

# Monster Writing

5<sup>th</sup>  
Grade



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# FRANKENSTEIN

**F**rankenstein is a character from the novel, *Frankenstein, or A Modern Prometheus*, published in 1818 by Mary Shelley. In the book, a scientist tries to reanimate a body using electricity. Once given life, the monster tries to relate to humans, but because of his appearance, people fear him and act hostile to him, no matter how hard he tries to fit in. Eventually, the monster vows revenge on Dr. Frankenstein for bringing him to life, only to be mistreated by other humans. In the end, the story leaves readers wondering who is scarier: the monster, or the man who created him?

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Despite what most people think, the monster's name is not Frankenstein. The scientist who created him is named Frankenstein; the more accurate name for the famous character is Frankenstein's monster.

## THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The Industrial Revolution was a period in America and European history when technology began to become an important part of life for most people. Instead of goods being handmade and sold by small shops or directly by the makers, products began to be manufactured in factories and mass-produced. The Industrial Revolution brought about many important scientific advancements, but caused some citizens to worry that technology would take over. Frankenstein was written during that time period, and in some ways reflects the belief that putting too much faith in technology can be dangerous.

## STAGE AND SCREEN

Many stage versions of Frankenstein were staged before it was made into a short film by the Edison Company in 1910. The image of Frankenstein that we recognize today comes from the 1931 film version starring Boris Karloff. The tall, striped hair of his bride in the sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, is also a familiar Halloween image!

## QUIZ

- 1) The monster in the novel Frankenstein's true name is:
  - a) Frankie
  - b) Fred
  - c) Frankenstein's Monster
  - d) Frankenstein
- 2) Who do you think is the scarier character in the story of Frankenstein: the monster or the scientist? Write a paragraph about you opinion below.



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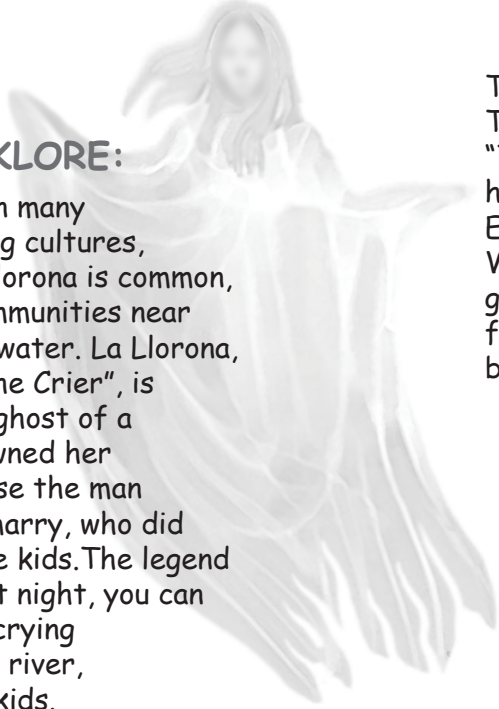
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# GHOSTS

Ghosts are believed to be the spirits of people who have died. They haunt the living for many reasons, usually because of "unfinished business" with friends or family. They are often thought of as a wispy, misty white figure, wearing clothes that match the time period during which they died. Ghosts don't usually harm people, but are said to make strange noises and move household objects.



## LOCAL FOLKLORE:

In Mexico and in many Spanish-speaking cultures, the tale of La Llorona is common, especially in communities near large bodies of water. La Llorona, which means "The Crier", is supposedly the ghost of a woman who drowned her children to please the man she wanted to marry, who did not want to have kids. The legend says that late at night, you can hear her spirit crying near the lake or river, looking for her kids.

## FAMOUS GHOSTS:

The Headless Horseman - Most people know The Headless Horseman from Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", but tales of a headless man riding a horse have been around in Europe since at least the Middle Ages. In Washington Irving's story, the Horseman is the ghost of a Revolutionary War soldier. Another famous example is in The Brothers Grimm's famous book of German fairytales.



## QUIZ

If you were going to be a ghost for Halloween, what would you wear to look like one?  
Describe how your costume represents a ghost using examples from the articles you have just read.

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If you were a ghost, where would you like to haunt? Who would you visit? \_\_\_\_\_

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Does your own culture have any legends about ghosts?  
Rewrite your favorite ghost story on a separate sheet of paper.

# MUMMIES

Mummies are often featured in movies as being undead beings. Early science fiction novels were written about ancient mummies coming back to life, and horror films about mummies became extremely popular between the 1930s and '50s, the heyday of science fiction and horror films. Many of the mummy films made around that time promoted a belief that mummies have magical powers: if you disturb their sleep, a curse will be placed upon you!



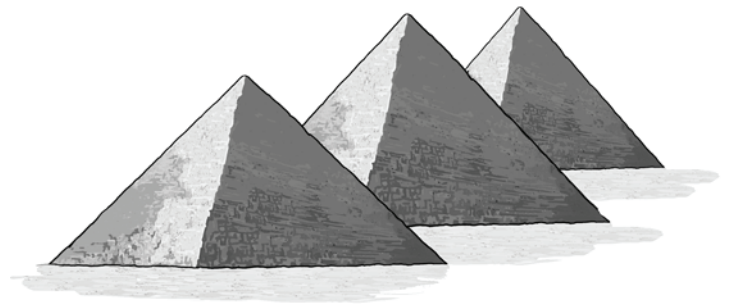
## FAMOUS MUMMY:

King Tutankhamun, or "The Boy King", is possibly the most famous of ancient Egyptian royalty. King Tut took the throne at age nine or ten. History suggests he wasn't very famous when he was a king, but he is remembered in modern society because of the very public discovery of his tomb by Egyptologist Howard Carter in 1922. Legends of a "curse" are still around to this day because people that were part of Carter's excavation team had instances of bad luck shortly after. The mission's funder caught an infection, and one of the anthropologist's house burned down!

## PYRAMIDS:

Though it was actually rare for Egyptian royalty to inscribe curses in their tombs, the pharaohs seemed to be trying to prevent people from breaking into their chambers and derailing their journey to the afterlife. Winding walkways to the tomb that lead deep under the pyramid were common, and doors to the tomb were often sealed shut. Even King Tut was buried in three nested sarcophagi, which were inside of five layered wooden shrines. Inside their tombs, pharaohs stocked everything they might need for the afterlife, including food, furniture and valuables.

Draw up a floor plan for your pyramid. How would you trick people into staying away from your chamber?



Name three things you'd want to have in your tomb. What do you think you'd need or want in the afterlife?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

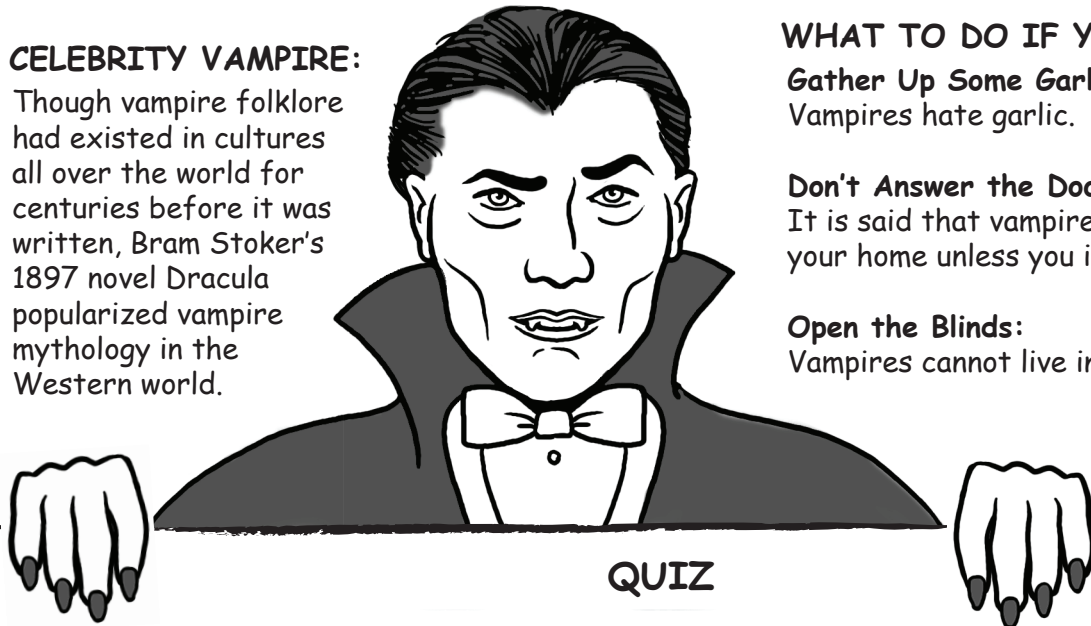
# VAMPIRES

Vampires are immortal creatures said to prey on the living, hoping to drink their blood.

If you are bitten by a vampire, it is said that you will become one. Many cultures believe in vampires and vampire-like creatures, and have for centuries. The modern-day image of a vampire is of a being that sleeps in coffins, lives in a large, isolated castle in Eastern Europe, and dresses in a long cape with a high collar. Most of these beliefs are influenced by early horror films about vampires, such as Nosferatu and Dracula.

## CELEBRITY VAMPIRE:

Though vampire folklore had existed in cultures all over the world for centuries before it was written, Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* popularized vampire mythology in the Western world.



## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A VAMPIRE:

### Gather Up Some Garlic:

Vampires hate garlic.

### Don't Answer the Door:

It is said that vampires will not enter your home unless you invite them in.

### Open the Blinds:

Vampires cannot live in sunlight.

## QUIZ

1. Can you think of any other famous vampires in books, movies, or television shows? What vampire-like characteristics does this character have? Do they have any that are different?

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2. A vampire is walking down your street, and he's heading towards your house! What would you do?

- a) Chase him away.
- b) Throw your leftover Halloween candy out the window at him
- c) Go to the grocery store and stock up on garlic.



3. If you were going to dress up as a vampire for Halloween, name three things you would wear.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

# WEREWOLVES

**W**erewolves are humans that are said to turn into wolves on nights when the full moon is out. Werewolves evolved from European folktales, but stories of shapeshifters, or beings that can change into other forms of life, have been told since ancient times. Once transformed, a werewolf will hunt for human prey with his excellent hunting capabilities: the instincts of an animal combined with the logic and reasoning of a human. It is said that if you are bitten by a werewolf, you will become one as well. The most common way of defending yourself against a werewolf is to expose it to pure silver.

## LOCAL FOLKLORE:

**The Beast of Bray Road.**

In the 1980s, citizens of a small town in Wisconsin began claiming to see a wolf-like beast in the forests along a rural road. Reports of sightings dropped off a long time ago, but it remains a favorite local legend and a scary story, especially around Halloween!



## CELEBRITY WEREWOLF:

**Lon Chaney, Jr. in 1941's The Wolf Man.** The Wolf Man was released in the early 1940s and helped popularize monster movies during that time period. The Wolf Man is mostly remembered for using special effects that were groundbreaking at the time. Movies about werewolves had been made before, but none had ever shown the man's transformation to wolf on screen because filmmakers couldn't make it look realistic.



## COSTUME PLANNER

What do werewolves wear? Draw a picture of yourself in costume as a werewolf for Halloween. Write the names of the materials you will use to make your costume on the lines below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick black border, intended for drawing a costume. Below the box are four horizontal lines for writing.

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# WITCHES

Witches are said to have magical powers. They often use these magical powers to cast spells over others. In early modern times, it was common to blame witches for bad luck and misfortune. "Witch trials", events where local citizens were accused of practicing witchcraft and put on trial before the community, were held in towns across Europe and the early United States. Currently, we imagine witches as wearing pointy hats and black, ragged robes, and spending their time riding broomsticks, keeping black cats as pets, and concocting magic potions over large cauldrons.

## FAMOUS WITCHES: The Witches of Macbeth

The image of witches cooking up potions in a cauldron comes from... Shakespeare? Most likely. The famous phrase "double, double, toil and trouble" is spoken by a trio of witches in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, as the characters stand over a bubbling cauldron, mixing a magic potion. Many of Shakespeare's plays incorporate themes of magic. In fact, many actors and directors consider the play *Macbeth* to be cursed, and will not say its name while in a theater.



## LOCAL FOLKLORE:



## The Salem Witch Trials

This was local, but wasn't folklore- it actually happened. In 1692, the town of Salem, Massachusetts went on one of the most famous witch hunts in history, where townspeople began accusing one another of performing witchcraft that caused three teen girls in the town to become "possessed". During the chaotic trial, many citizens were put in jail or executed because they could not prove that they weren't responsible for the supposed witchcraft. The Salem witch trials are often used as an example of how dangerous a mob mentality can be.

## QUIZ

1) Write up a witch recipe! What kinds of ingredients would you put in a potion that would...

cast a love spell? \_\_\_\_\_

help your friend study for a test? \_\_\_\_\_

make your room clean itself? \_\_\_\_\_

2) The popular idea of a witch cooking her potions in a cauldron most likely comes from...

- a) A play by William Shakespeare
- b) A popular book series about witches
- c) My next-door neighbor

3) Can you think of any more famous phrases, articles of clothing, or actions you associate with witches? What are they? Where have you seen them before?

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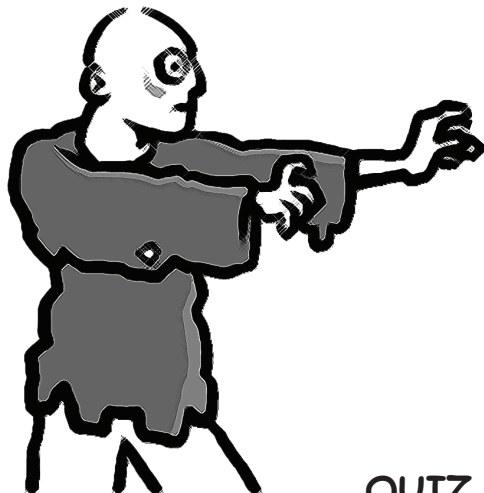
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# ZOMBIES

Zombie legends started in the country of Haiti. Zombies were thought to be bodies that had been brought back to life and were controlled by evil masters. However, the modern version of a zombie is much different. In most zombie movies, books and video games seen today, a zombie is a person who has been infected by a virus that has taken away everything but their ability to eat, walk and breathe. Modern zombies travel in large packs, looking to convert humans to zombies by biting them, which spreads the infection that turns the living into one of them. They are often shown as slow-moving creatures with pale skin that walk in large groups.



## QUIZ

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A ZOMBIE:

**Move fast:** Zombies typically walk slowly and are pretty easy to outrun. However. . .

**Stay quiet:** Don't draw attention to yourself. Once a zombie notices you, the rest soon follow.

**Aim for the head:** Zombies are basically human brains on legs. Hit a zombie in the head to "turn off" its brain.

**Use your brain:** The number-one advantage people have over zombies is logic and reasoning. Zombies have brains, but they can't think for themselves.

1. What country does zombie folklore come from?

- a) Great Britain                      b) Haiti                                      c) France

2. What is your favorite zombie movie, game, or book? Are the creatures in it more like traditional folklore zombies, or do they have different characteristics? Do they share traits with other monsters or mythical creatures? How so?

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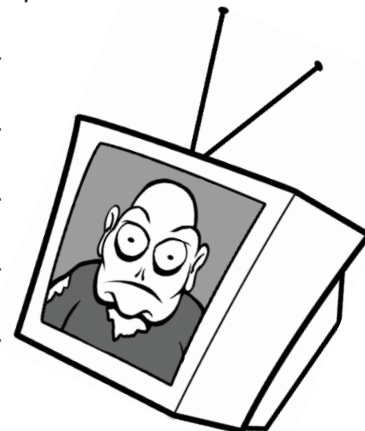
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Imagine that you turn on the news to see that your town is being invaded by zombies! Name a person you'd want to be with, an item you'd like to have with you, and where the best place in the neighborhood to hide is.

Person you'd like to be with: \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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Item you'd want to have with you: \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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Best place to hide: \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Creative Writing

What if every Halloween at midnight you turned into a werewolf? What would you do every Halloween? Describe your experience in a brief paragraph.



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# Creative Writing

Imagine you are a witch and you are making a special brew. Write down the magic recipe. Also write down what your brew does. Use your imagination!

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# Creative Writing

Write a scary story. Use your imagination to write the scariest story you can. Choose a spooky environment and a few monsters, or a ghost perhaps. Be as descriptive as possible.

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# Creative Writing

What if you could be a ghost? Where would you go? Would you want to scare people or be a friendly ghost? Write a descriptive paragraph about your unique experience. Don't forget to use your imagination!

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Great job!

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