ENGLISH II - COLLEGE PREP/HONORS

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

Dear English II College Prep Students,

Welcome to a brand new year at Carroll, we are looking forward to a wonderful and challenging year for all of you.   As part of your preparation for next year, you are assigned **one** summer novel to read.   This thought-provoking novel and the related assignment will provide you with the necessary practice to sharpen and maintain your critical reading skills. Your assignment is as follows:

Frankenstein **by Mary Shelley**

See the plot summary below (from Amazon):

Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus, is a novel written by English author Mary Shelley about the young student of science Victor Frankenstein, who creates a grotesque but sentient creature in an unorthodox scientific experiment. Shelley started writing the story when she was eighteen, and the novel was published when she was twenty. The first edition was published anonymously in London in 1818. Shelley's name appears on the second edition, published in France in 1823.Shelley had travelled through Europe in 1814, journeying along the river Rhine in Germany with a stop in Gernsheim which is just 17 km (10 mi) away from Frankenstein Castle, where two centuries before an alchemist was engaged in experiments. Later, she travelled in the region of Geneva (Switzerland)—where much of the story takes place—and the topics of galvanism and other similar occult ideas were themes of conversation among her companions, particularly her lover and future husband, Percy Shelley. Mary, Percy, Lord Byron, and John Polidori decided to have a competition to see who could write the best horror story. After thinking for days, Shelley dreamt about a scientist who created life and was horrified by what he had made; her dream later evolved into the story within the novel.

Please purchase a paperback copy of the novel. Also, please read and carefully follow the instructions for the assignment which are designed to help prepare you for the first quarter of the school year. The assignment will be collected on the first day of school, without exception

Have a fun, relaxing summer, enjoy your reading selection, and we'll see you in August!

Many blessings,

Archbishop Coleman Carroll High School
English Department

SUMMER ASSIGNMENT ON *FRANKENSTEIN*

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY AS NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THEM WILL BE REFLECTED IN YOUR GRADE

- Please purchase a black and white **composition notebook** in which to answer the discussion questions on the novel. You must **hand write your answers** (NO TYPED WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED).   You may answer in cursive or print, but please make sure that your writing is legible. Your notebook must be turned in on the first full day of class.
- **This assignment will count as three (3) homework assignments**.

- Please answer each question in a complete sentence with details to support your answer. Use the questions to frame your answers. Also, eliminate the use of personal pronouns as much as possible (I, me, he, him, her, she, it, you, them, they). Use the character's name instead to identify who you are talking about.   Remember that capitalization and punctuation rules apply and will be considered when grading your notebook.

- The key component in reading comprehension is being able to answer what we call the 5 W's and an H: Who, what, when, where, why and how. The discussion questions will address these reading comprehension building blocks.

- As you finish reading each chapter of the novel, you should complete the discussion questions for that chapter.   Do not read the book and then go back and try to answer the questions. Answer them while the chapter is fresh in your mind!

Frankenstein Discussion Questions

1. How will/did the death of Victor Frankenstein's mother affect the family dynamic? What potential strains might it cause?

2. Justify who is at fault for William's death.

3. What's the purpose of Walton's character?

4. In what ways does the quest for knowledge impact the story?

5. What effect on the monster does Frankenstein's abandonment have? How will this shape the rest of the story?

6. Does Victor owe a parental role to the monster since he was the monster's creator? Why/why not?

7. How do the monster's experiences and actions reflect his level of consciousness?

8. If the creature had turned out beautiful, do you think Victor would have abandoned him? Why/why not?

9. Why does Victor describe the creature as both beautiful and horrifying?

10. Hypothesize how the creature's personality would have been different if he had been beautiful instead of ugly.

11. Why did Justine sacrifice herself even though she knew she was innocent?

12. How should Victor have handled the accusation of Justine for William's murder?

13. Are the creature's actions justifiable? Explore/explain.

14. How does Victor's not giving the creature a name add to the storyline and influence the society's view of the creature?

15. If the creature had been surrounded by a loving and accepting environment, how would the storyline/outcome have changed?

16. What is the core reason Victor abandoned his creation?

17. How do you think the isolation of the creature helped to shape his personality and actions?

18. If Victor could speak to his past self, what do you think he would say?

19. What role does Victor's guilt play in the development of his character throughout the novel?

20. Would you consider the creature a conscious being? Why/why not?

21. Would you describe Victor's fear of his creation as rational or irrational? Why would you describe it that way? What do you think his fear is founded on?

22. How does Victor's drive to discover all the things he can in the natural world reflect the changing sentiment regarding science during the 1800s?

23. In your opinion, was the creature a "monster" because of his genes (nature) or his experiences (nurture)?

24. When the creature was watching the villagers in their cottage, how was he addressing one of his core needs?

25. How would Victor's life and the events of the story be different without the presence of Henry Clerval?

26. Does the creature see Victor as God, father, both, or neither? Justify your answer.

27. How would the creature have developed had he not "lived with" the De Laceys for so long?

28. Explain why *Frankenstein* is also titled *The Modern Prometheus*. What is implied by this alternate title? Explore the metaphor on multiple levels.

29. In what ways does Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* fit the Romantic genre?

30. What messages about scientific progress are conveyed through the novel?

31. Does the structure of the novel (meaning that it's both a story-within-a-story as well as an epistolary novel—one that is told through letters) work or not work? Critique the novel's structure and its effectiveness.

32. What does the monster show about human nature? How is this idea shown and why is it significant?

33. What role does guilt play in the story? How does it affect the characters? What does Shelley imply about guilt itself?

34. Which character learns the hardest lesson? How and why is it the hardest?

35. What does the novel suggest about ethics (doing the right thing)?

36. What role does revenge play in the story? How does it affect the characters? What does Shelley imply about revenge?

37. How are women portrayed in the novel? Based on the female characters, what do you think Shelley's opinion of a woman's role is? Why?

38. Did Victor make the right decision not to create a partner for the creature? Use evidence from the novel to support your opinion.

39. What qualities make a monster? Who is the real monster in the story?

40. What role does nature play for the characters in the story?

41. Hypothesize how the story's ending would have been different had Victor created a mate for the creature.

42. In what ways does Elizabeth influence the story?

43. What could Victor have done differently to prevent the death of his loved ones?

44. Were the creature's actions justifiable? Why/why not?

45. Besides the creation of the creature, evaluate the mistakes Victor made.