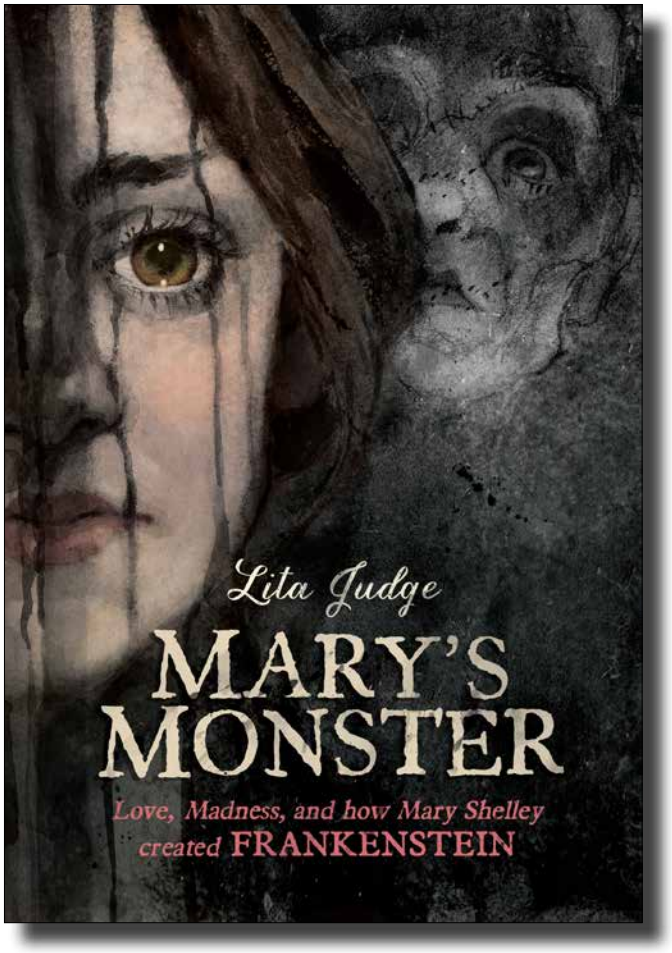
Mary's Monster Teacher's Guide



This teacher's guide seeks balance between active classroom discussion and individual thought, writing and art, reflection and analysis. It addresses best practice strategies that incorporate organizing, listing, classifying, making & supporting claims, and cross-curricular instruction. The items in the guide are ordered chronologically from the novel. Pertinent CCSS and NCTE Standards are identified for each section. Some identify as activities that could take place at any specific moment in the study of the novel. The goal of this guide is to address the standards, keep students engaged in the material, and to get kids thinking.

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Are you a Mary Shelley clone living in another time period? (Before the novel)

Answer the following questions on the scale provided. As you arrive at the bottom of the page, total your score to determine your likelihood of friendship with Mary.

1. Do your parents' words dramatically affect you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Nah, they're harmless. Well, I hear them. They make me think. I'm totally sensitive to them.

2. How much do you like to read? (Be honest – no one's judging you)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Yeah, right. I *might* like it when I pick it. I'm not opposed. I voraciously devour books.

3. How do you feel about societal restrictions on romantic love? Should marriage, social class coordination, monogamy, and age be considerations of relationships?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Yes, restrictions have reasons. It's purely situational. No, love is the only criteria that matters.

4. What should parents prioritize most in raising their kids?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Teaching right behaviors. Meeting physical needs. Playing. Nurturing & loving.

5. How much do you like to travel internationally regardless of expense?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I like my own bed. I do when I have to. It's fun sometimes. I'd travel non-stop if I could.

6. Does the weather affect your mood at all? Do you have Seasonal Affective Disorder?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No, I'm good rain or shine. It depends. Yes, I mirror weather with my mood.

7. How do you deal with the deaths of those close to you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Haven't had to yet. It doesn't affect me. I grieve briefly. I struggle for months and years.

8. When it comes to school subjects and enjoying learning, how would you most classify yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I dislike all classes. I love ONE class. I enjoy a couple subjects. I LOVE ALL SUBJECTS.

If you scored between…

68-80 – you might be a reincarnated Mary Shelley. You possess her character, and you will experience her joys and pains as you read. You will have complete empathy for her.

56-67 – you can definitely relate to Mary, but more like a friend who sympathizes – you can't exactly *feel* what it's like to be her, but you feel *for* her.

44-55 – you probably see a Mary Shelley type in the halls and know her character with just a few judgmental looks. You *know* the two of you wouldn't run in the same circles or be friends, but that doesn't lessen your understanding of her human need for acceptance. You would be cordial, but not necessarily friendly.

43 or less – you likely couldn't effectively socialize with Mary. As you read *Mary's Monster*, your eyes will be opened to what it feels like to be someone completely different than you and that's good! This book will teach you to be open-minded to those around you who may need a friend because we rarely know all that goes into a person's history that might be affecting their present

This quiz should preview the major themes that surface in *Mary's Monster*. As a teacher, some additional questions to consider for discussion could be:

Why do people who like to read actually like it? What purpose(s) does reading serve?

Why might we all have differing opinions about what parents should value as they raise their children?

What possible benefits and drawbacks might exist because of moving residences frequently?

How can different children within a family have different levels of worth? Is favoritism real? How so?

Teen pregnancy, accidental deaths, and neglectful relationships all occupy the pages of this book. Why is it valuable to discuss them even though they might be controversial?

NCTE Standard 3: Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features.	Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Historical and Literary Allusions – Finding the Sweet Spot (Throughout the novel)

Pick 4 of the following topics: Debtor's prison, Napoleonic Wars, The French Women's Rights Movement, Mary's Mother, Mary's Father, French Revolution, *Queen Mab*, galvanism, *Paradise Lost*, *Prometheus*, Samuel Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Percy Bushe Shelley, Lord Byron, or another allusion you find in the novel.

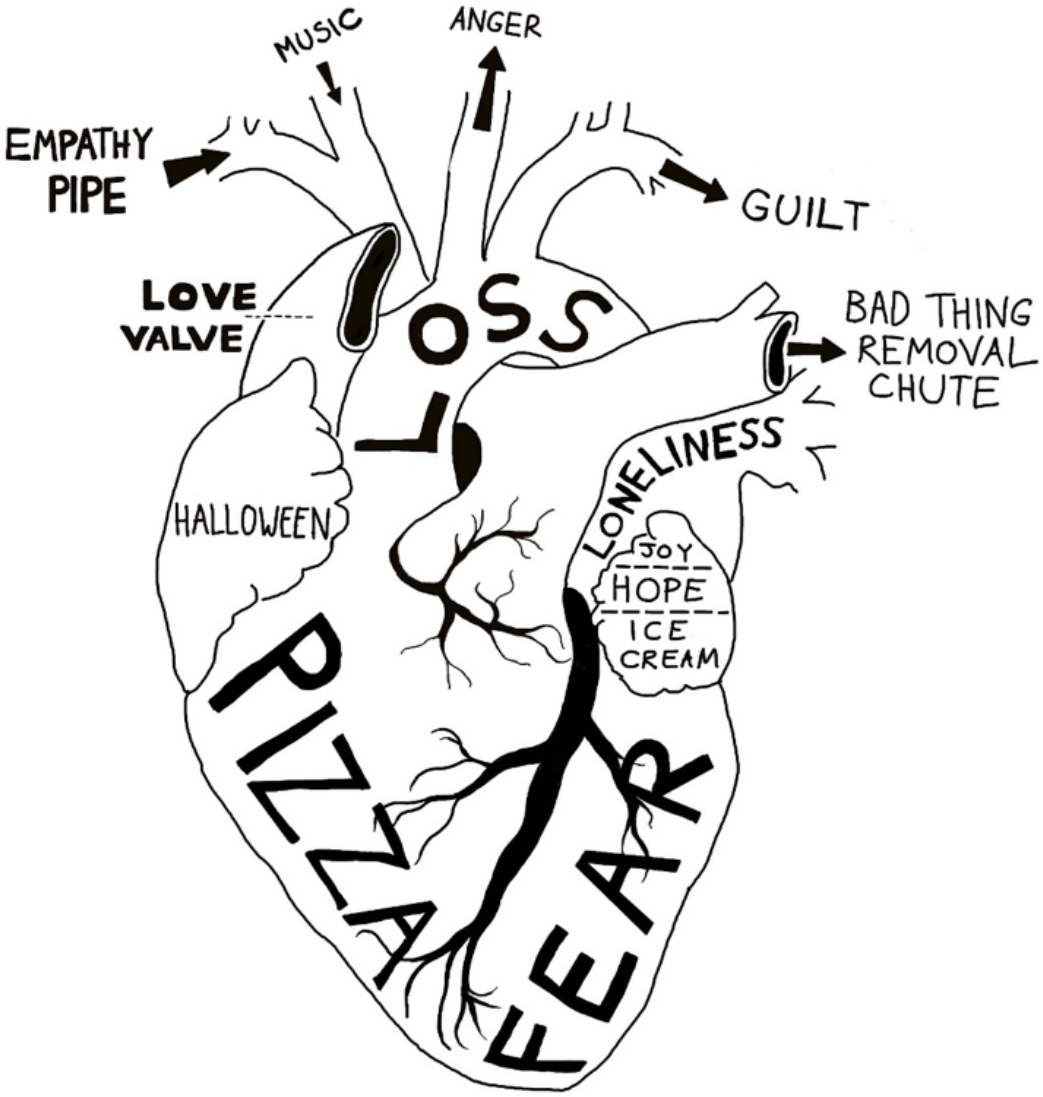
An **allusion** is a reference in literature to something famous whether it be a person, event, piece or art, famous topic, or piece of literature. Considering these famous items, place a title, a quote from the story, some detailed research about the topic, and a reason why the topic is relevant in Mary's life in each of the four circles. Then, when the circle intersects with another topic, write a word or phrase that captures a common theme or idea between the two. When three circles cross, write a word that connects them. Finally, pick a word or phrase that would connect all four circles to define the diagram's sweet spot.

NCTE Standard 7: Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.	Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.9 Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

Mary's Heart Chambers (Throughout the novel, could be done at any one specific point)

Either find an anatomical diagram of the heart, or use this one provided as a model to serve as a visual representation for what courses through Mary's veins and actually makes her blood curdle or her soul happy. The human heart contains four main chambers. What different major emotions occupy Mary's four chambers? What exits and enters her heart? To what degree do different feelings reside in her?

Use thematic words in specific locations in the heart to demonstrate Mary's feelings. Support each feeling with quote evidence from the text. Use COLOR to shade each portion of the heart symbolically.



NCTE Standard 11: Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.	Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Character chart: – William Godwin, Mary's Father (Parts I, III)

Fill each bubble with information about the character. Use textual evidence.

Physical appearance description:

What consumes his mind?

What does he/would he say about himself?

Describe 3-4 relationships William has.

Please list two actions of his that reveal his character.

What does another character say about him?

NCTE Standard 2: Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.	Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Character chart: – Mrs. Godwin (Parts I, III)

Fill each bubble with information about the character. Use textual evidence.

Physical appearance description:

What consumes her mind?

Describe 3-4 relationships Mrs. Godwin has.

What does she/would she say about herself?

Please list two actions of hers that reveal her character.

What does another character say about her?

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Character chart: – Percy Bysshe Shelley (Parts I, III)

Fill each bubble with information about the character. Use textual evidence.

Physical appearance description:

What consumes his mind?

Describe 3-4 relationships Percy has.

What does he/would he say about himself?

Please list two actions of his that reveal his character.

What does another character say about him?

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Close Reading Strategies (Throughout entire novel)

Color-Coded Annotating:
Assign a different color pen or pencil (if you are writing in the book or on your own paper), or a different color post-it note to each of the following topics:

LOOK FOR	WHAT TO WRITE:
Questions	Every time it feels like there is a hole in the information given, ask questions of the author. Ask questions of clarification. Ask questions of characters. Ask questions that connect the text to our society today.
Notes	Anything you notice that seems important but unable to be categorized otherwise should be listed as a note. Any thought that jumps off the page at you.
Themes	Notice and discuss themes of humanity, society, education, birth, development, life and death, loss, parenting, women's rights, and any others. Note what the author is saying about that theme.
Character Development	This includes descriptions of character, moments of change, moments of success or guilt, exchanges with new characters, physical descriptions, and mental and emotional descriptions.
Symbols	Every time an object has a meaning other than its stated or typically understood meaning, it may be serving as a symbol. Take note. When objects are repeated, predict why.
Literary Devices	Moments of figurative language should be noted. This includes metaphors, foreshadowing, similes, personification, imagery, irony, and in this piece, even poetic devices. Discuss what the author is using the device to achieve. Or, discuss the effect the device has on the reader.

Listing Diction:
Keep a running t-chart log of a specific pattern of word choices you start to see in the text. In this book – it might be pregnancy and childbirth diction, terminal or ghostly diction, or even nautical diction. Record all phrases on the left side and consider the purposes the author has in using that diction on the right side. Maybe the author uses the diction coupled with other literary devices that could be discussed.

Reading to Prepare for a Socratic Seminar:
Overall Seminar Question: *What could possess a sweet innocent young girl to become the mother of modern-day horror in literature and film?*

Answer each of the following questions by making a claim, supporting it with textual evidence, and giving reasonable explanation about the connection between the claim and the support.

Prologue: What features of Mary does this Monster's point of view reveal? What might she have been fighting during her life?

Part I: This introductory portion of the novel depicts Mary's feelings while aboard a ship bound for Scotland alone at the will of her father. What 4-5 feelings plague her and how? Who is responsible for the feelings she encounters?

Part II: Upon arrival in Scotland, Mary experiences a loving family with a healthy respect for the history of Mary's own mother. What might the purpose of this Scotland residence be for Mary considering what you might already be anticipating about her future?

Part III: As Mary returns to England in Part III, what symbols do you notice in both the graphics of these pages and the text? What do these symbols communicate or possibly foreshadow about Mary's life?

Part IV: A forbidden love conjures rebellion in Mary that sacrifices the reputation of the family. Whose behavior is worse, Mary's for pursing a married man? Or, her father for letting her be beaten for it? Who is the greater home-wrecker?

Part V: While Percy and Mary run away with Claire in tow, Mary deals with one challenge after another. If you were Mary, which challenge would be the straw that breaks the camel's back for you and why?

Part VI: Build the laundry list of reasons for Mary to leave Percy for good. Why doesn't she? What makes sweet innocent girls stay with bad boys?

Part VII: Mary's story *Frankenstein* is conceived in Part VII. Lita Judge uses the real facts of Mary's life and history to foreshadow this idea. Identify at least 5 instances of foreshadowing that occur in this Part through weather, strange phenomena, word choices, tone, mood, or circumstances of the story.

Part VIII: Mary possesses great empathy for Claire, Fanny, Harriet, and even Percy as he struggles. But each of them comes to ruin, pain, frustration, and for some death. How might her monster represent both their death and the hope of what could have been?

Part IX: Both society and Mary receive her book, *Frankenstein*. How is that reception both literal and figurative?

NCTE Standards 3-6: Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.	Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Social Media Frenzy – the Drama Unfolds (Parts IV, V, & VI)

If Mary only had a Snapchat! The Insta-worthy moments. The tweets she would send! Throughout Parts IV, V, and VI, determine a social media vehicle through which you will reveal Mary's deepest & darkest thoughts about love, life, and the world. She thinks about her lover, her lover's wife, her own pregnancy, and the politics that establish the cruelties people experience. Create a series of 10 Instagram posts, 10 Snaps, or 20 Twitter posts that would chronologically express her feelings in these sections like a typical teen today. Caution – do not create a fake account on any of these sites. Instead, draw or take your own pictures to mimic the look and feel of these feeds.

NCTE Standard 8: Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.	Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.A Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.B Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

Flying through Mary's Monster (throughout entire novel)

Mary traveled throughout Europe in general to escape whatever was ailing her. Using Google Earth to create a path or Prezi with the background of a map of Europe, create a presentation that uses an image and a description for 10 different spots in Mary's life. Similarly, address the aspects of the literary quest in your descriptions and chosen images. These aspects include:

- a quester (someone with an intention to go somewhere),
- an actual place to go (sure, Mary goes to many different locations, but what do you think is her ultimate goal location figuratively or literally?),
- a stated reason to go there,
- challenges along the way,
- and the actual reason to go there (the actual reason is never the stated reason – the actual reason always means self-knowledge – learning about one's self).

NCTE Standards 8 & 11: Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.	Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.A Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.B Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Hot Seat – Claire, Fanny, Percy, Mary, Lord Byron (Parts V, VI, VII)

Have students gather in teams to fill out the following content regarding one specific character. If students do not know a piece of information while preparing, they should infer it based on what they do know. One of the students in the team will eventually sit on a chair in front of the class to answer questions AS that character (this could be a choice the teacher or the group makes). After all students have prepared themselves to be a certain character, the class will serve as a press core and ask questions of the character.

As a general rule, each press core student should try to ask 2 questions during the entire press conference, and each student being "hot-seated" should be asked about 10 questions. "Hot-seaters" – remember to act as that character, so if your character is shy, be shy. If they are arrogant, be stuck-up. If they are a non-stop talker, make sure to keep talking and talking.

Name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Physical Appearance:_____

Family (parents/children): _____

Describe your social economic status: _____

Closest friends: _____

Where do you live? _____

Hobbies: _____

_____

Fears: _____

_____

Love interest(s): _____

Enemies: _____

Personal strengths: _____

_____

Weaknesses: _____

_____

Quirks: _____

Character trait #1: _____ Proof (quote evidence): _____

_____

Character trait #2: _____ Proof (quote evidence): _____

_____

Character trait #3: _____ Proof (quote evidence): _____

_____

Introduction paragraph (Before you get on the hot seat, what are 3-4 sentences of information you want to use to introduce your life?): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Anticipate 2 questions other might ask you AND write in an answer:

Question 1. _____

Answer 1. _____

_____

Question 2. _____

Answer 2. _____

_____

On a separate sheet of paper, **write 2 good questions** for each of the other characters.

NCTE Standards 3-4:	Common Core State Standards:
Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Connecting the graphic epic poem of Mary's Monster to the classic gothic novel *Frankenstein*

Whether you read Mary's life story as a precursor before reading Frankenstein or as an afterword explaining why the events in the story happened, together these storylines finish a picture and answer many questions.
As a final culminating task, create a juxtaposed timeline/chart/graphic of one of the following pairs of ideas:

1. **Negligence** – Both Mary in her life and the Creature in *Frankenstein* feel abandonment, loneliness, rejection, and neglect. Track both characters experiences demonstrating connections as you see them. Include 15 events for each character supporting them with textual evidence and image.
2. **Structure and Point of View** – Consider the volumes of *Frankenstein*, *Mary's Monster*, and another work referenced in either or both of them (for example, Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Dante's *Inferno*). Visually depict the structure of each of these and their shifting, changing voices. Find 3-5 points of reference in each that demonstrate a connection to another work. Use textual evidence and images.
3. **Foil Characters and locations** – Mary Shelley placed her real life people and places into *Frankenstein*. Order events with people, noticing how similarly Mary's real life as reported to us from *Mary's Monster* aligns to that of the character Victor Frankenstein. Cite textual evidence.
4. **Writing Styles of Mary Shelley and Lita Judge** – Patterns, themes, structure, point of view and content may find similarity among the styles of these works, but the differences abound too! Diction and genre are entirely different in these works. Can you find more similarities or differences? Create a comparative diagram or infographic that depicts your findings with textual evidence.
5. **Gestation and Childbirth** – Lita wrote in nine Parts. Mary took nine months to write. *Frankenstein* and *Mary's Monster* both give voice to the incubator of life and the life itself. *Mary's Monster* gives great attention to the language of birth and developing an infant while *Frankenstein* notes the longing a creation has for its creator. Craft an infographic that displays these similarities. Use textual evidence and commentary to demonstrate the significance of each similarity.
6. **The Feminist Lens** – Both Mary and Lita write to us as female authors. They biologically can't help but have emotion. They culturally can't help but notice the disadvantages posed to Mary, her sisters, and perhaps her mother she never really knew. Mary's mother was a feminist. After seeing the truth of feminine experience in *Mary's Monster*, how does that explain the naivety and roles of women in *Frankenstein*? Develop a graphic that gives opportunity to explore the feminist point of view throughout these works.

Note to teacher: Any of these project prompts could easily develop into a writing prompt.

NCTE Standards 2, 5, 6, 11, 12: Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).	Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.A Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.B Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

An Interview with LITA JUDGE

Q1: Mary's Monster begins with an Introduction in your voice, a Prologue in the Creature's, and then Mary's voice appears. In the novel, Frankenstein, three different narrators tell their own story, Robert Walton, the ship captain who discovers Victor Frankenstein wandering in the northern polar regions, Victor, and the Creature. Did you set up your book to parallel Mary's structure? What do you think today's teen readers needed at the start of the book? How did you balance giving voice to Mary, the Creature, and yourself?

I did want to parallel Mary Shelley's text. Novels previous to Frankenstein were mostly didactic and told in third person. Mary's use of multiple first person accounts was an innovation. I wanted to honor her originality by telling her story with two voices: hers and her Creature's. I also wanted to acknowledge the revolutionary nature of her work. She wrote a novel about creating life from death. But her own act of creativity resulted in the "birth" of a Creature that almost everyone has heard of, even two hundred years after its inception. It was another reason for giving the Creature a voice in this text. The poetry and art is where I found my voice. So many versions of Frankenstein have been told, so much misinformation about Mary Shelley herself has been formed. Getting back to what I felt was the truth of her story, was a way of giving myself a voice as a writer and artist.

Q2: In Frankenstein, the Creature learns what it is to be human by watching the Delacey family. By looking through a slit in the cottage wall, the Creature learns concepts of religion, morality, and most importantly, relationships, family, and love. Your book opens with Mary's 1812 trip to Scotland, and her "Second Birth" with the Baxter family. Do you think that Mary's time in the Baxter's seaside cottage was pivotal in her own understanding of family, as well as her Creature's?

I Do. Mary's mother died ten days after Mary was born. Her stepmother was a foul tempered, abusive woman. Mary felt betrayed when her father sided with his new wife and agreed to send Mary away. Like the Creature she felt rejected. But she found love and kindness within the Baxter's home which was pivotal to her wellbeing. She also found Scotland to be a land of legend and lore that filled her imagination. I think the happiness she felt while staying in the Baxter's home gave her a strength that fueled her imaginative mind. And the belief that she could become a writer grew from that experience.

Q3: Mary Shelley's Frankenstein draws upon a range of literary motifs and genres. In some ways, it reads like one of Ann Radcliff's gothic novels. The Creature comes alive on "a dreary night in November" while "the rain pattered dismally against the panes." In contrast, Shelley also quotes contemporary Romantic poets like Coleridge and Wordsworth. Ultimately, she also creates something entirely new: the modern science fiction novel. On your webpage, you refer to the book as both historical fiction and fictionalized biography. In your multimodal Mary's Monster Timeline, you say that you intended on creating something brand new, like Mary Shelley. How do you define the genre(s) you are working with in Mary's Monster? How do you draw on your work as a picture book illustrator and the form of the graphic novel to create this new form of a visual novel or novel-length picture book?

My book is part biography — some illustrations show what happened in her life — but it is also part fantasy, because it reveals the interior workings of Mary's imaginative life and unveils how her imagination was evolving. Through her journals and writing, I felt I could understand her well enough to explore this. The illustrations of her interior, imaginative world were important to telling her full truth.

This is also fully illustrated, but not a graphic novel where the action of the story is illustrated in a series of cells. I didn't feel a graphic novel could pull readers into the haunting inner workings of Mary's mind. The inherent white space around the illustrations would have broken the spell. My book is told through poems and full bleed illustrations on each spread. Like a picture book, it is a dance between words and art, were each medium takes a turn at telling the story and the two become inseparable.

Q4: Throughout your novel, as you discuss in your video "The Making of Mary's Monster" and demonstrate in your gallery of sketches, you are working with emotional and psychological contrasts: light and dark, real and imagined, joyful and painful, reality and madness. How do your black and white watercolor images connect to and contrast with James Whale's iconic, if inaccurate, 1931 movie?

James Whale's movie retained many of the plot aspects of her story, but transformed her Creature into a lumbering lobotomized version. He physically altered the Creature, forever changing the image of what we have in our mind. He focused on the horror aspect and lost the deep layers of social criticism. I wanted to get back to the Creature Mary created. I also wanted readers to be very aware of the remarkable teenager behind that Creature. Originally, Mary was forced to publish her work anonymously because she was a woman. In creating my illustrations, I show the Creature swirling around her. She is at the center of the illustrations with him. She is painted in solid black and white, while illustrations of him are distorted and muted. I am literally pointing to the girl, reminding readers of who created this iconic monster, and hopefully prompting them to pause and consider what she was saying through her story, and why.

Q5: Every book is the unique result of its author. This is your version of Mary Shelley's life, one that only you could have written. While conceptualizing, researching, writing, and illustrating this novel, you fought a debilitating autoimmune disease. You don't shy away from Mary's physical and psychological agony. Mary's Monster has a birth motif throughout. She buries several children, and gives life to her fictional Creature. You share Mary's ruminations on her own birth, and her mother's death as a result. How has your perspective on Mary been shaped by your health challenges?

I had reread an annotated version of Frankenstein during the two-year period that my illness forced me to stay in bed. Unable to work, or have full use of my hands, or walk, I faced a lot of isolation, so the Creature's story spoke to me. But I was even more drawn to understand the teenage girl behind the story. I had a million questions about how someone so young could have wisdom enough to write a novel so ahead of its time. When I found that Mary kept a journal I immediately searched to find a copy. In those volumes, I found inspiration to gather the strength and resilience I needed for my own recovery. Mary survived and overcame unbelievable sorrow, isolation, cruelty, and obstacles, in order to create her work. When I started reading her journals, I didn't know if I'd ever be able to gain remission and work again. I was fortunate that we eventually found the treatment to make that possible. It felt like my own rebirth to resume my life. And it felt as if Mary had been with me every step of the way. Her life and work had fueled my imagination during a very dark time. Once I could work, I felt a debt of gratitude toward her. I also wanted others, especially young woman, to know of this remarkable girl.

Q6: When rereading Frankenstein, I was once again struck by Shelley's brilliance. To write this novel, she had to know so much about contemporary science, alchemy and the history of science, literature, and religion. I'm astounded when I remind myself that she was still a teenager, without benefit of a university education. What lingers with you, after living with Mary for so many years, about Mary's brilliance?

Her ability not only to grasp the cutting edge of scientific research of her day, but to understand the complexity of the social and political world around her and to distill that into a story that was not only relevant and deeply poignant to her time, but remains relevant two hundred years later. Mary was able to grasp the broad ramifications of what tyrannical power, unjust wars, slavery, and neglect of the poor were doing to repress society. She was also grappling with the ethical dilemmas brewing from men pushing the envelope of scientific advancement. She believed we needed to weigh our ambitions with the needs of people. In a time when men prevented most women from being properly educated, she dared to learn and understand, and to challenge their actions. I guess I am in awe of her courage as well as the brilliance she had to turn her contempt for the corrupt and ugly world she was witnessing into a story that was so relevant it remains a touchstone today.

Q7: We are living through the "Me, Too" moment right now. Throughout her life, Mary was abused by her father and her husband. In your Author's Note, you state that "[it] may be difficult for readers of Mary's story to understand why she continually made the choice to stay in what any modern person would deem to have been an extremely abusive relationship" (p. 302). What do you hope today's 21st century teenage readers take away from the novel?

Mary's life, strength and resilience have been a constant inspiration to me. In my own life, I've faced abuse. I stayed far too long in a relationship that was physically and emotionally abusive when I was young because I wasn't secure enough in my own value as a human being to walk away. Then I walked away from a career (geology) because I didn't know how to fight against the chronic sexual harassment I faced, made more extreme due to the isolation and remote nature of the work. By the time I discovered Mary Shelley, I had my own partially healed wounds from these events. But learning how Mary continued the work of her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft (who was the founder of the feminist movement) and fought to change people's beliefs and didn't back down when she was vilified for her actions has helped me speak out more for myself and others. I hope young readers gain this perspective as well. I hope too, they realize how hard women have had to work to gain equality, and are inspired to continue the work.

Teaching with Mary's Monster - More Ideas

Like the diversity within the pages of the Mary's Monster, there are many roles that the book can play in classroom life. Here are some ideas:

Visual Metaphors and Motifs. As students read the novel, have them jot down where they see recurring visual images. How does Judge create metaphors with images rather than words?

Research and Creativity. Research does not always have to result in a research paper. There are so many ways to show what you have learned. Have students create a multigenre research portfolio on a topic of their choice. After reading Mary's Monster and watching Lita's video "The Making of Mary's Monster" , have students research a topic of their choice and demonstrate their learning through the various genres at work in the novel: poetry, paintings, expository writing, personal narrative, mini-biographies, and/or a timeline.

Paired Texts. After reading Mary's Monster, read Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. What are the connections that students observe between the text and Lita's book? Specifically, students might consider the motif of birth, absent fathers, and the quest for love and community.

Public Figures, Private Lives. After reading Mary's Monster, students might be confused about the outward persona of Mary's father and the reality of his private life. Can students reconcile the man who Mary Wollstonecraft married and Mary's father? Have students consider other "thought leaders" who may put one "face" forward publicly, and another privately.

Exploring the Gothic. At the time of Frankenstein's publication, the novel was a relatively new art form. Mary's Monster, like Frankenstein, offers a window into some motifs of "the Gothic" in literature and art. Have students explore these connections by looking at other art produced at the time.

Me, Too. If Mary Shelley were participating in the "Me, Too" movement, what might she have to say? She didn't have access to social media. But if she did, what might she say? Use this novel as an entry into conversations about power dynamics in romantic relationships, power dynamics in parent-child relationships, women's choices, public shaming, and the brilliant potential of teenage girls.

Mary, Who? After reading Mary's Monsters, have students read portions of her mother's work and writing. To what extent has the world changed for girls and women? To what extent are we still facing many of the same challenges about which Wollstonecraft wrote?

Oversimplification. After reading Mary's Monster, have students watch the 1931 movie. What themes do they see across both works? To what extent do they view the 1931 movie as an oversimplification of her concept? Compare and contrast the 1931 movie with Kenneth Branagh's 1994 version.

ABOUT LITA JUDGE

Lita Judge is the author and illustrator of 24 fiction and nonfiction books including, *Mary's Monster, One Thousand Tracings, Born in the Wild, Red Sled*, and *Hoot and Peep*. Her book, *Flight School*, has recently been adapted into an off-Broadway musical which is currently showing in New York City and China. Awards for her books include the International Reading Association Children's Book Award, an ALA Notable, NCTE Notable Book, a Kirkus Best Book, and the Jane Addams Honor. Before she created art and books, Lita was a geologist and worked on dinosaur digs. But a trip to Venice Italy inspired her to quit her job and pursue a lifelong passion for creating art. Now, when not in her studio, she can be found backpacking through Europe with her sketchbook and easel in hand. Painting in the streets of Italy, France, Sweden, Russia and many other places have inspired her many of her books. The novel, *Mary's Monster*, was inspired through reading Mary Shelley's journals while exploring places she had traveled. This book created a rich opportunity to explore working in a completely new form, that of combining free verse with full page illustrations in novel form. Lita was drawn to capturing the interior world of Mary Shelley's mind, as well as the realistic images of her life. Creating this book was a journey in itself and took five years to complete. Lita lives in New Hampshire.

This teachers' guide was written by Missy Nichols, AP English Literature and Composition teacher at Bishop Kelly High School, Boise, Idaho. Missy Nichols also writes freelance English curriculum for Teachers Pay Teachers and serves as a mentor teacher in her community. Summers find her teaching English in Haiti for Maranatha Children's Ministries. In addition to being a National Board Certificated Teacher, Missy coaches softball, and enjoys her own three teenage children with her husband Josh. Her Common Core aligned novel study and activity guide to to accompany your class read of *Frankenstein* is available at: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Frankenstein-Novel-Study-COMMON-CORE-Aligned-2019061

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