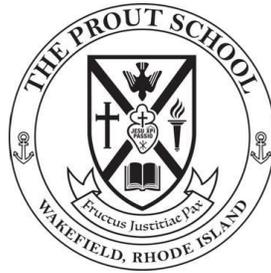


Prout School Summer Reading 2017



Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Prout School encourages students and families to continue reading during the summer months. Literacy research has shown that students often tend to experience the “summer slide” which is a slowing down in reading abilities, vocabulary, comprehension, and focus. This phenomenon is a tendency for students to lose some of the achievement gains they made the previous school year by not reading over the summer. This summer slide will frequently cause students to be less prepared for the academic expectations of the next school year. We want ALL students to have the same chance for academic success from the very first day of school!

Summer reading matters in other ways, too. “Reading empowers critical thinking skills. It can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people who are different from ourselves, and it can help us appreciate other points of view”. (California Library Association) When parents/guardians are able to read the books their children have been assigned for summer reading, the experience can foster wonderful family discussions and build great reading memories. Familial modeling the importance of year round reading will encourage teenagers in becoming lifelong readers.

Reading is an important part of everyday life! The more our students read, the better readers they will be. If you have any questions pertaining to the summer reading, please feel free to contact Miss Mary Hoyt: mhoyt@theproutschool.org.



SUMMER READING 2017 ENGLISH ELEVEN CP

Frankenstein (Mary Shelley)

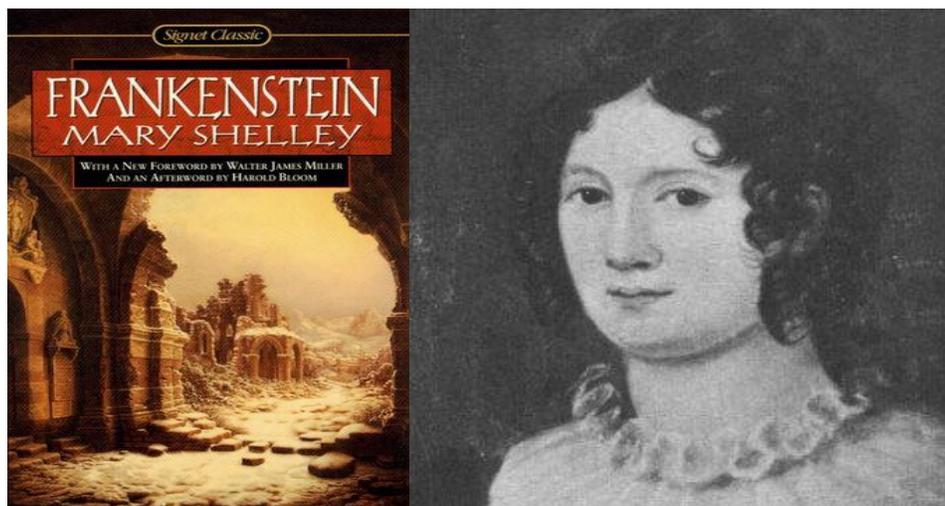
The Time Machine (H.G. Wells)

Keep the questions at hand as you read and take notes, in the books (if they are yours) or on paper. **Answers to the questions SHOULD NOT be written out.** Guiding questions are just to help students with more effective comprehension.

Assessment – first full day of classes:

You will be asked to respond to short answer questions related to the Guiding Questions.

Frankenstein (Mary Shelley)



Mary Shelley was born Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin on August 30, 1797, in London, England. She was the daughter of philosopher and political writer William Godwin and famed feminist Mary Wollstonecraft—the author of *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

The Godwin household had a number of distinguished guests during Shelley's childhood, including Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth. While she didn't have a formal education, she did make great use of her father's extensive library. Shelley could often be found reading. She also liked to daydream, escaping from her often challenging home life into her imagination.

Shelley also found a creative outlet in writing. According to *The Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft*, she once explained that "As a child, I scribbled; and my favorite pastime, during the hours given me for recreation, was to 'write stories.'"

In 1814, Mary began a relationship with poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. Percy Shelley was a devoted student of her father, but he soon focused his attentions on Mary. Mary and Percy fled England together that same year. Mary's actions alienated her from her father who did not speak to her for some time.

Mary and Percy Shelley traveled about Europe for a time. They struggled financially. The following summer, the Shelleys were in Switzerland with Jane Clairmont, Lord Byron and John Polidori. The group entertained themselves one rainy day by reading a book of ghost stories. Lord Byron suggested that they all should try their hand at writing their own horror story. It was at this time that Mary Shelley began work on what would become her most famous novel, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*; Mary was only twenty years old when she wrote the famous story. Mary Shelley died of brain cancer on February 1, 1851, at age 53, in London, England. (adapted from: <https://www.biography.com/people/mary-shelley-9481497>)

Summary Overview

Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus, is frequently called the world's first science fiction novel. In Shelley's tale, a scientist animates a creature constructed from dismembered corpses. The gentle, intellectually gifted creature is enormous and physically hideous. Cruelly rejected by its creator, it wanders, seeking companionship and becoming increasingly brutal as it fails to find a mate. The story explores philosophical themes and challenges Romantic ideals about the beauty and goodness of nature. (adapted from: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/frankenstein-published>)

"In Ancient Greek mythology, Prometheus was said to be the wisest of all the Titans. In the form of fire Prometheus is credited with bringing mankind knowledge and enlightenment. He stole fire from the Gods of Mount Olympus. For acting against the decree of the Gods, who wanted to keep the power of fire to themselves, Prometheus was harshly punished. He was chained to a rock to have his liver eaten out every day by an eagle. Every night his liver would grow back. This was to be his punishment for all of eternity.

The full title of Mary Shelley's novel is *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus*. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that Mary Shelley was influenced by this tale. Her husband Percy Shelley even began composing his own tale of Prometheus in the form of a poem entitled, *Prometheus Unbound*. He began composing his work right around the same time that Mary was publishing *Frankenstein*.

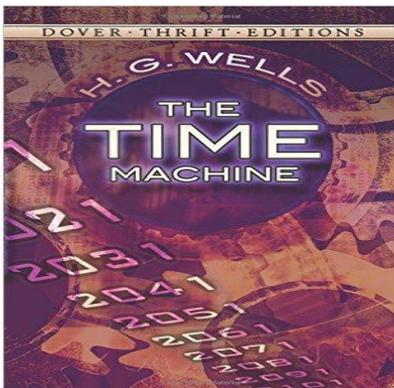
Aside from the title, Shelley borrows from the tale of Prometheus a sense of consequence resulting from seeking enlightenment and power. Victor is her modern incarnation of Prometheus. He, as Prometheus was, is fascinated by the power of electricity (lightning). We can recall from the narrative the moment when he becomes captivated by its fantastical power.

It is from this power, with which he has equipped himself, that the inner torture he will suffer from the use of it stems. Immediately following the creation of the creature, Victor is ill with disgust for what he has done. His torture mirrors that of Prometheus'; undying and eternal. From the beginning of the novel, when Victor warns Walton of the consequences of his quest, to the conclusion when Victor again reiterates the misfortunes he has suffered as a result of his curiosity, Mary Shelley mimics the Prometheus tale. Perhaps, this is why she saw it as a fitting subtitle.” from
(<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/rschwart/hist257s02/students/Becky/prometheus.html>)

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Reflecting on the above information from a Mount Holyoke College literature class, think about why, perhaps, Mary Shelley used the myth in developing her story.
2. The story explores the idea of what really makes something “human”. In the story, the “monster” ends up being more “human” than his creator. Reflect on what qualities you think make a person human – and how does the monster initially display these characteristics.
3. What makes the monster “turn” from being very human-like in spirit/personality, to being a “true” monster? What does Mary Shelley seem to be indicating about this transformation?
4. Reflect on how women are portrayed in the story.

The Time Machine (H.G. Wells)



Visionary writer H.G. Wells was born Herbert George Wells on September 21, 1866, in Bromley, England. Wells came from a working class background. His father played professional cricket and ran a hardware store for a time. After Wells' father's shop failed, his family, which included two older brothers, struggled financially. The boys were apprenticed to a draper, and his mother went to work on an estate as a housekeeper. At his mother's workplace, Wells discovered the owner's extensive library. He read the works of Jonathan Swift and some of the important figures of the Enlightenment, including Voltaire. He won a scholarship to the Normal School of Science where he learned about physics, chemistry, astronomy and biology, among other subjects.

In 1895, Wells became an overnight literary sensation with the publication of the novel *The Time Machine*. The book was about an English scientist who develops a time travel machine. While entertaining, the work also explored social and scientific topics, from class conflict to evolution. These themes recurred in some of his other popular works from this time.

Wells continued to write what some have called scientific romances, but others consider early examples of science fiction. In quick succession, he published the *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). *The Island of Doctor Moreau* told the story of a man who encounters a scientist conducting the gruesome experiments on animals, creating new species of creatures. In *The Invisible Man*, Wells explores the life of another scientist who undergoes a dark personal transformation after turning invisible. In 1901, Wells published a non-fiction book called *Anticipations*. This collection of predictions has proved to be remarkably accurate. Wells forecasted the rise of major cities and suburbs, economic globalization, and aspects of future military conflicts. He died on August 13, 1946, in London. (adapted from: <https://www.biography.com/people/hg-wells-39224>)

Summary Overview

The main character in the book (referred to only as The Time Traveler) is a scientist and inventor in England who has been able to construct a machine that will allow him to travel back through time. At a meeting of dinner guests, the Time Traveler recounts the story of how he first tested his machine by traveling over 800,000 years into the future. Once there, he discovers that society as he knows it has fallen into ruins and that all that is left are remnants of crumbling buildings and overgrown vegetation. Instead of modern humans, he comes into contact with two species: First, the Eloi – a pint sized group of androgynous simpletons who seem to do no work and subsist mainly on fruit. Second – the Morlocks, scary ape-like creatures who live underground and come out only at night. The Time Traveler spends a good amount of time trying to decipher the relationship between the two species (whether it is symbiotic, predatory or something else completely).

After briefly losing and then recovering his Time Machine from the Morlocks, the Traveler then escapes into the distant future (30 million years) where he witnesses events on Earth at the end of it's life. As he travels further in short jumps, he slowly sees the decay and degeneration of life on Earth – including the eventually dimming of the sun and the slowing down of the rotation of the planet. After coming to the end of life on Earth, he then decides to return to his own time and eventually finds himself back home.” (from : <http://top-science-fiction-novels.com/the-time-machine-hg-wells/>)

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. The issue of credibility comes up at the outset of *The Time Machine*. How does the Time Traveler attempt to give credibility to his ideas at the beginning, and what devices throughout does the character use to make the time-travel premise believable for his audience? What techniques, or ideas, does Wells use to make the premise credible for his readers?” (from: <http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/188557/the-time-machine-by-hg-wells/9780553213515/readers-guide/>)
2. The novel is often seen as both a work about a utopia and a dystopia. A utopia is described as: “an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect. The word was first used in the book *Utopia* (1516) by Sir Thomas More”. Dystopia is defined as: “an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one.” Describe the physical landscape of the future as Wells envisions it. What elements of both utopia and dystopia are immediately noticeable? How is the illustration of society in the novel both utopian and dystopian?
3. By the ending of the story, what do you think the Time Travelled learns about himself, life, and scientific experimentation?

I have love in me
the likes of which
you can scarcely imagine
and rage the likes
of which you would
not believe.
If I cannot satisfy
the one, I will indulge
the other.

- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*.

We all have our time
machines, don't we. Those
that take us back are
memories... And those that
carry us forward, are
dreams.

H.G. Wells