

Gothic Horror Short Story/Scary Story Contest

“Things That Go Bump in the Night”

Gothic Horror Short Story & Scary Story Contest

**Due: Day Before Halloween: Monday, October
30**



Assignment: After reading and discussing Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Tell-tale Heart*, John Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*, you are to write your own Gothic short

story. You are to use the characteristics of Gothic Literature we discussed in class; however, you are encouraged to take creative liberties with your work. Your ultimate goal is to scare your peers –while only using your words.

Contest: On Monday, October 30, we will read each other’s stories; everyone is entered into a contest against each other. Your peers will determine just which story is the scariest! Winners (top 3) will receive extra credit and prizes.

Mechanics: **DO NOT PUT your name on your paper. Ms. Maxson will give you a code.** The paper should be **at least 300 words**, typed in 11 pt. font and 1.5 spaced. All papers should have an effective title.

Assessment: Your grade will be determined by a combination of peer reviews and specific criteria; see rubrics and ballots.

FAIR WARNING: Avoid mimicry! Although you are encouraged to use Gothic Horror elements, you **SHOULD NOT** use a derivative plot. **Do your best to create an original text!!!!**

Gothic Literature Characteristics

1. Setting in a castle or isolated locale
2. Atmosphere of mystery and suspense: rain, fog, impending storm
3. Ancient Prophecy
4. Omens, Visions, Portents (i.e. raven appears out the window may portend death)
5. Supernatural or unexplained events
6. High emotion (anger, sorrow, surprise, and especially terror)
7. Women in distress (often abandoned)
8. Women threatened by a powerful, tyrannical male
9. Gloom and horror metaphors (ex. Rain=sorrow)
10. Mentally unstable character/disfigured character/disabled character who “knows” more

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Classic Gothic Horror Descriptions

wind, especially howling	rain, especially blowing
doors grating on rusty hinges	sighs, moans, howls, eerie sounds
footsteps approaching	clanking chains
lights in abandoned rooms	gusts of wind blowing out lights
characters trapped in a room	doors suddenly slamming shut
ruins of buildings	baying of distant dogs (or wolves?)
thunder and lightning	crazed laughter

Classic Gothic Horror Thesaurus

Mystery	diabolical, enchantment, ghost, goblins, haunted, infernal, magic, magician, miracle, necromancer, omens, ominous, portent, preternatural, prodigy, prophecy, secret, sorcerer, spectre, spirits, strangeness, talisman, vision
Fear, Terror, or Sorrow	afflicted, affliction, agony, anguish, apprehensions, apprehensive, commiseration, concern, despair, dismal, dismay, dread, dreaded, dreading, fearing, frantic, fright, frightened, grief, hopeless, horrid, horror, lamentable, melancholy, miserable, mournfully, panic, sadly, scared, shrieks, sorrow, sympathy, tears, terrible, terrified, terror, unhappy, wretched
Surprise	alarm, amazement, astonished, astonishment, shocking, staring, surprise, surprised, thunderstruck, wonder
Haste	anxious, breathless, flight, frantic, hastened, hastily, impatience, impatient, impatiently, impetuosity, precipitately, running, sudden, suddenly
Anger	anger, angrily, cholera, enraged, furious, fury, incense, incensed, provoked, rage, raving, resentment, temper, wrath, wrathful, wrathfully
Large	enormous, gigantic, giant, large, tremendous, vast

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Name: _____

Directions: Highlight the description that best matches the qualities of the short story.

Readability, Style, and Ideas

20. The writer tells a scary story which builds in intensity and suspense until the end. The sensory details make the story come alive. Work makes use of more than three senses to paint complete and vivid pictures for the reader. Dialogue enhances the story. Gothic horror elements are seamlessly incorporated without being mimetic; ideas are original and innovative.
18. The writer tells a scary story which includes intense and suspenseful moments. More details are needed to make the reader feel he/she is there. Work makes use a few of the senses to paint some pictures for the readers. Dialogue may be included. . Gothic horror elements may be present but are not seamlessly incorporated; text avoids mimicry; it's original.
15. The writer tells a scary story. Work relies predominantly on only one or two senses. Descriptions do not paint vivid pictures. Many more details and dialogue are needed.
10. Elements of a story are missing, or the story doesn't focus on one plot line.
8. The writer needs to select a topic suitable for this assignment.

Organization

10. The narrative is well organized. The author creates a clear, detailed, vivid story without adding anything extraneous Each part of the story flows well into the next.
8. The narrative is well organized. Paragraphs are mostly used correctly. Most of the story flows well.
6. The writer needs to pay more attention to how paragraphs are used. The writer also needs to work on smooth transitions from one part of the story to the next.
5. Paragraphs and flow need much attention.

Voice/Dialogue/Sensory Details

- 15 The voice, dialogue, and sensory details in the narrative adds much to the suspense and intensity of the story and creates not just interest, but a sense of urgency in the reader.
- 13 The voice, dialogue, and sensory details helps create interest in the story but lacks polish of a "15"
- 10 The voice, dialogue, and sensory details could be stronger. The writer needs to show more feeling.
- 8 The voice, dialogue, and sensory details are uneven or create confusion.
- 5 The voice, dialogue, and sensory details are simply not present; Writer didn't seem to care.

Word Choice

- 10 The writer's word choice reflects precision and engages the audience.
- 8 Unique and specific language creates vivid scenes., but may be more precise at times.
- 6 Word choice reflected some thought, but at times were unclear, repetitive, or imprecise.
- 4 The language was vague or repetitive.
- 2 The writer shows no interest in word choice.

Conventions

- 5 The narrative is almost error free. The rubric and all drafts are attached.
- 4 The narrative has a few errors or is missing a draft or rubric.
- 3 Several errors confuse the reader, makes the narrative confusing and hard to read.

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Overall Score ____ /60

Your Name: _____

Frankenstein Scary Story Contest Ballot

Directions: For each round, score the entries on readability and ability to “scare,” using the dot system.

Round I: Four people select the top two of four to move on to the next round. (You have 4 minutes/paper to read silently and make your ranking.)

Title of the Selection	Student ID	Dot/Ranking (1-4)	Comments
		○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○	

Round II: Eight people select the best of four to move on to the next round. (Listen to the readers of each paper, then make your ranking)

Title of the Selection	Student ID	Dot/Ranking (1-4)	Comments
		○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○	

Round III: The entire class selects ranks the third, second, and first place winners. (Listen to the readers of each paper, then make your ranking)

Title of the Selection	Student ID	Dot/Ranking (1-4)	Comments
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○	
		○ ○ ○ ○ ○	