

Year 7 Term 1: Coming of Age

M

Everybody, young or old, experiences a coming of age as they develop from child to adult. A common coming of age theme revolves around how a teenager finds their own identity.

The literature we will be studying deals with aspects of coming of age including: characters discovering their purpose in life, learning to accept themselves and others, experiencing life-changing moments, confronting their fears, taking responsibility for their actions, and coming to terms with the unfair nature of the world.

BILDUNGSROMAN - The combination of two German words: Bildung, meaning "education," and Roman, meaning "novel." A bildungsroman is a novel that deals with the formative years of the main character, and in particular, with the character's personal development and moral education.

The Graveyard Book - Neil Gaiman

Neil Gaiman is a modern writer who is influenced by gothic authors including Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe. The Graveyard Book is the coming of age story of Nobody 'Bod' Owens who is adopted and raised by the supernatural occupants of a graveyard after his family is brutally murdered.

Graveyard Book Themes

- Life and Death
- Community
- Identity
- Coming of Age
- Family
- Good and Evil

Gothic Genre & Conventions

Gothic fiction was a very popular genre in the 19th century. It explored the darker side of human nature & the theme of the supernatural.

Conventions include:

- Strange places
- Scientific Progression
- Doppelganger (someone's double)
- The Uncanny (something strangely familiar)
- Characters in moral or ethical turmoil (huge confusion/doubt)

Influential gothic writers include: Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Edgar Allan Poe and the Bronte Sisters.

The Graveyard Book - Characters

Nobody 'Bod' Owens - The novel's protagonist and the adoptive son of the Owens. Bod is fearless and curious, qualities that save his life at the beginning of the novel when he's a toddler.

Scarlett Amber Perkins - Bod's only living friend throughout his childhood. Five-year-old Scarlett meets Bod when her parents take her to play in the graveyard, but her parents believe that Bod is just Scarlett's imaginary friend.

Silas - Bod's guardian. The novel heavily implies that he's a vampire: he has no reflection in mirrors and he assumes a batlike form when he's not in his tall, pale, human form.

Jack Frost - Often referred to as "the man Jack," Jack is the novel's antagonist and the murderer who killed Bod's family and is intent on hunting down Bod. He's a member of the mysterious organization the Jacks of All Trades, an ancient fraternity that harnesses magic by killing people.

The Sleer - A mysterious being that resides in the graveyard's **barrow** grave. Bod only sees the Sleer once. It is huge, has three heads, the body of a snake, and speaks in a hissing voice.

Miss Lupescu - A Hound of God—that is, a werewolf—who acts as Bod's guardian whenever Silas is away.

Coming of Age Extracts

Great Expectations - Pip learns to accept others and forgive people. He shows maturity in facing his fears and learning to deal with complex relationships.

Jane Eyre - Jane learns to stand up for herself and to deal with injustice - she is changing from child to adult and learning to deal with relationship problems. Moving away from Mrs Reed is a life-changing moment for her, and part of her coming of age.

Little Women - Jo is realising what it is to be a woman growing up in a male society with all the expectations of her gender, and the difficulties of gaining female independence in a 19th century society geared towards men.

White Teeth - Magid is realising what it is to be a Bangladeshi son of immigrants, living in London. As he comes of age, he is dealing with the conflict between following his parents' wishes, and finding his own identity.

Narrative Features

Plot - The main events of a novel or play, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence.

Setting - The location and time frame in which the action of a narrative takes place.

Character - A person, animal, being, or thing in a story. Writers use characters to perform the **actions** and speak dialogue, moving the **story** along a **plot** line.

Narrator - A narrator is the person telling the story, and it determines the **point of view** that the audience will experience.

Atmosphere - The overall mood of a **story** or poem, achieved through description.

Narrative voice - Narrative voice is the perspective the story is told from. Can be First person, Second person or third person.

Themes - The central ideas, topics, or points of a story.

Tension - The sense that something ominous (bad) is right around the corner.

Protagonist - The main character. The **story** circles around this character's experiences, and the audience is invited to see the world from his or her perspective.

Antagonist - The opposite of the protagonist. Typically, this is a **villain** of some kind, but not always! It's just the opponent of the main character, or someone who gets in their way.

Confidant - A secondary character in the story, often a friend or authority figure, whose role is to listen to the protagonist's secrets and advise them on their actions.

Third Person Omniscient Narrator - The narrator of *The Graveyard Book* is a third-person narrator, meaning that it never talks about itself, but just tells us the story. Although the narrator is most closely tied to Bod and his story, this narrator can go into the mind of any character it chooses. It's omniscient, meaning that it knows just about everything that's going on.

Narrative Structure

Exposition - The start of the story where the **characters**, setting and basic information are introduced. Allows the reader to understand where the story is taking place and who's in it.

Conflict - A clash between two opposing forces in the story. Conflict occurs when the main character struggles with either an external conflict or an internal conflict.

Rising Action - The conflict begins to affect the characters, complicating their lives.

Climax - The highest point of tension or **drama** in a **narrative**'s plot. Often, the climax is also when the main problem of the **story** is faced by the protagonist.

Falling action - The story begins to slow down, showing the results of the climax.

Resolution / denouement - The very end of a story, where all the plotlines are finally tied up and all remaining questions are answered.

Grammar

Noun types:

Concrete – A noun we can see, hear, touch, smell or taste e.g. table

Abstract – A noun which we cannot experience with any of the 5 senses e.g. happiness, tension

Proper – A noun which is the name or title of something and is capitalised e.g. Bolton, Turton School

Collective – A singular word used to group together a plural e.g. a group, a herd, a class

Verb types:

Dynamic – A verb that we can see/hear being completed – a deliberate action e.g. I kick, I speak

Stative – A verb that we cannot see being completed e.g. I think, I believe

Imperative – A commanding verb e.g. Do this work, sit down, let's go

Modal – A verb expressing possibility or probability e.g. will, should, could, can, must

Subject: Does the action in a sentence or clause

Past tense: used to describe things that have already happened and usually have an -ed ending e.g. I walked to school yesterday

Present tense: used to describe things that are happening now

Future tense: describes things that have yet to happen and usually uses 'will' e.g. I will go tomorrow.