

LITERATURE – 3B

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 weather was **stormy** that night and the rest of the family were already in their bedrooms. Catherine crossed the hall and listened to the strong wind and **heavy** rain outside the ancient abbey. She **jumped** with fright when the **wind** shut a door. She imagined all the terrible situations and horrible scenes that were probably part of the abbey's history. She was sure Henry's stories about **ghosts** 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 fire and was glad to be inside her warm room and not outside in the storm. Then she saw 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 herself. She pulled back the curtains and looked behind them. 'Of course it was only the wind!' She noticed an old box near the window, 'Now, Catherine, don't start to **imagine** 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! How strange!' Catherine saw the key was in the door and couldn't stop herself from 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 began to **shake** as she tried to turn the key. The door didn't open, she tried again, but the door still didn't open. She tried one more time. This time the key turned, but she still couldn't open the door. She stopped and listened to the **sounds** of the storm outside: 'There are surely horrible things in that cupboard and I can't sleep until I know what they are!' She was going to open it and look inside; nothing was going to stop her ...



Jane Austen
1775–1817

Glossary

stormy	with strong wind and rain	imagine	to have a picture or idea of something in your mind
heavy	a large amount of	candle	a piece of wax that burns when you light it
jump	to move suddenly	shake	to move quickly and in short movements
wind	air moving horizontally	sound	something that you can hear
ghost	the spirit of a dead person		
joke	a funny story or trick		

- 2 **▶▶ 3B.1** Read the text and listen.
- 3 Read the text again. Mark the sentences true (T) or false (F).

- 1 She was afraid of storms. ____
- 2 There was an object behind the curtain. ____
- 3 She saw the black cupboard when she was in bed. ____
- 4 The cupboard made her think of one of Henry's stories. ____
- 5 She felt scared opening the cupboard. ____
- 6 The cupboard door opened immediately. ____

- 4 **▶▶ READ BETWEEN THE LINES** Match the statements with the quotes from the text.

- 1 Catherine had a very good imagination. ____
- 2 Catherine was very curious. ____
- 3 The weather influenced the way Catherine felt. ____
- a 'She ... listened to the sounds of the storm outside: ... I can't sleep until I know what they are!'
- b '... all the terrible situations ... that were probably part of the abbey's history.'
- c 'Catherine ... couldn't stop herself from opening it to see what was inside.'

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

- 1 Shhhhhhh! What's that _____? Is it outside?
- 2 I don't believe you – it must be a _____.
- 3 The snow was very _____ last winter; some people couldn't leave their houses for days.
- 4 The light isn't working at the moment. Please use a _____ instead.
- 5 The tree fell on the car in the _____ weather.
- 6 Lucy's hands _____ when she's cold or frightened.

- 6 **▶▶ ROLE PLAY** Work in pairs. Henry and Catherine are discussing what they can and can't do in stormy weather. Student A is Henry, Student B is Catherine. Read the beginning of the conversation and then continue it using the words in the list.

read(ing) a book | sing(ing) a song
go(ing) for a swim | draw(ing) a picture
play(ing) tennis

HENRY What awful weather! We can't go for an evening walk in this rain.

CATHERINE Why don't we play a game instead?

HENRY I'm not so sure. How about ...

- 7 **▶▶ LISTENING ▶▶ 3B.2** Listen to the next part of the story. Circle the words you hear.

- 1 turn the *key* / *handle*
- 2 a *bit* / *piece* of paper
- 3 her *light* / *candle* went out
- 4 under the *blanket* / *bed*
- 5 *keys moved* / *turned* in the locks

- 8 **▶▶ 3B.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 dark.
- D She opened the door of the big cupboard.
- E She was scared and couldn't move.
- F She found an old piece of writing.

WRITING Suspense

- 9 **▶▶ WRITING** Write 75–100 words about how the author created suspense in the text.

- Bad weather and loud noises create suspense. Think about the adjectives used and quote these in your essay.
- Is there anything in the text that many people find scary (snakes, the dark)? If the reader is afraid too, he / she will want the main character to overcome their fear.
- Does the character think they're in danger, but it's a false alarm? How does the reader feel afterwards?
- When you have finished your writing read it again. Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation.

DID YOU KNOW?

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

Northanger Abbey is an example of a gothic novel with its innocent young character (Catherine), an old building (Northanger Abbey), bad weather, ghosts and horror. Other gothic novels are *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë.