

# Gothic literature essay

[Design](#), [Architecture](#)



It has a style all its own. Gothic literature has been around since 1765 (Academic).

It was most popular in England, Germany, and the United States during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Academic). It is a genre that combines Romanticism, horror, and fiction. It all started with Horace Walpole, who wrote the first gothic novel, called *The Castle of Otranto*, subtitled “A Gothic Story.” The plot included the basis of Gothic literature: a threatening mystery and a curse, as well as hidden passages and heroines. It grew popular quickly and other people started to imitate it.

It soon became its own genre (Academic). There are certain elements in Gothic literature that make it unique compared to all other genres. One example is contrasts with light and darkness (Academic). This includes shadows, a beam of moonlight in the blackness, a flickering candle, or the only source of light failing (a candle blown out or an electric failure.

) Dark colors, shades of grey, and blood-red colors are present throughout (Course). Another characteristic is drastic landscapes (Academic). For instance, mountains, thick forests, icy lakes, and extreme weather are used throughout to give an eerie affect (Academic). The supernatural can also be used in Gothic literature (Academic).

This includes omens and curses, magic, and spirits (Academic). Weather can also play a major part in setting the scene in a Gothic novel. There is often fog used to make things seem more frightening (Heck). Storms are very important, as well (Heck). The flashes of lightning and loud, booming

thunder can make the story seem more suspenseful (Heck). Usually, a storm takes place when an important part of the story is going on (Heck).

These characteristics truly make the story interesting and give the reader suspense and fright. The architecture used in Gothic literature is a very crucial element. This type of architecture is called Gothic Revival Architecture (Princeton). Most gothic stories usually take place in medieval buildings (Course).

Writers used buildings from the medieval time period because they saw it as a frightening time, with its tyrannical laws enforced in cruel ways and superstitions (Princeton). Some examples of the architecture include labyrinths, dark corridors, winding stairs, castles, dungeons, underground passages, catacombs, basements, attics, and stained glass windows (Course). Ruins of alluding are often used in gothic literature to represent the unavoidable death and decay of humans and their creations (Princeton).

Also, having the setting be in an old castle or house can imply that the story is set in the past. Authors use creepy settings to reflect the creepy events that take place. The architecture can give readers feelings of dread, which is an element of gothic literature. Characters in a Gothic novel have certain traits that are not found in other genres. Characters could be a passionate villain, a hero whose identity is not revealed until the end of the story, a heroine with a need to be accused-maybe even multiple times throughout the novel (Academic).

Usually, the main character is alienated, and it is made clear that they are different from the rest of society (Princeton). A character may have

repressed feelings or memories that cause trouble in the story (Course).

Sometimes the villain in the story is the main character (Heck).

He/she is then called a “ villain-hero. This character usually has heroic traits (Beck). The reader is let in on their past so the reader is sympathetic for the villain and understands how the villain came to be one (Heck).

Characters within a gothic novel are unique compared to main characters in Other genres. Gothic novels usually make their readers feel a certain way. This includes sadness, mystery, fear, and uneasiness (Academic). There are different branches of Gothic literature. First, there is Psychological Gothic, which has haunted castles or houses as “ reflections of haunted minds.

” Edgar Allan Poe wrote many Psychological Gothic novels and short stories (Course). Second, there is Wilderness, which is when the story or main parts of the story take place in the wilderness, usually an eerie rest (Course). The third is Puritan/Moral, which has to do with witches and things that go against one’s morality. The fourth is Suburban Gothic, which has elements of horror. An example of this is Nightmare of Elm Street.

The fifth is Southern Gothic. Southern Gothic incorporates the setting and style Of the Southern United States. An example of Southern Gothic IS Harper Lee’s To Kill A Mockingbird. Finally, there is Urban Gothic, which has elements of mystery (Course). An example of this genre is Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr..

. Hyde, by Robert Louis Stevenson. Gothic literature can be defined as literature that uses a combination of the supernatural, scary, and the

frightening to deliver its point to the reader. A gothic novel gives readers to experience the strange and frightening things that go on inside of someone else's mind. The elements that are used are clever, and contain symbolism.

The stories are extremely interesting because they contain what both dreams and nightmares are made of. Dating all the way back to the 18th century, it has stood the test of time.