

# LITERATURE – 3A

Catherine is visiting her friends Henry and Eleanor Tilney. Catherine has just arrived at their house, Northanger Abbey.

## START THINKING ...

### 1 Work in pairs. Discuss:

- the things you are afraid of
- situations when you feel frightened
- your most frightening experience

## NORTHANGER ABBEY (1817) Jane Austen



The night was **stormy** and the rest of the family were already in their bedrooms. Catherine crossed the hall and listened to the strong wind and **violent** rain outside the ancient abbey. She jumped with fright when the wind **banged** a door shut. She imagined all the **dreadful** situations and horrible scenes that were probably part of the ancient abbey's history. I'm sure Henry's stories about **ghosts** and murderers at the abbey were only jokes – or were they true? Catherine was happy to be at her friends' house. 'I'm perfectly safe in this house. Eleanor's room is very near mine so I mustn't be afraid', she thought as she went up the stairs.

When she opened her bedroom door, she saw a cheerful fire and was glad to be inside her warm room and not outside in the storm. Then she noticed the curtains were moving. As she walked to the windows to make sure there wasn't a ghost behind them, she sang a little song to give her **courage**. She pulled back the curtains and looked behind them. 'Of course it was only the wind!' She noticed an old chest near the window, 'Now, Catherine, don't start imagining what's in that! Silly girl!'

She started to get ready for bed but she noticed a tall, black cupboard in the corner of the room. 'That can't possibly be the black cupboard Henry told me about in his ghost story!' Catherine picked up her candle and slowly walked towards the cupboard. 'It's black and old, just like the cupboard Henry described to me! What a **coincidence**!' Catherine saw the key was in the door and couldn't resist opening it to see what was inside. She could not sleep until she knew what was in that cupboard. She put her candle on the chair and her hand **trembled** as she tried to turn the key. The door didn't open, she tried again, but the door still didn't open. **Alarmed** but not discouraged, she tried again. This time the key turned, but she still couldn't open the door. She stopped and listened to the sounds of the violent storm outside and she realised the awfulness of her situation: 'There are surely terrible things in that cupboard and I can't sleep until I know what they are!' She was **determined** to open it and look inside ...



Jane Austen  
1775–1817

## Glossary

**stormy** with strong wind, rain and sometimes thunder and lightning  
**violent** sudden and causing damage  
**bang** to make a sudden very loud noise  
**dreadful** very bad or very shocking  
**ghost** the spirit of a dead person  
**courage** the ability to control your fear in dangerous situations

**coincidence** when two or more similar things happen at the same time which is unexpected  
**tremble** to shake slightly when you are cold, frightened or emotional  
**alarmed** to be worried or frightened by something  
**determined** wanting to do something and not letting anyone or anything stop you

- 2 **▶▶3A.1** Read the text and listen.
- 3 Read the text again. Mark the sentences true (T), false (F) or doesn't say (DS).

- 1 Catherine frequently visited Northanger Abbey.
- 2 She was afraid of storms.
- 3 There was an object behind the curtain.
- 4 She saw the black cupboard when she was in bed.
- 5 She didn't like the black cupboard.
- 6 The cupboard reminded her about one of Henry's stories.
- 7 She felt scared opening the cupboard.
- 8 The cupboard door opened immediately.

- 4 **READ BETWEEN THE LINES** Do you think the statements are true? Explain why / why not.

- 1 Catherine had a very good imagination.
- 2 Catherine's fear prevented her from being curious.
- 3 The weather influenced the way Catherine felt.

- 5 **VOCABULARY** Complete the sentences with the correct words from the glossary in the correct form.

- 1 The most \_\_\_\_\_ storm ever was the Bhola Cyclone in Bangladesh in 1970. Half a million people died.
- 2 It isn't a \_\_\_\_\_ that the Earth is getting warmer while the ice caps in Antarctica are melting.
- 3 There are, on average, one hundred days of thunderstorms a year in Lakeland, Florida. It's a very \_\_\_\_\_ city.
- 4 People who stayed to help others after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 showed a lot of \_\_\_\_\_. It was a very dangerous place.
- 5 First you hear the lightning, then you hear the \_\_\_\_\_ of thunder.
- 6 Governments are \_\_\_\_\_ to find a cure for Ebola, a terrible disease mainly affecting Africa.

- 6 **ROLE PLAY** Work in pairs. Henry and Catherine have just finished dinner and are discussing what they should do now. Student A is Henry, Student B is Catherine. Read the beginning of the conversation and then continue it using the verbs in the list.

can / could | (don't) have to | should(n't) | must(n't)

HENRY What awful weather! We can't go for an evening walk in this rain. We have to think of something else to do instead.

CATHERINE I agree. I should help Eleanor in the kitchen first.

HENRY You mustn't do that. You're our guest. Why don't we ...

- 7 **▶▶3A.2** Listen to the next part of the story. Circle and correct the mistakes.

- 1 The small door had a mirror on it.
- 2 Catherine found a roll of paper with a map on it.
- 3 When she sat down, the room became cold.
- 4 She dropped her candle before she got into bed.
- 5 The storm was the last thing she heard.

- 8 **▶▶3A.2** Listen again. Put the events in the correct order.

- A She curiously turned the key of the small door.
- B Catherine quickly got into bed.
- C The room was completely dark.
- D She opened the door of the big cupboard.
- E She was so scared she couldn't move.
- F She found an old piece of writing.

## WRITING Suspense

- 9 **WRITING** Write 100–150 words about how the author created suspense in the text.

- How does the situation make the reader think that something bad is about to happen? What's the weather like? What sounds can the character hear? Think about the adjectives used and quote them.
- Are there any common fears in the text? If the reader is afraid too, he / she will want the main character to overcome this obstacle.
- Are there any points in the text where the reader thinks the character is in danger, but it's a false alarm? How does the reader feel afterwards?
- When you have finished read your work again. Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation.

## THINK GOTHIC NOVELS

Gothic novels were very popular in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries.

*Northanger Abbey* is a parody (something that copies the style) of a gothic novel and it contains all the elements of gothic fiction: an innocent young girl (Catherine), an old building (Northanger Abbey), bad weather, mystery and references to the supernatural and horror.

- 10 Think about a TV programme, film or comic you've watched or read. Were any of the techniques (a vulnerable girl as the main character, ancient buildings, storms) the same as those used in gothic novels?