Year 8 Gothic Homework – Winter

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

and the Gothic Tradition

'The Past Isn't Dead. It Isn't Even Past'

– William Faulkner

How to complete your homework

Start the retrieval questions without notes. Then use the reading on the page and your class notes. Spend the suggested time on each part and stop after about 40 minutes. Correct your retrieval answers in a different colour when your teacher shares the answers.

The support and challenge options replace part of the main task within the same time. They are not extra homework. Accurate ideas and clear explanations matter more than writing lots.

Your toolkit

Gothic fiction often uses threatening settings, secrets, isolation, unsettling events and uncertainty about what is natural or supernatural. A story does not need all of these features to be Gothic.

Useful terms: atmosphere = the mood a text creates; inference = an idea worked out from evidence; contrast = a difference placed side by side; duality = two contrasting sides; reputation = what others think of someone; narrative = how a story is told.

Explain an idea: Stevenson presents… For example, "…" The word… suggests… This creates… because… A reader might also think…

A Timeline of Key Publications

1818	Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is published	Dr Frankenstein is an overreaching scientist whose monstrous creation pursues and eventually destroys him. Dr Jekyll also overreaches and is ultimately destroyed for doing so. Both novels employ layered, framed narratives that help to generate a sense of unsettling opacity.
1859	Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* is published	Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* challenged traditional Victorian perceptions of science and scientific possibilities, whilst also undermining the value of religion as a guiding force. The resulting debates around morality and existentialism are clearly present throughout *Jekyll and Hyde*.
1871	Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* is published	Darwin considered 'whether man, like every other species, is descended from some pre-existing form'. *Jekyll and Hyde* captures many of the anxieties that arose from late nineteenth-century evolutionary thought, specifically the fear of regression. It is notable that Hyde is described as 'ape-like' and 'troglodytic'.
1885	Criminal Law Amendment Act	Henry Jekyll is part of a circle formed of respectable professional men. His life, outwardly at least, is sterile and self-consciously repressed. Hyde's 'undignified' and 'monstrous' nocturnal acts are suggestive of what, at the time, would have been classified as gross indecency.
Robert Louis Stevenson publishes *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in 1886		
1888	The Whitechapel murders are committed.	The first of the eleven unsolved Whitechapel murders were committed two years after *Jekyll and Hyde* was published. Speculation in newspapers that the identity of the murderer was Edward Hyde did not, at the time, seem entirely implausible and they helped to fuel the widespread 'urban terror'.
1890	Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is published	Both Dorian and Jekyll lead double lives and, outwardly, maintain gentlemanly exteriors. Each character is able to create a double, with all the resources necessary to indulge in the 'sordid and sensual' whilst avoiding public shame. However, Dorian, like Jekyll soon grows 'deadly sick'.
1895	Oscar Wilde's trial results in his imprisonment	Section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was used to send Wilde to prison. A number of oblique references to Jekyll's homosexuality are made in the novel, and the power of Hyde to blackmail him over his past greatly concerns Utterson.
1897	Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is published	Dracula's dual identity as a refined Count and primitive monster mirrors Jekyll's own duality. The novel, like *Jekyll and Hyde*, is a dramatization of fears at the time that civilisation was only a thin veneer, emphasised by the common imperialistic view that colonial subjects were primitive savages.

Developing understanding

Week 1 Entering the Gothic world

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 What is atmosphere? 2 What is inference? 3 Name one feature you associate with a frightening story.

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

Robert Louis Stevenson published Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in 1886. The story takes place in London. Utterson, a lawyer, investigates the troubling connection between his friend Dr Jekyll and a disturbing man called Mr Hyde. Secrets and unanswered questions build unease. Gothic fiction can turn a familiar place into somewhere threatening.

Create a glossary of six terms: Gothic, atmosphere, mystery, setting, reputation and duality. Write a definition and a short example for each. Use the toolkit and reading.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Describe an ordinary street becoming unsettling in 100–150 words. Use two Gothic features and one contrast, such as light and darkness. Underline your features, then explain in two sentences how they create unease.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Use this opening: “By day, the street was… By night…”

Challenge: Make the threat uncertain rather than naming a monster.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 2 The mysterious door

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 Who wrote the novella? 2 Where is it set? 3 What is contrast?

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

In Chapter 1, a neglected door stands near a lively, attractive street. Stevenson describes its building as showing “the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence”. Prolonged means lasting a long time; sordid suggests something dirty or morally unpleasant; negligence means lack of care.

Sketch the door and annotate it with four details inferred from the quotation. Beside it, list three details you would expect on the attractive street. Label which details come from the text and which are your imagined additions.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Answer in 100–150 words: How does Stevenson make the door seem unsettling? Include the quotation, explore one word and explain the contrast with the street. End with a question the door might make a reader ask.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Use “The word… suggests that nobody… This contrasts with…”

Challenge: Explain how the door could symbolise a hidden life.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 3 First impressions of Hyde

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 What is Gothic fiction? 2 What does negligence mean? 3 Why can a mysterious door create tension?

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

Enfield tells Utterson that Hyde knocks down a child and walks over her, showing little concern. In Chapter 1, Hyde “trampled calmly over the child’s body”. Trampled means trod heavily; calmly means without visible agitation. The child survives. Hyde later provides payment to avoid public scandal.

Make two columns headed Action and Attitude. Explain “trampled” and “calmly” in the correct columns. Add three adjectives to describe Hyde, giving a reason for each from the account.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write 100–150 words explaining why the pairing of “trampled” and “calmly” is disturbing. Use evidence and explore the contrast. Then write two sentences predicting what trouble Hyde may cause, clearly labelling these as predictions.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Begin “Hyde seems… His action is violent, but his attitude…”

Challenge: Offer a second interpretation of his calmness, such as confidence that he can escape consequences.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 4 Utterson the investigator

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 Who tells the story of the child? 2 What does Hyde do? 3 Why is “calmly” unsettling?

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

Utterson is a lawyer and Jekyll’s friend. Jekyll’s will gives Hyde an alarming role if Jekyll dies or disappears. Utterson fears that Hyde has power over his friend and begins investigating. He does not yet know the truth. Readers discover many clues alongside him.

Draw an evidence map: put Utterson in the centre and add Jekyll, Hyde and the will. Explain each connection in a sentence. Add two questions Utterson needs to answer.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write a 120–160 word private case note as Utterson. Separate what you know from what you suspect, explain why you are worried and suggest one sensible next step. Finish with two sentences explaining how limited knowledge creates mystery.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Use headings Facts, Suspicions and Next step.

Challenge: Explain why a trustworthy investigator can still reach an incorrect conclusion.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 5 Jekyll and hidden identities

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 What is Utterson's job? 2 What is a will? 3 What is reputation?

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

Jekyll appears respectable and has a comfortable home, but he keeps secrets about Hyde. A respectable reputation can create pressure to hide behaviour others would disapprove of. This is useful context for the novella, but it does not mean all Victorian people behaved in the same way. Duality means two contrasting sides.

Create a two-sided profile headed Public Jekyll and Hidden questions. Give three details or questions on each side, using this reading and class notes. Do not present an unanswered question as a fact.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write 100–150 words: Why might a character protect their reputation by keeping secrets? Apply your ideas to Jekyll. Then explain how one place, such as the door or house, could represent a hidden identity.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Use "Other people see Jekyll as… However, readers wonder…"

Challenge: Explain how secrecy might protect a reputation in the short term but damage it later.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 6 Violence and animal imagery

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 Define duality. 2 Name one question about Jekyll. 3 What is a simile?

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

In Chapter 4, Hyde murders Sir Danvers Carew. His violence is described as “with ape-like fury”. The comparison makes his behaviour seem savage and uncontrolled. Animal imagery can make a character seem less governed by reason. This is a description of behaviour, not proof that appearance reveals someone’s morality.

Explain fury and ape-like in your own words. List two differences between Hyde’s violence here and his earlier treatment of the child. Find one similarity. Use the summaries and your notes.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write 120–160 words: How does Stevenson present Hyde as frightening? Use “with ape-like fury”, explain the comparison and connect it to “trampled calmly”. Consider whether Hyde seems controlled, uncontrolled, or both at different moments.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Use “Earlier… In the murder scene… This change…”

Challenge: Explain why the contrast between the two scenes may make Hyde unpredictable.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 7 London as a Gothic setting

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 Who is murdered? 2 What does fury mean? 3 How can setting create atmosphere?

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

In Chapter 4, London is covered by “a great chocolate-coloured pall”. A pall is a covering and can also mean a cloth over a coffin. Here the fog darkens and obscures the city. A familiar city becomes difficult to see and navigate, making concealment possible.

Create a mind map for the quotation with four branches: colour, visibility, associations of “pall”, and feelings. Write one explanation on each branch. Add one link to secrecy in the novella.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write a 100–140 word Gothic description of a modern familiar place obscured by fog or darkness. Use a metaphor and two sensory details. Then write 40–60 words explaining one deliberate language choice and its effect.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Choose a bus stop or school corridor. Use sight and sound.

Challenge: Make the setting reflect a character’s uncertainty without saying “they felt scared”.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 8 Suspense behind the cabinet door

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 What is a metaphor? 2 What can “pall” suggest? 3 Name two Gothic features in the novella.

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

In Chapter 8, Jekyll’s servant Poole seeks Utterson’s help. Someone is shut inside Jekyll’s cabinet, a private room. Poole is frightened by the voice and behaviour he has observed. Utterson and Poole delay, debate and listen before forcing entry. The reader waits for an explanation.

Create a five-step tension ladder: concern, clues, uncertainty, delay and discovery. For each step, write one detail from the summary or class reading. At discovery, record only what your class has reached.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write a 120–160 word suspense scene ending just before a door opens. Include a sound, a delayed action and an unanswered question. Explain in two sentences why withholding the discovery can increase suspense.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Start “Behind the door, something…” Use short sentences at one key moment.

Challenge: Vary sentence length deliberately and explain the effect of one change.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 9 Lanyon and the limits of knowledge

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 Who is Poole? 2 What does suspense mean? 3 Give one way to delay a discovery.

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

In Chapter 9, Lanyon's written account reveals that he witnessed Hyde transform into Jekyll. The experience horrifies him. His testimony gives the reader a new explanation for earlier clues. The novella explores the danger of experiments and the fear of discovering something that challenges familiar beliefs.

Draw a before-and-after chart for Lanyon: what he expected, what he witnessed, and how his understanding changed. Add two earlier mysteries that the transformation helps explain.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write 120–160 words: Why is Lanyon's account an effective way to reveal the truth? Explain his role as a witness, the shocking event and how the late revelation changes the reader's understanding. Refer to at least one earlier clue.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Use "Before this account, readers might think… Afterwards…"

Challenge: Explain how a written testimony can feel convincing while remaining one person's perspective.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 10 Jekyll and responsibility

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 What does Lanyon witness? 2 What is testimony? 3 Define duality.

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

In Chapter 10, Jekyll writes that “man is not truly one, but truly two”. He believes he can separate different sides of himself through an experiment. At first he chooses to become Hyde, but later he loses control and transformations happen without his choosing. His account explains the events from his own perspective.

Paraphrase the quotation. Make a three-stage timeline: initial choice, repeated transformations and loss of control. Write one sentence at each stage. Add one question you would ask Jekyll about his decisions.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write 130–170 words: How far is Jekyll responsible for the harm caused by Hyde? Give a view, use two details from the reading or class notes, consider a different view and reach a reasoned judgement.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Use “Jekyll is responsible because… However… Overall…”

Challenge: Consider whether Jekyll’s own account could minimise his responsibility.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 11 What makes the novella Gothic

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 What does Jekyll believe about human nature? 2 Name one choice he makes. 3 Why might his account need questioning?

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

A Gothic text may combine threatening places, secrets, violence, isolation and apparently impossible events. In this novella, the transformation offers an experimental explanation, yet it remains frightening and extraordinary. Gothic writing often explores boundaries: safe and dangerous, respectable and hidden, human and monstrous.

Choose four Gothic features. For each, record a precise example from the novella and explain its effect in one sentence. Revisit at least one example from weeks 1–4 and one from weeks 6–10.

3 Apply for 20 minutes

Write two linked paragraphs totalling 150–200 words: How does Stevenson use Gothic features to explore hidden dangers? Focus on setting in one paragraph and character or transformation in the other. Use two short quotations from this bank or your text.

4 Check for 5 minutes

Check the accuracy of your ideas using this page or your notes. Improve one explanation. Record one thing you understand better and one question you still have.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Use the door and Hyde. Link each example to fear, uncertainty or secrecy.

Challenge: Explain how two Gothic features work together rather than discussing them separately.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Week 12 Final revision and Gothic writing

1 Retrieve for 5 minutes

Close your notes. Answer these questions briefly.

1 Name the author. 2 Name the investigator. 3 Define duality. 4 Name two Gothic features. 5 Recall one quotation and explain it.

2 Read and revise for 10 minutes

Revision works best when you recall first, check afterwards and correct gaps. Useful evidence from this bank includes “trampled calmly”, “with ape-like fury” and “man is not truly one, but truly two”. Choose evidence that supports your idea and explain the words rather than simply copying them.

Spend 10 minutes making a revision card: five key events in order, three characters and their roles, two themes with examples, and one quotation explained. Check against your notes and correct one gap.

3 Apply and check for 25 minutes

Spend 20 minutes writing a 130–180 word Gothic opening inspired by a central idea from the novella, such as secrecy, duality or a dangerous experiment. Use a threatening setting, one hidden detail and a contrast. In the final 5 minutes, annotate three choices and explain how each links to Gothic fiction or the novella.

Support or challenge within your 40 minutes

Support: Plan three sentences before writing: the place, the clue and the unanswered question.

Challenge: Make the narrator’s understanding limited so the reader can suspect more than the narrator knows.

Success check: I completed the retrieval, used accurate details, explained my ideas and checked my work.

Literary Research Tasks – Challenge yourself for extra house points!

Task 1:

a) What is the novel *Frankenstein* about? Create a research page showing your understanding.
b) What parallels (similarities and differences) are there with *Jekyll and Hyde*? Use a Venn diagram on a different page to show this.

Clue: Dr Frankenstein is an overreaching scientist whose monstrous creation pursues and eventually destroys him.

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

Task 2:

a) What is the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* about? Create a research page showing your understanding.
b) What parallels (similarities and differences) are there with *Jekyll and Hyde*? Use a Venn diagram on a different page to show this.

Clue: Both Dorian and Jekyll lead double lives and, outwardly, maintain gentlemanly exteriors.

For the wonderful beauty that had so fascinated Basil Hallward, and many others besides him, seemed never to leave him. Even those who had heard the most evil things against him – and from time to time strange rumours about his mode of life crept through London and became the chatter of the clubs – could not believe anything to his dishonour when they saw him. He had always the look of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world.

Task 3:

a) What is the novel *Dracula* about? Create a research page showing your understanding.
b) What parallels (similarities and differences) are there with *Jekyll and Hyde*? Use a Venn diagram on a different page to show this.

Clue: Dracula's dual identity as a refined Count and primitive monster mirrors Jekyll's own duality.

When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demoniac fury, and he suddenly made a grx`ab at my throat. I drew away and his hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it was ever there.