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Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Dracula

by Bram Stoker

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Dracula

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. infer information about characters and events when these meanings are not explicitly stated.
2. recognize how the structure of this episodic novel, written in the form of letters and diary entries, provides the reader with several points of view for an incident, heightens the suspense of the novel, and contributes to the novel's believability.
3. point out examples of foreshadowing and recognize how foreshadowing adds suspense to the story.
4. cite incidents from the story to support the following themes:
 - Good triumphs over evil.
 - Modern scientists must keep an open mind to recognize the existence of evil in the world, even if its existence can not be empirically proven.
 - Christian values and symbols are important tools to overcome evil.
 - The Christian promise of redemption applies to everyone.
 - Madness threatens the lives of the sane.
5. recognize instances of dramatic irony in the story and point out how this irony adds suspense to the story
6. discuss how the episodic structure of the novel contributes to the dramatic irony in the story.
7. recognize and give examples of simile's, metaphors, and allusion in the story.
8. cite incidents from the novel illustrating that this novel is an example of Gothic fiction.
9. understand that attitudes and beliefs of the characters reflect the era in which the story was written.
10. find passages in the story to illustrate Dracula's sexual/sensual qualities.
11. relate the extent of Dracula's powers and recognize his weaknesses; discuss how Stoker incorporates these strengths and weaknesses into the plot of the story.

Dracula

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Why is it dangerous for Jonathan Harker to travel on the eve of St. George's Day?
2. What peculiarities does Jonathan observe about Count Dracula when he visits Castle Dracula for the first time?
3. How does Jonathan Harker, during his first visit to Castle Dracula, come to believe that he will be killed on June 29th?
4. Gothic fiction is characterized by the following:
 - a picturesque setting
 - a story dealing with the supernatural
 - conflict between good and evil
 - innocent, non-aristocratic females being corrupted by aristocratic males

Cite one incident from the story to illustrate each of the above points.

5. In what sense does Renfield's madness parallel Dracula's behavior?
6. List five of Dracula's powers and five of Dracula's weaknesses. Relate an incident from the story supporting each of your answers.
7. Dracula was written in 1897, so the values and beliefs of the characters reflect this era. Cite incidents from the story illustrating the view of 1897 society on each of the following topics: women, redemption, scientific advances, and superstitions.
8. At first Renfield seems to worship Dracula. What happens to change his opinion?
9. Describe Renfield's connection to Mina.
10. List Lucy's symptoms that lead Professor Helsing to the conclusion that she has been attacked by a vampire.
11. How does Mrs. Westenra unwittingly place Lucy in danger?
12. Why does Professor Helsing insist that Arthur accompany the group to Lucy's tomb? For what three reasons must Lucy be killed?

shorthand – a system that uses symbols and abbreviations for rapid writing
sinewy – vein-like and muscular
smattering – a minimal amount of knowledge or understanding
staves – wooden poles

1. What direction is Jonathan Harker traveling? What is his destination?

2. How does the old woman who lives at the Golden Krone Hotel try to prevent Jonathan from continuing his journey to Castle Dracula? How does he respond to her warnings?

3. Originally published in 1897, *Dracula* reflects the traditions and customs of people living in that era. Some historians characterize English people in this time period as having a strong tradition of keeping detailed journals and writing descriptive letters. Find a passage in this chapter that illustrates the level of detail the reader can expect from the journal entries in this novel.

4. Science and technology were increasingly important to England at the turn of the century. Scientific, logical reasoning was prized and valued by the people of the time. What evidence is there that the people in Transylvania are superstitious and do not share Jonathan's scientific thought processes?

6. The Count wants Jonathan to stay at Castle Dracula for a month. Why does Jonathan agree to this request? The Count also orders Jonathan to write only about business matters in his letters, implying that the Count plans to read the letters before mailing them. How does Jonathan defy the Count's orders?

7. Jonathan writes,

“What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature, is it in the semblance of man? I feel the dread of this horrible place overpowering me; I am in fear—in awful fear—and there is no escape for me; I am encompassed about with terrors that I dare not think of...”

What does Jonathan observe about the Count's behavior that finally convinces him that the Count is a “creature” rather than a man?

8. Some critics believe that one reason this novel has remained popular for so long is the sensual, sexual power of vampires. Find a passage in this chapter describing the three female vampires in a sensual manner.

Chapter V – Letter from Miss Mina Murray to Miss Lucy Westenra

Vocabulary

assiduously – attentively, diligently, persistently
breadth – width
commence – to begin
exultation – joy
fervour – intense emotion
heresy – an act or statement against established religion
imperturbable – remaining calm
lancet – a type of surgical knife
paramount – of greatest importance
previous – premature
quaint – unusual and attractive at the same time
rebuff – refusal
sanguine – cheerful
stenograph – to write in shorthand
trod – walked
wring – to squeeze and twist
yarns – fun or entertaining stories

1. An episodic novel is one that is made up of loosely connected incidents rather than an integrated plot. The first four chapters of this novel are from Jonathan Harker's journal writings, so they reflect his point of view. Chapter V consists of letters and diary entries from other characters. Why do you think Stoker switches narrators at this juncture?

2. In what sense is this chapter, when Mina and Lucy discuss Mina's relationship with Jonathan, an example of dramatic irony?
