

GRAPHIC HORROR TEACHER TIPS & ACTIVITIES



Illustration from *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*

ABDO
A Family of Educational Publishers

Based on the series Graphic Classics published by Magic Wagon, a division of ABDO.

1-800-800-1312 • www.abdopublishing.com

Not for resale • Photocopy and adapt as needed for classroom and library use.





TABLE OF CONTENTS



Comic book text is short, but that doesn't mean students don't learn a lot from it! Comic books and graphic novels can be used to teach reading processes and writing techniques, such as pacing, as well as expand vocabulary. Use this PDF to help students get more out of their comic book reading.


Here are some of the projects you can give to your students to make comics educational and enjoyable!

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Publication History & Research	1
Book vs. Movie vs. Graphic Novel	2
Shared Reading & Fluency Practice	3
Scary Horror Stories	4
Create a Ghost Story	4
Work with Your Library	5

ACTIVITIES FOR EACH STORY

<i>The Creature from the Depths</i>	6
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	7
<i>Frankenstein</i>	8
<i>The Legend of Sleepy Hollow</i>	9
<i>Mummy</i>	10
<i>Werewolf</i>	11
<i>Dracula</i>	12
<i>The Invisible Man</i>	13
<i>Journey to the Center of the Earth</i>	14
<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	15
<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>	16
<i>The Tell-Tale Heart</i>	17



PUBLICATION HISTORY & RESEARCH

Classic stories speak to every generation, but it's important for students to know the context of the story's original publication and any other facts about the story's history. Use these questions as a starting point to research your Graphic Horror story.

1. When was the story originally published? Was it originally published as a book or in a magazine?
2. Did the story become popular? Was it a best-seller? Many classics were ignored in their time, or they only sold a few copies when they were first released. Plus, many horror authors were criticized when their stories were first published. Have your students research what happened when the original story came out, including the public's and critic's reactions.
3. What was happening in the world when the classic story was originally published? For this activity, have students search online for a list of noteworthy events in the story's publication year. Were there any big historical events — such as wars, inventions, or famous people — from that era? What country was the work originally published in? Who were the country's leaders at that time? What other events were happening in the world?
4. Does the horror story have any roots in folklore or illness? Many experts believe werewolves, vampires, and zombies were based on symptoms of illnesses that were misdiagnosed in their time.



BOOK vs. MOVIE vs. GRAPHIC NOVEL

Horror stories are often adapted into movies or other works, including variations on the stories featured in our Graphic Horror series. Host a movie viewing in your program and watch the adaptation of the horror story as a film.

1. How did the movie version compare with the graphic novel adaptation and the original work? Did some of the themes seem more or less important in the movie? Make a list of the group's observations on a white board.
2. Research director and actor interviews on the making of the classic movie to learn their takes on the characters and storyline of the horror classic to the group. Have your students discuss how their thoughts compared to the group's list from above.

EXAMPLE: *Dracula* was originally written by Bram Stoker, and is a great example of an "epistolary" novel (the story is written in letters, diary entries, captain's logs, etc.). The book was popular when first published in 1897, but became a sensation only when movies began to be made about the famous vampire in the 20th century. Today, there are literally dozens of vampire movies, some remaining faithful to the original *Dracula* while others reinventing vampires for modern audiences or other effects. Discuss the similarities and difference in class. Have students compare and contrast what they know about vampires with the folklore about similar creatures in other cultures.



SHARED READING & FLUENCY PRACTICE

Graphic novels are primarily filled with dialogue. There is less descriptive text than in novels. This provides unique opportunities for shared reading and fluency practice in a group reading environment.

1. Assign students to “give voice” to the characters in the story. Have one student read the narration boxes in the graphic novel for setting or story developments. Remember, reading fluently can mean reading dramatically with accents, hero voices, villain laughs, and more. So encourage creative reading styles to help add fluency practice to graphic novels. If you view a movie based on the classic, use the actors’ interpretations of the characters to add fun to the reading.
2. Discuss the fluency choices made by the students. Why did they choose certain voices for the characters? Graphic Horror tales can include Dracula-like accents (“I vant to dreenk your blooooo”) or other fluency takes on the characters.



SCARY HORROR STORIES

Every kid or teen we've ever met has had some strange encounter – something that makes them run upstairs from the basement, or get a bad feeling in a room, etc. Discuss with students why we all share these feelings.

We all say we don't like to be scared. Yet, horror is the #1 category in the movie business today. This means that millions of Americans regularly pay \$8–10 to sit and have something scare them. Discuss with students why we experience this contradiction.

CREATE A GHOST STORY

Have students create their own horror story to share with the class. The story can be an essay, a performance, or even a video. Have the creators base their stories on original ideas or on their own scary experiences, such as hauntings.



WORK WITH YOUR LIBRARY

Many of the research projects and ideas throughout this guide can be supplemented by your local public or school library. Graphic Horror is designed to introduce students to the basic story of classic tales. You can foster more reading by providing related nonfiction, the original classics, and more for your program! Provide the information for the original classics for your students to find:

Irving, Washington. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. New York, NY: Penguin, Classics 1999.

Leroux, Gaston. *The Phantom of the Opera*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2012.

Lovecraft, H.P. *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*. New York, NY: Penguin, 1999.

Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2006.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2003.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2003.

Stoker, Bram. *The Jewel of the Seven Stars*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2008.

Verne, Jules. *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. New York, NY: Signet Classics, 2012.

Wells, H.G. *The Invisible Man*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2005.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.



THE CREATURE FROM THE DEPTHS

1. **Weird Fiction:** HP Lovecraft is one of the greatest horror and science fiction writers ever, yet many students do not know his name. Research this writer's "weird fiction" and see if students can see any similarities between his style and today's horror/sci-fi movies and books.

2. **What's in the Water?:** Many stories of scary creatures — from Godzilla to Jaws to the White Whale — are filled with bad things happening to people on or near the ocean. Discuss with students why they think so many scary stories involve water or deal with water monsters. Is this because humans feel more vulnerable in the water? What other reasons can they think of? How does water serve to fuel fear?



DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

1. Two People, One Man: Many experts believe this story is one of the first to deal with split personalities. Discuss with students the other “split personalities” in popular comics and TV shows (for example, the double lives of Spider-Man, Batman, or even Hannah Montana). Why are these characters interesting to us? How do their split personalities help propel their story?

2. Create a Hyde: Have students create their own Hyde character. On a sheet of paper, have students list their best qualities, things they love and believe, etc. Now, list the Hyde character’s reaction to the items on the list. Discuss with students whether they think they have a “Hyde” inside of them and what they can do to control this inner monster.



FRANKENSTEIN

1. Writing Assignment: One of the most interesting how-it-was-written tales in literature revolves around *Frankenstein*, penned by Mary Shelley. She and some other writers decided to have a writing contest over a weekend they were staying at a castle. Challenge students to write a horror story — 3–5 pages long — in one weekend. Can they do it? (Note: we've found that writing a horror story or ghost tale is one of the most popular writing assignments ever.)

2. The Power of Science: One of *Frankenstein's* themes is that science will become too powerful, leading man to believe he's like a god and create something that will destroy him. Discuss with students some contemporary examples of this argument — using nuclear weapons, global warming, genetically modified foods and animals, etc. — that suggest the power of science can also destroy the world as we know it. Discuss why this warning is worth heeding.



THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

1. The Undead: Here's what we find scary: being chased by the undead. Can your students think of other famous stories or movies where people are pursued by the undead (hint: zombies are often slow-moving, but still scary when they are chasing you).

2. Local Legends: Sleepy Hollow was based on a New York legend shared by Dutch immigrants. Ghosts are not always people, sometimes they can be animals or even objects, like ghost trains, ghost ships, and even ghost cars. Have students research any local legends of ghosts — people or things — in their area. What do the ghosts want and how do they threaten the living?



MUMMY

1. Mummification: Have students research the mummification techniques used in ancient Egypt. Why were bodies prepared this way? What did the Egyptians believe about the afterlife, and how is that similar or different from people's beliefs today? How do these ancient beliefs relate to pyramids, amulets, and other Egyptian relics of the time? Now, compare the Egyptians mummy techniques with those of other cultures, like South American Indians. What did they have in common, and how did they differ?

2. Ancient Curse: When explorer Howard Carter discovered the crypt of King Tut, there was a curse above the door, and many involved in the expedition died shortly afterward. Do the students know the legends of any other famous curses? Have them research famous curses throughout history. (Note: These can include modern, less serious "curses," such as the belief that a football player who appears on the cover of the video game Madden NFL will have a bad year — otherwise known as the "Madden Curse.")



WEREWOLF

1. Undead Emergency: Create a "How to Protect Yourself Against the Undead" kit. Silver bullets, holy water, crucifixes, garlic, and more will be needed. Research what is needed to kill, ward off, or heal wounds inflicted by monsters and the undead, including werewolves. Be sure to include more involved questions in your research, like why these objects are thought to work. Their answers could be compiled into a handy how-to manual to go along with the kit.
2. Full Moon Madness: Did you know that there is more crime committed, and more admittance into hospitals, during a full moon? In fact, the word "lunatic" is from the same root as the word "lunar," meaning moon. Discuss with students why people get crazier around the full moon. Research the full moon's affect on people and animals.
3. Shapeshifters: A "lycanthrope" is a creature who changes during a full moon — and not just into wolves. Have students research the different kinds of "were" creatures in myths and legends.



DRACULA

1. Pop Quiz: Give your students a vampire pop quiz (Note: with so many popular vampire novels, movies, and stories, you will be surprised how much they already know).

What is a vampire? What gives him (or her) power? How can you protect yourself from a vampire? What powers does a vampire have? (Shapeshifting, turning into a mist, immortality, mind control — especially when invited into a home, strength, speed, and more.) How do you become a vampire? What are a vampire's weaknesses or limitations?

2. Research: Is there a real Dracula and a real Transylvania? Have students research the legends behind *Dracula*, including Vlad the Impaler and other historical figures the legend is based on. Research Transylvania and find it on a map. Source photos of Transylvania on the Web. Does it look like what the students expected?



THE INVISIBLE MAN

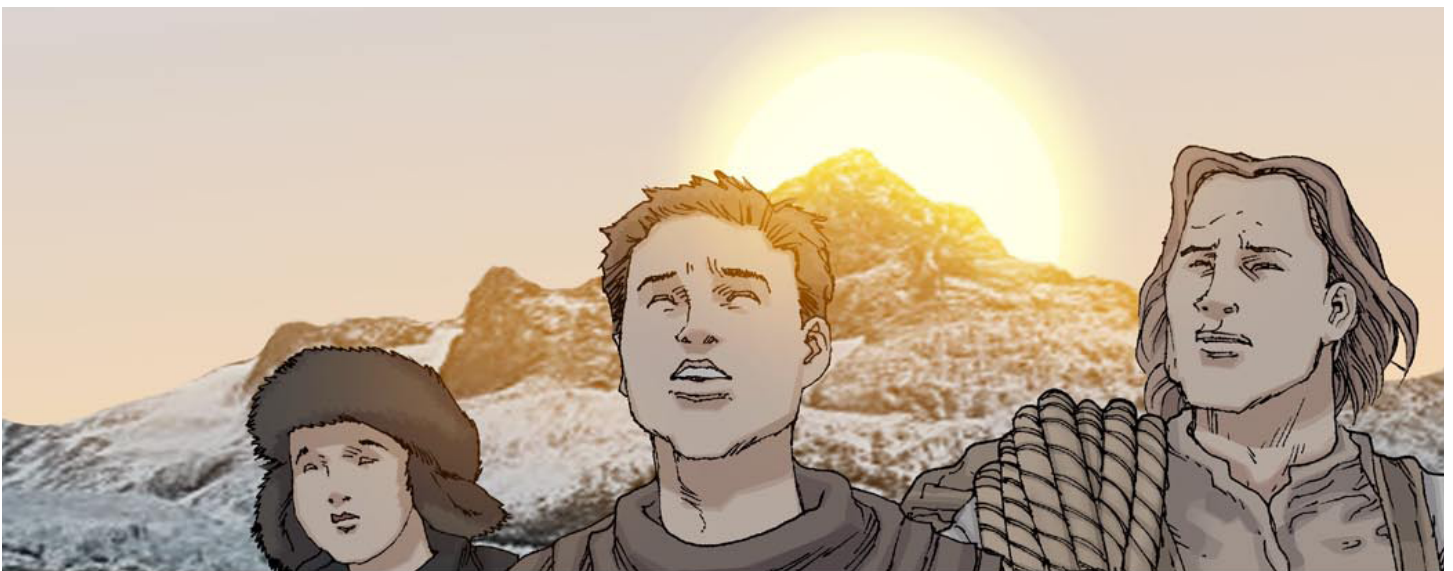
1. Invisibility: Harry Potter's Invisibility Cloak. Frodo's Ring of Power. These are familiar devices that can make the wearer invisible. Discuss with students these stories and invisibility, the story of *The Invisible Man*, and other stories that utilize invisibility. What are the benefits of such power? What are its drawbacks?

2. What if: Have students discuss or write an essay on what they would do if they were invisible for one day. Would they try to make the world a better place? How? Would they use it to find out what friends really thought of them or other personal things?



JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

1. Jules Verne: Jules Verne was a pioneer of the science fiction genre. Have students research this author's famous writings and how he created "science fiction." Many of his works foreshadowed modern technology, like man going to the moon. But *Journey to the Center of the Earth* was quickly refuted by science.
2. Your Journey: Write a description of what you think you'll find in the center of the Earth. Read it to your students and challenge them to describe what they would find there.
3. Map It: Have your students draw a map of what the journey through Earth would look like. Do they go straight through Earth to the other side? Around in a circle?



THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

1. Terminology: Even though the word *phantom* usually means “ghost,” the Phantom in this story is not undead. Have students research the origin and meaning of these undead terms and creatures, and their varying differences and similarities: phantom, zombie, ghoul, spectre, wraith, mummy, etc.

2. Dramatic Music: Opera is a dramatic musical art form. Research with students the kinds of music used in horror stories. What is similar between the music in these stories? (Hint: dissonance in the chords, complex chords, unsettling tempos, the strange sound of children singing, and other elements of a typical horror movie soundtrack.)

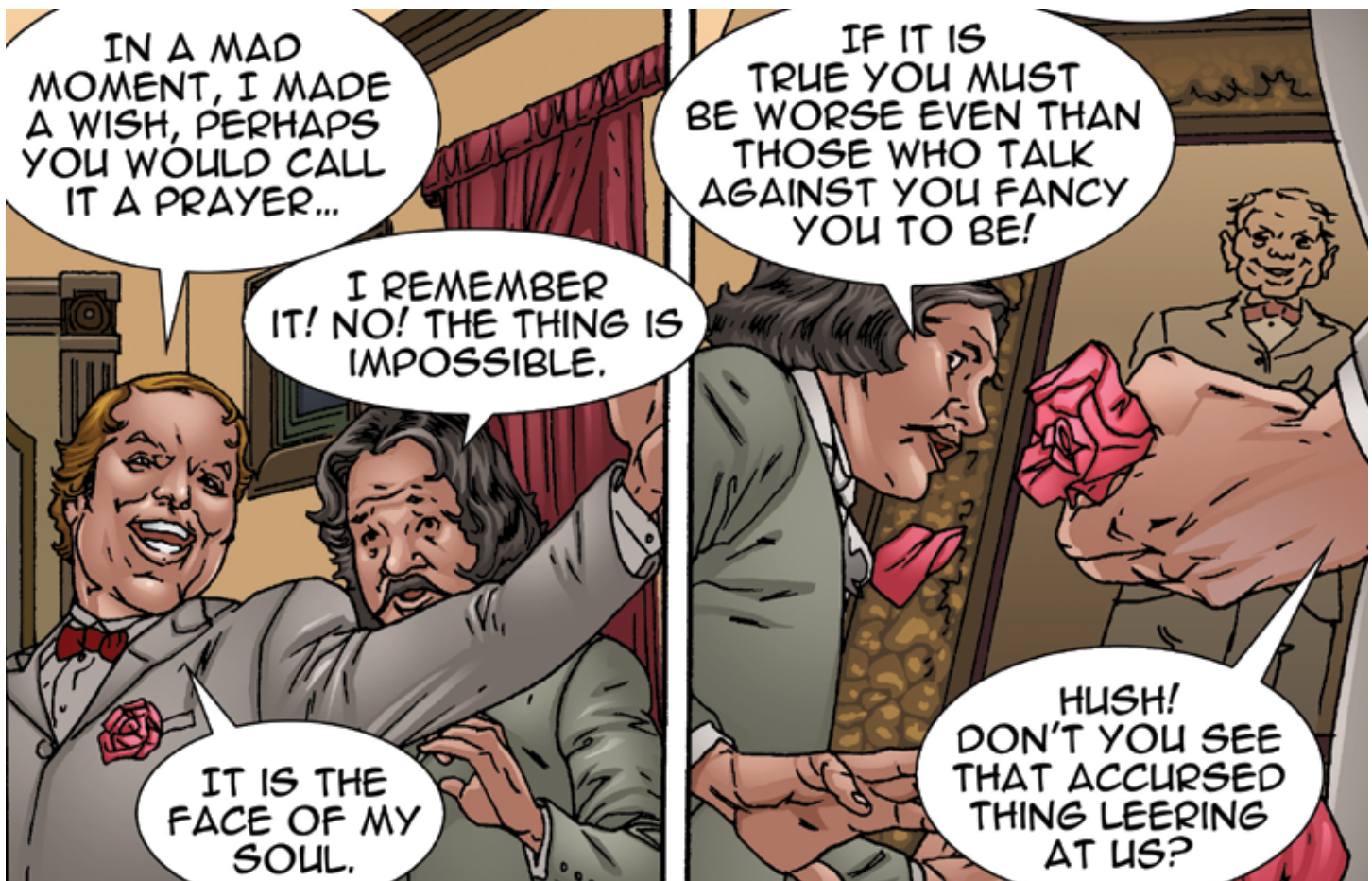
*Note: We don’t advise having students watch these films, but try putting together your own soundtrack from video clips to use in class, or see if soundtracks to these films are available in your local library.



THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

1. Double Life: This classic horror story is a good example of the “deal with the Devil” used in literature, where the character sells his soul in exchange for something. Like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dorian Gray tells the tale of a Victorian era person leading a double life, in this case, the horrific life of someone who ages in his portrait rather than in real life. Have students research current cases of people who seem ordinary but have done something horrific such as serial killers.

2. Dr. Faust: Have students research making a “deal with the Devil” and the famous story of Dr. Faust. Can they name any other stories or movies where characters make deals with the Devil for a longer life, fame, or money? Ask students if they would ever make such a deal themselves. For what?



THE TELL-TALE HEART

1. Guilt Ridden: The story of the murderer being driven crazy with guilt for his crime is told in many versions, including the classic poem by Edgar Allan Poe. Have students research stories and movies where the guilty murderer imagines hearing things, being visited by ghosts, etc. Can they come up with examples?

2. Inside a Murderer: Poe wrote *The Tell-Tale Heart* from the viewpoint of the murderer. This is the only story he wrote from this perspective. Read *The Black Cat* and *The Cask of Amontillado* with the group and compare the experiences by all three murderers. Do they feel guilt? What other feelings do they experience and share (or not)?

