

LITERATURE 3A

TEACHER'S NOTES

AUTHOR: Jane Austen
TITLE: *Northanger Abbey* (Chapter 22)
THEMES: Weather (unit 9)
WRITING: Suspense
THINK STYLE: Gothic novels

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Austen (1775–1817) was born in Hampshire, England. Her works include *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Emma* (1815).

Jane Austen grew up in the country in a big family. She loved reading and started writing as a child to entertain her family. She also educated herself by reading books from her father's large library. Although Jane and her sister were educated at boarding school for a short time, they returned home when the family could no longer afford the fees. She wrote six novels, all set in high society, and the main character in each one is a young woman. In her books she explores the themes of love, the education of women, the difficult financial situations of women, property and money. She observed people carefully and used parody (copying and exaggerating someone else's style in a funny way) and irony (when the outcome is different to the one intended) as well as realism in her stories. Two of her six novels were published after her death and it wasn't until much later that she was considered to be one of the great English novelists.

INTRODUCTION

Ask students if they have heard of Jane Austen or *Northanger Abbey*. Write any ideas on the board in note form. Use the information in the *About the author* box to provide an introduction. Ask if students know any of the novels mentioned or any others – they may know *Pride and Prejudice* as there have been many film adaptations.

START THINKING ...

- 1 Draw students' attention to the film still at the top right of the worksheet. Elicit responses to the questions: *Who is in the first picture?* (Catherine) *Where is she?* (in a house / in a bedroom / in a study) *How old do you think she is?* (Students' own answers.) *What is she doing?* (writing in her diary / a letter)
Organise the class into pairs or small groups. Set a time limit of a few minutes for students to discuss the questions. Then ask students for their opinions. Encourage them to back up their answers with examples. For example, 'I'm afraid of water because I can't swim.' 'I'm afraid of spiders because I don't like the way they look.' 'I feel frightened when I'm in small, dark rooms.'
- 2 Draw students' attention to the text above the film still which 'sets the scene' and clarify understanding. Play the audio. When students have read and listened to the text once, allow time to check unfamiliar words in the glossary.

Optional extension

Ask some comprehension questions to check general understanding of the text: *What is Catherine doing?* (She's in her bedroom looking at the furniture and thinking about ghost stories.) *What is the weather like?* (stormy)

- 3 Students read through the questions. Check for understanding and remind them to refer closely to the text to find the answers.

Answers

1 DS 2 T 3 F 4 F 5 DS 6 T 7 T 8 F

- 4 Students read the text again. Discuss the questions and answers with the class.

Answers

1 Yes. The text says 'She imagined all the dreadful situations and horrible scenes that were probably part of the ancient abbey's history.' 2 No. She still pulled back the curtains and tried to open the cupboard even though she was scared. 3 Yes. The weather outside reflects and emphasises Catherine's feelings. The text says 'She stopped and listened to the sounds of the violent storm outside and she realised the awfulness of her situation.'

VOCABULARY

- 5 Read through the sentences one at a time to check comprehension of any unknown vocabulary. Working individually, students complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the glossary. Ask individual students for answers.

Answers

1 violent 2 coincidence 3 stormy 4 courage
5 bang 6 determined

Optional extension

Ask students which facts they find interesting or surprising and why. Point out that these facts all relate to natural disasters, climate and extreme weather. Ask students to think of any other recent natural disasters. Encourage them to describe what happened and how they felt when they heard the news and saw the pictures.

Optional extension

Ask students to read the text again and to underline five more words that are new to them. Ask them to write the words in sentences. They then read their sentences in pairs and correct each other's mistakes.

ROLE PLAY

- 6 Organise the class into pairs. Read the instruction and check that students understand what they are going to do. Ask two students to read the first part of the conversation. Brainstorm ideas and write the ideas on the board. ((could) play cards, (shouldn't) play near the cupboard, (mustn't) go outside, (must) have something hot to drink) Set a time limit of 5–10 minutes and then when they have finished, ask a pair of students to perform their role play to the class.

LISTENING

- 7 Before listening, explain that students are going to hear what happened next. Ask them: *Is she able to open the cupboard? (yes) What do you think is in the cupboard?* (Accept any sensible answer.) Play the recording twice. The first time, encourage students to listen without taking notes. The second time, they complete the sentences.

Answers

- 1 ~~mirror on~~ it key in it 2 ~~a map~~ writing 3 ~~cold~~ dark
4 ~~her candle~~ the roll of paper 5 ~~the storm~~ the clock
(striking three o'clock)

- 8 Students read through the sentences. Encourage students to complete the activity from memory. Play the recording again for students to complete their answers and to check.

Answers

- 1 D 2 A 3 F 4 C 5 E 6 B

Optional extension

In pairs, students retell the story using their answers to Exercises 6 and 7 as prompts.

AUDIOSCRIPT

Catherine tried to turn the key again and the door suddenly opened. She put her head inside the cupboard and looked around. She was disappointed to see that it was completely empty except for another small door with a key in it. Catherine was curious to see what was inside. She had difficulty turning this key too, but in the end, the door opened. She couldn't believe her eyes when she saw the roll of paper inside the cupboard! Her heart beat faster, she began to tremble and her face became completely white. She picked up the precious document and looked at it.

'This is exactly what Henry told me about!' She opened it and saw there was writing on it! She decided to sit down and read it but just at that moment, her candle went out. Disaster! Now, she had no light and the room was completely dark! What a time for the candle to go out! What could she do now? She stood still for a few moments in horror. The sounds of the storm outside made her feel even more frightened. Catherine trembled from head to foot. She thought she could hear a door close and a person walking in a distant part of the house. She was so frightened that she dropped the roll of paper and jumped into bed. She put her head under the bedclothes. She couldn't sleep. She thought about the document – what did it say? Who wrote it? Why was it in the cupboard? Has Henry's prediction come true?

'I can't read it now because I haven't got a candle. I'll wait here until the morning, and then I'll read it when the sun comes up,' she thought.

It was the middle of the night and she could still hear the storm outside. The wind blew the curtains, the keys shook in the locks, doors banged and Catherine trembled in her bed. The last sound she heard was the clock striking three o'clock ...



CRITICAL THINKING

Ask the students the question: *How does Catherine's body language show how she's feeling?* Elicit a few ideas and explain that they should listen for verbs and adjectives. Play the recording again. Ask them to work in small groups to discuss their ideas. You can then bring their ideas together on the board and discuss them as a class. Ask them how their body language changes when they feel scared, nervous or embarrassed.

Suggested answers

'difficulty turning this key', 'her heart beat faster', 'she began to tremble', 'her face became completely white', 'she stood still for a few moments', 'trembled from head to foot', 'dropped the roll of paper', 'jumped into bed', 'put her head under the bedclothes', 'trembled in her bed'.

WRITING: SUSPENSE

- 9 Ask students to explain what they think suspense is (the feeling of excitement or nervousness that you feel when waiting for something uncertain to happen). Then read through the *Writing skills* box. Look at the first bullet point with the class and ask them to underline the key information in the text. Students can write the short essay in class or for homework. Students then swap their essay with a partner. They read each other's work and highlight any mistakes. They then return the essay to the original student who looks at the highlighted mistakes and corrects them. Ask some students to read their essays out loud to the class.

THINK GOTHIC NOVELS

- 10 Read through the introduction and check that students understand the meaning of *parody* (to copy the style of someone or something in a humorous way). Students then think about a TV programme, film or comic that they've watched or read and think about whether techniques used are the same as in gothic novels. If students are finding it difficult to think of suitable TV programmes, etc., stop the activity and brainstorm ideas. Write the ideas on the board and then restart the activity.

Students' own answers

Optional extension

Ask students to research one of these gothic novels and find out more about the story. *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley; *Dracula* by Bram Stoker; *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë.

Additional reading or internet research topics

- Jane Austen's life
- *Northanger Abbey* themes
- Gothic fiction