2.15 Literature: Frankenstein (Mary Shelley): 2-hour Pack

AQA 8702 · about 120 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

Extract: Frankenstein, Chapter 5 (the creation of the creature)

From Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus by Mary Shelley (1818, public domain). In this extract, Victor Frankenstein describes the moment his creature first comes to life.

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!--Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips.

1 'The creature is presented as more sympathetic than monstrous.' Using details from elsewhere in the novel, evaluate how far you agree with this statement.

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

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2 Explore how Shelley uses language in this extract to present Victor's feelings of horror.

(Total for Question 2 is 6 marks)

3 Analyse how Shelley uses sentence structure and contrast in this extract to convey the sudden shift in Victor's feelings from anticipation to disgust.

(Total for Question 3 is 6 marks)

4 Explain how Victor's isolation in the period before this extract contributes to the disastrous outcome shown here.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

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5 Explore how Shelley's use of the frame narrative shapes the reader's understanding of this moment.

(Total for Question 5 is 8 marks)

6 Explore how Shelley uses the natural world elsewhere in the novel, such as mountains, ice or storms, as a Gothic or Romantic setting that reflects a character's inner state.

(Total for Question 6 is 8 marks)

7 Explain how ambition drives the actions of both Victor and Walton in the novel.

(Total for Question 7 is 6 marks)

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8 Explore how Shelley presents isolation as both a cause and a consequence of suffering in the novel.

(Total for Question 8 is 8 marks)

9 Explain one way in which the novel's structure, such as its use of letters and embedded narratives, reflects the Gothic and Romantic conventions of the period in which it was written.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

10 Analyse how Shelley presents the creature's development, from a newborn, innocent consciousness into a figure capable of violence.

(Total for Question 10 is 10 marks)

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11 Explore the significance of colour imagery in this extract and how it contributes to the extract's Gothic atmosphere.

(Total for Question 11 is 8 marks)

12 Using this extract and your knowledge of the novel as a whole, explain what this moment reveals about Victor Frankenstein's character and the consequences of his ambition.

(Total for Question 12 is 8 marks)

13 Explain how this extract reflects some of the scientific and philosophical concerns of the period in which Shelley was writing.

(Total for Question 13 is 6 marks)

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14 Write about how Shelley presents the relationship between Victor and the creature as it changes across the novel.

(Total for Question 14 is 12 marks)

15 Write about how Shelley presents ideas about responsibility and the consequences of neglect in the novel, and comment on how the frame narrative structure shapes our judgement of the characters.

(Total for Question 15 is 15 marks)

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16 Starting with this extract, write about how Shelley presents ambition and its consequences in the novel as a whole.

In your response you should discuss:
- how ambition is presented in this extract
- how Shelley presents ambition and its consequences in the novel as a whole
- the methods Shelley uses to present these ideas

(Total for Question 16 is 30 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.15 Literature: Frankenstein (Mary Shelley): 2-hour Pack

Question 1

Level 3 Detailed, well-supported evaluation that weighs sympathetic moments, such as the creature's self-education and rejection by the De Lacey family, against his violent actions, reaching a considered judgement. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear response, supported by relevant reference, showing some awareness of both sympathetic and monstrous aspects. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, one-sided comment on the creature, with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the creature's self-taught learning, through observing the De Lacey family and reading works such as Paradise Lost, shows a capacity for feeling and understanding that invites sympathy
- his repeated rejection purely because of his appearance, despite good intentions, presents him as a victim of others' prejudice
- his later acts of violence, including against innocent characters, complicate any straightforwardly sympathetic reading
- a balanced answer might conclude the creature is presented as both, with Shelley suggesting his monstrous acts are created by society's treatment of him rather than being innate

Question 2

Level 3 Detailed exploration of how a range of language choices combine to build horror, using precise subject terminology and showing awareness of the writer's intended effect on the reader. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of how one or two language choices, such as dull, shrivelled or watery, create a sense of horror, using some relevant subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of a word or phrase connected to horror, with little or no comment on its effect. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the adjectives dull, shrivelled and watery strip the creature of the vitality Victor hoped to create
- the exclamatory Beautiful!--Great God! enacts Victor's instant collapse from hope into horror
- verbs like agitated and the noun convulsive motion suggest uncontrolled, disturbing movement rather than the graceful life Victor imagined
- the semantic field of decay and mismatch, such as luxuriances and horrid contrast, shows beauty and horror sitting unnaturally close together

Question 3

Level 3 Detailed analysis of how the extract's structure, moving from long, controlled sentences to the abrupt Beautiful!--Great God! and then a sustained list of contrasts, is shaped to mirror Victor's collapsing hope. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of how a structural feature, such as the short exclamatory sentence or a single contrast, marks the change in Victor's feelings. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple comment on a structural feature, such as the exclamation mark, with little explanation. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the opening sentences are long and measured, building suspense as Victor collected the instruments of life
- the single-word exclamation Beautiful! followed immediately by Great God! creates an abrupt structural break that mirrors his shock
- the long final sentence piles up contrasting details, beautiful features set against horrid contrast, structurally overwhelming the reader as it overwhelms Victor
- the rhetorical question How can I describe my emotions... slows the pace and signals Victor's struggle to process what he has done

Question 4

Level 3 Detailed explanation, supported by reference to the novel, of how Victor's self-imposed isolation removes any moderating influence, so that his ambition is never questioned until it is too late. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of how Victor's withdrawal from family and friends allows his obsession to go unchecked. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple comment that Victor worked alone, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Victor cuts himself off from his family in Geneva and his friend Clerval while he works, so no one can question or moderate his obsession
- his isolation means his enthusiasm becomes what the novel calls a resistless, and almost frantic impulse, unchecked by any outside perspective
- only in isolation could Victor ignore the moral and physical toll of the work, since his health suffers badly during this period
- the extract's horror is the direct result of years of solitary, secretive labour with no one to warn him of what he was creating

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Question 5

Level 4 Detailed, exploratory analysis of how the layered narrative, Walton to reader and Victor to Walton, controls what we know, filters the moment through Victor's guilt and hindsight, and prepares the reader to judge both Victor and Walton. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear analysis of how the frame narrative, Walton's letters containing Victor's told-to-Walton account, shapes distance, sympathy or reliability. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation of how hearing this moment through Victor's retrospective account affects the reader's understanding. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple awareness that the story is told by Victor, with little comment on effect. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the reader never sees the creature's animation directly; we only receive Victor's retrospective, guilt-coloured account of it, filtered again through Walton's letters
- this narrative distance means the reader must judge how reliable and self-serving Victor's description of his own horror really is
- Victor is telling this story as a warning to Walton, whose own polar ambitions mirror Victor's, so the moment is shaped to persuade Walton, and the reader, of the dangers of unchecked ambition
- the framing creates dramatic irony, since the reader senses disaster from Walton's outer frame before Victor's inner narrative reaches this moment

Question 6

Level 4 Detailed, exploratory analysis of the dual Romantic and Gothic function of nature, both sublime comfort and threatening power, well supported by precise reference. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear analysis of how Shelley uses natural imagery to mirror or intensify a character's emotional state, with relevant reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation of how a natural setting reflects a character's feelings. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of a natural setting, with little or no comment on its effect. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the vast, icy landscape of Mont Blanc and its glaciers reflects both the sublime awe and the cold isolation Victor feels after creating the creature
- storms and lightning recur at key moments, associated with Victor's despair and, earlier in his life, his fascination with natural forces, linking nature to both destruction and inspiration
- the Arctic setting of Walton's frame narrative mirrors the novel's themes of isolation and dangerous ambition pursued into hostile, unpeopled extremes
- unlike Gothic castles in earlier novels, Shelley's Gothic terror often takes place in vast natural settings, reflecting Romantic ideas about nature's power over humans

Question 7

Level 3 Detailed explanation of the parallels between Victor's scientific ambition and Walton's exploratory ambition, supported by relevant reference to the frame narrative. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of one clear parallel between Victor's and Walton's ambitions. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple comment that both characters are ambitious, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Walton seeks glory through Arctic exploration, just as Victor seeks glory through scientific discovery, both willing to risk everything for their goal
- Victor tells his story specifically to warn Walton against repeating his mistakes, drawing an explicit parallel between them
- unlike Victor, Walton ultimately chooses to turn his ship back rather than continue at any cost, suggesting Victor's warning has some effect
- both men's ambitions isolate them from others, Victor from his family and Walton from his crew and from the sister he writes to

Question 8

Level 4 Detailed, exploratory analysis of the cycle of isolation and suffering across both Victor and the creature, considering how Shelley's methods, including structure and narrative voice, present this as a central warning of the novel. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear exploration of how isolation both causes and results from suffering for Victor and, or, the creature, using relevant reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation of how isolation causes or results from suffering for one character. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of a moment of isolation, with little comment. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Victor's isolation while creating the creature causes the disaster of this extract; his subsequent guilt then isolates him further from his family
- the creature's isolation is forced upon him by others' rejection, and this suffering in turn drives him to violence, which causes further isolation
- the structure of the novel, with both Victor and the creature narrating extended solitary journeys across Europe and into the Arctic, formally mirrors their isolation
- Shelley presents isolation as a self-perpetuating cycle: suffering causes withdrawal, and withdrawal causes further suffering, for both creator and creation

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Question 9

Level 2 Clear explanation of how a structural feature, such as the epistolary frame or nested first-person narratives, reflects Gothic or Romantic conventions of the period. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of a structural feature, such as the novel being written in letters, with little explanation. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the epistolary opening, Walton's letters, was a familiar 18th- and early 19th-century form, lending the fantastic events an air of documented, first-hand truth
- the nested, story-within-a-story structure, Walton, then Victor, then the creature, was a common Gothic device for creating distance and mounting suspense
- giving the creature his own extended first-person narrative was unusual for the period and reflects Romantic interest in individual, subjective experience, even for a monstrous figure

Question 10

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured analysis: tracks the creature's development from confused newborn sensation, through self-education and repeated rejection, to acts of violence, with confident, well-integrated reference across the whole novel. **9-10**

Level 3 Clear analysis: explains at least two stages of the creature's development with clear reference to the novel. **6-8**

Level 2 Some analysis: identifies one relevant stage in the creature's development with some supporting reference. **3-5**

Level 1 Simple, limited analysis: makes a simple, undeveloped point about the creature changing. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- immediately after his creation, the creature experiences the world through confused, overwhelming physical sensation, suggesting an innocent, almost infant-like consciousness with no capacity yet for cruelty
- his secret observation of the De Lacey family teaches him language, feeling and a longing for companionship, showing a capacity for learning and connection rather than innate monstrousness
- each violent rejection he suffers, culminating in being driven away by the very family he has come to love, removes another possible route to acceptance
- his first act of violence, against the innocent William, marks a clear turning point, after which he deliberately uses violence and threats to try to force Victor to meet his demands
- by the end of the novel, his transformation into a figure capable of repeated violence is presented as a direct, traceable consequence of sustained rejection rather than an innate quality he was created with

Question 11

Level 4 Detailed, exploratory analysis of the colour imagery as a coherent Gothic pattern, considering how it disrupts conventional ideas of beauty and connects to the novel's wider concern with unnatural creation. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear analysis of how the pattern of colours, such as yellow, black and dun-white, works together to create Gothic horror, with relevant terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation of how one or two colours contribute to a disturbing or unnatural mood. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of colour words, with little or no comment on effect. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- dull yellow eye and yellow skin associate the creature with sickness and decay rather than life
- lustrous black hair and straight black lips create a stark, almost monochrome palette typical of Gothic description
- dun-white sockets suggests something bleached and lifeless, undercutting the watery eyes set within them
- the clash between conventionally beautiful features, such as pearly teeth and flowing black hair, and their sickly colouring embodies the novel's Gothic idea that Victor has created something that should not exist

Question 12

Level 4 Detailed, well-supported explanation of Victor's ambition and its consequences, showing understanding of how this moment marks a turning point that shapes the rest of the novel, including his abandonment of the creature and the deaths that follow. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear explanation of how Victor's obsessive ambition leads directly to this moment of horror and regret, supported by relevant reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some relevant comment on Victor's ambition and reaction, supported by a reference to the extract or novel. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, general comment on Victor's character with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Victor's two years of secret, obsessive study have been driven entirely by ambition to infuse a spark of being into dead matter
- the instant he succeeds, his ambition collapses into horror, showing he never properly considered the consequences of achieving his goal
- this moment directly causes Victor to abandon the creature, the decision that sets in motion the tragedies of the novel, including the deaths of William, Justine, Clerval and Elizabeth
- Victor's reaction reveals a key flaw: he values the idea and process of creation far more than the responsibility of caring for what he creates

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Question 13

Level 3 Detailed explanation of how the extract engages with early 19th-century debates about science and the limits of human knowledge, integrated closely with textual detail. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of a relevant contextual idea, such as galvanism or Enlightenment confidence in scientific progress, linked to the extract. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, general awareness that the novel relates to science, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- early 19th-century experiments in galvanism, using electricity to make dead tissue twitch, fed public fascination with reanimating the dead, which this scene dramatises
- the extract reflects Enlightenment confidence that science could master and improve on nature, a confidence Shelley's novel goes on to question
- Victor's wider ambition to pour a torrent of light into our dark world reflects the era's excitement about scientific progress, shown here curdling into horror
- the novel, written in the Romantic period, uses this moment to warn against science pursued without regard for moral or natural boundaries

Question 14

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured response: sustained analysis of how the relationship between Victor and the creature shifts, from creation, through mutual pursuit, to their final entwined destruction, with confident subject terminology. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear response: explains how the relationship is presented through at least two stages, with relevant reference to the novel. **7-9**

Level 2 Some response: identifies relevant moments relating to the relationship with some supporting reference, though development may be limited. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: makes a simple, undeveloped point about the relationship between Victor and the creature. **1-3**

Indicative content:

- the relationship begins with Victor's immediate abandonment of the creature the instant he is created, establishing a failure of responsibility that shapes everything that follows
- the creature's demand that Victor create a companion for him shifts the relationship into one of confrontation, with each man attempting to force the other's hand
- Victor's decision to destroy the half-finished female creature turns the relationship decisively hostile, after which the creature begins to target those Victor loves
- by the end of the novel, Victor and the creature are locked in a pursuit across the Arctic that binds them together as closely as any conventional relationship, suggesting creator and creation cannot ultimately be separated
- the creature's final grief at Victor's death, rather than triumph, suggests the relationship, however destructive, always contained a genuine, unresolved need for connection on both sides

Question 15

Level 4 Convincing, critical response: sustained, perceptive analysis of responsibility and neglect across the whole novel, using confident subject terminology; the point about the frame narrative's effect on judgement integrated fully and convincingly into the argument. **12-15**

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: explains how responsibility and neglect are presented through several methods; makes a clear, appropriate point about the frame narrative's effect on judgement. **8-11**

Level 2 Some, generic response: identifies relevant moments relating to responsibility and neglect; makes a generic or partly relevant comment on the frame narrative. **4-7**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: makes a simple, undeveloped point about responsibility; little or no comment on the frame narrative. **1-3**

Indicative content:

- Victor's instant abandonment of the creature, fleeing rather than caring for what he has made, is presented as the founding act of neglect from which every later tragedy follows
- the creature's own account directly links his violence to this neglect, arguing that he was made capable of good but was denied any chance to develop it
- Victor repeatedly fails to take responsibility even when he has the power to prevent harm, most strikingly by staying silent while Justine is wrongly executed for William's murder
- the frame narrative means the reader receives Victor's version of events first and mostly, filtered through his own guilt and self-justification, which can make him seem more sympathetic than his actions alone might suggest
- allowing the creature his own extended first-person narrative, embedded within Victor's, gives him a rare chance to argue his own case directly to the reader, complicating any simple judgement of him as purely monstrous
- context: Mary Shelley's own life, including the death of her mother shortly after her birth and the loss of her own infant child, has been connected by critics to the novel's preoccupation with creation, neglect and parental responsibility
- taken together, the novel's structure withholds a single, final judgement, instead asking the reader to weigh Victor's neglect against the creature's resulting violence without offering an easy resolution

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Question 16

Level 4 Compelling, critical response: sustained, sophisticated exploration of ambition and its consequences across the whole novel; judicious, precisely selected references, including to this extract; perceptive analysis of Shelley's methods with consistently precise subject terminology; contextual understanding woven fully into the argument.	**26-30**
Level 3 Critical, exploratory response: clear line of argument sustained across the extract and novel; well-chosen range of references; analyses the effects of Shelley's methods with accurate subject terminology; relevant context integrated where appropriate.	**16-25**
Level 2 Detailed, well-structured response: consistently clear response to the question; well-chosen range of references from the extract and, or, the novel; explains the effects of some of Shelley's methods with some subject terminology; some awareness of context.	**6-15**
Level 1 Simple response: simple response with some relevant reference to the extract or the novel; simple or limited comment on Shelley's methods; little or no awareness of context.	**1-5**

Indicative content:

- in the extract, Victor's ambition is shown collapsing into horror the instant it succeeds, revealing that his desire for creation outweighed any thought of consequence
- Victor's ambition is repeatedly described using a language of obsession and disease, such as a resistless, and almost frantic impulse, suggesting his ambition is itself a kind of sickness
- Walton's Arctic ambitions frame and mirror Victor's scientific ambition, and Victor's narrative is explicitly told as a warning to him
- the consequences of Victor's ambition escalate through the novel: abandonment of the creature, the deaths of William, Justine, Clerval and Elizabeth, and finally Victor's own destruction
- Shelley uses the novel's Promethean subtitle and its allusions to Paradise Lost to frame ambition as a form of overreaching against natural or divine order
- unlike Victor, Walton ultimately abandons his ambition and turns the ship home, suggesting the novel offers a way to escape ambition's worst consequences
- the contrast between Victor's restless ambition and the domestic warmth of Elizabeth and Clerval reinforces the novel's suggestion that ambition pursued in isolation, without responsibility or human connection, is destructive
- context: Shelley wrote during a period of rapid scientific advance, including galvanism, and Romantic anxiety about human overreach, and the novel can be read as a caution against Enlightenment confidence unchecked by ethical responsibility

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