical, and though the importance given to love and the admission of comedy and even farce have complicated emotional effect in a way that Sophocles could hardly have conceived, yet "pity and fear" still serve as well as any other terms to describe the emotional appeal peculiar to tragedy. Second: The reversal of fortune has been usually found in tragedy, though in the sense of a fall of the mighty, long the favorite theme, it cannot be regarded as the essential kernel of a tragic action. Third: Though the action of modern tragedies has usually been less simple than that of the Greeks, and though double plots and many complications have been common, yet, after the Elizabethans and the Romanticists, the tendency today seems to be toward a return to the simplicity that Aristotle had in mind. Only in rare instances, as in "The Doll's House," has a dramatist ventured to leave the action in a state that

might be called incomplete. Fourth: Though themes have changed and widened in range, still the great majority have been confined to extraordinary events and illustrious persons. Renaissance and pseudo-classical theorists interpreted Aristotle to limit the persons of tragedy to princes or men of the highest rank; and tragedy, even in England, long adhered to this superficial restriction. But already in the 16th century there were authors who wrote tragedies of ordinary men and contemporary events; and realism has broken away from the literary tradition in every generation since. Fifth: Tragedy has generally been reserved for poetry, and often for poetry of the most embellished kind; but here again realism has resorted to a bare style, and, particularly in the last century, to prose.

Unit 27 – Assignments

- Read the Assignment Background below, then answer the following review questions:
  - What are the six elements that need to be considered when evaluating literature?
  - Into what two groups are they divided?
  - Who are the major characters in *Frankenstein*? How are they described in the novel?
  - What are the incidents in the novel?
  - What is the setting of the novel?
  - What is meant by plot? How are the incidents arranged?
  - Reflect on the following quote from Mary Shelley's introduction:
    "Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist…"
    How does *Frankenstein* illustrate this quote?
  - What is Mary Shelley's worldview? How can you tell?
- Finish your reading of *Frankenstein*.
- On your genre chart, continue to add information about how *Frankenstein* fits each genre.

Unit 27 – Assignment Background

Adapted for High School from:

Elementary Guide to Literary Criticism

by Franklin Painter

Components of Literature

In every important work of fiction there are six things to be considered, namely, the characters, the incidents, the environment, the plot, the purpose, and the view or philosophy of life. The first three elements constitute the materials out of which the novelist builds his work; the last three supply the general plan by which he builds it. The excellence of the work, as in architecture, depends both on the character of the materials and on the manner in which they are put together. When Solomon constructed his famous temple, he not only used cedar and gold but also joined them together according to a wise design and noble purpose. These various elements are worthy of separate consideration.

Characters

The characters of a novel are of prime importance. As in actual life, they give tone to the society to which we are introduced. They should be clearly individualized and maintain throughout a reasonable consistency. They may be taken from any class of society. It is not enough that the characters be described in their outward appearance and experiences, the author must also reveal the hidden springs of motive and disposition. The great potentialities of human nature both for good and evil will be brought to light, and thus mimic the world of the novelist, and will reflect the life of the great real world in its more tragic aspects.

Incidents

By the incidents of a novel we mean the acts and experiences of the characters. They make up the connected and progressive story. The incidents may be as varied as the occurrences of human life, sweeping the whole range of toil, sorrow, and joy. They may be either comic or tragic. The interest of a

work of fiction depends largely upon its incidents. Separately they may be entertaining, absorbing, or thrilling; and taken together in their sequence they may carry us forward irresistibly to the conclusion. They should be in keeping with the time and place, and the several acts of the personages should be in harmony with their character and culture.

Setting

As in real life, the personages of a novel or romance live and move in the midst of an environment. They are placed in the midst of circumstances, upon which they act and by which they are acted upon. They may live on land or sea, in the country or in the city, amid the wildness of unsubdued forests or the culture of long-established communities. They may be surrounded by intelligence and luxury or by ignorance and squalor.

The environment is brought before us by description. The descriptive passages should be true to fact and graphic enough to enable the reader to picture the scenes in his mind; but they should not be so long drawn as to encumber or impede the story. Description is subordinate in fiction; instead of being an end in itself, its purpose is to throw light upon the characters and incidents of the story.

Plot

By plot, we mean the manner in which the incidents of a story are arranged with reference to the final issue. The incidents may be loosely connected, or they may be so skillfully ordered as to arouse the reader's breathless interest. A skillful plot presupposes dramatic talent. While a skillfully arranged plot is not an essential element in a work of fiction, it is always a source of interest and power.

Aim/Purpose

Every work of fiction has an aim or purpose. Sometimes the author merely aims at telling an interesting story which has no other significance than to provoke a smile or a tear. Sometimes it may be intended to illustrate a period in history or the manners of a particular locality. Sometimes it is designed to throw light on some phase of human character or human experience. And again, it may be a vehicle for conveying some form of teaching or for illustrating the growth of culture and character. In studying a work of fiction the purpose should be clearly apprehended, for the merit of a novel or romance depends in a measure upon the author's aim and his degree of success in realizing it.

Author's Worldview

Every work of fiction, consciously or unconsciously to the author, is apt to embody a particular view or philosophy of life. Every thoughtful person has convictions in regard to God, nature, and man. He may believe in a personal deity or an unconscious force as the source of all things. He may think of nature as a creation or as a product of impersonal natural law. He may think of man as an immortal being or as a creature whose existence ceases with death. But whatever may be an author's fundamental beliefs, they will inevitably color his work.

Unit 28 – Assignments

- Read the Assignment Background below.
- Create an outline on one of the following topics:
  - Write a literary analysis analyzing how *Frankenstein* fits one of these genres: Gothic, Romanticism, Tragedy.
  - Using this quote: *"Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist,"* analyze how *Frankenstein* can be seen as a warning for modern science.
- From your outline, write a rough draft of your essay.
- Read your essay aloud and note any corrections that should be made. Write your final draft using the grading rubric found in the **Language Arts Resources** on your **ArtiosHCS** curriculum website to grade your work.

Unit 28 – Assignment Background

Writing a Literary Analysis

To analyze is to carefully examine; so when you write a literary analysis, you are carefully examining a piece of literature. This may include examining how well the author illustrates theme, how well the

author presents the characters, or what effect the point of view has on the story. With any analysis, it is important to use evidence to prove the ideas presented in your essay.

A literary analysis should include a thesis statement, an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion:

A **thesis statement** gives the purpose of your essay. The thesis statement should answer this question in one sentence: What are you proving in your essay? Here's an example of a thesis statement which answers this question:

> "In *Oliver Twist,* Dickens reveals his theme of innocence of youth through the actions of Oliver."

The remainder of the essay should prove your thesis.

The **introduction** of your literary analysis should begin with a statement, question, statistic, or some other eye-catching phrase that encourages your reader to keep reading. It should also provide any background information necessary for your reader to understand your thesis statement and the position you are taking in your paper. At a minimum, the introduction MUST include the title and author of the literary work analyzed. An example introduction is:

> Have you heard of the "Great London Waif Crisis"? No, it does not refer to the need for skinny models we think of in modern times to eat food. It refers to the national crisis of the late 1800s when many children were subject to cruel treatment and fatal living conditions in London. Many wealthy and middle-class citizens in the city chose to turn their backs on the poor, because they viewed the poor as criminals who deserved their fate. In order to shed light on this situation, Dickens began publishing the story of *Oliver Twist* as a monthly serial. Each month, readers enjoyed the story about the plight of Oliver, a poor orphan, trying to maintain his purity and innocence as he comes in contact with criminals and other low-life characters who try to persuade him to steal and cheat the wealthy. In *Oliver Twist,* Dickens reveals his theme of innocence of youth through the actions of Oliver.

The **body paragraphs** should begin with topic sentences that support your thesis. Each paragraph should begin with a sentence that introduces the topic of that paragraph as it relates to your thesis statement. The remaining sentences of your body paragraph should support the idea presented in your topic sentence and should contain textual evidence from the novel, play, etc. An example body paragraph is:

> Topic sentence:
> When Oliver realizes that "making handkerchiefs" means stealing wallets, he is shocked and cannot participate.
> Explanation and textual support:
> Oliver is taken in by Fagin and is taught how to make handkerchiefs. Because of his innocence, Oliver thinks that they are actually making handkerchiefs and agrees to accompany Charley Bates and the Artful Dodger in order to make money for the gang. When they reach the city and Oliver realizes what they are actually doing, Oliver is "perfectly amazed and stupefied by it." More precisely, "In an instant the whole mystery of the handkerchiefs, and the watches, and the jewels rushed upon the boy's mind. He stood, for a moment, with the blood so tingling through his veins from terror." Dickens shows Oliver's innocence in believing Fagin and his gang to have his best interest at heart and shows his reaction to the realization that they are criminals.

The **conclusion** completes your essay and highlights the important information presented in your essay. One way to write your conclusion is to restate your thesis, restate your topic sentences, and conclude with a thought-provoking statement or question. The thing to avoid in conclusions is introducing new ideas. If you have more to say about your topic, add another body paragraph. Remember, your conclusion lets the reader know that this is the end of your essay. An example conclusion is:

> Oliver remains innocent and good throughout the novel, and his actions illustrate Dickens' message of the innocence of youth. In his innocence, Oliver does not realize the gang are criminals until he sees them steal a wallet. This realization does not change Oliver; in fact, he maintains his goodness, which we see in his heroic actions during the burglary. At the end of the novel, after all that Oliver has experienced, Dickens still portrays him as innocent and good. In what ways can we be like Oliver and resist becoming tainted by world?