

Gothic Literature: Using X to Explore Characterization

Grade level: 9-12

Introduction

A common occurrence in gothic literature is the appearance of a doppelgänger — someone’s double or alter ego. Doppelgänger is a German word meaning “look-alike” or “double walker.” In literature, a doppelgänger is usually shaped as a twin, shadow or a mirror image (character foil) of a protagonist. It refers to a character who physically resembles the protagonist and may have the same name as well. Novels such as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Wuthering Heights* all contain doppelgängers.

This lesson plan, which integrates Literary Reference Plus and Poetry & Short Story Reference Source, asks students to consider the role of the doppelgänger in literature — how it influences mood and can give rise to the conflict in the story — and explore characterization by creating mock X accounts for a literary doppelgänger.

Essential Questions

1. How do the words, decisions and actions of characters reveal their personalities?
2. How do the words, decisions and actions of characters reveal their personalities?

Lesson Objectives

1. Students will define doppelgänger.
2. Students will identify characteristics of doppelgängers.
3. Students will understand how a doppelgänger can impact a story’s mood and/or give rise to a story’s conflict.
4. Students will analyze and discuss selected works of Gothic literature that contain doppelgängers.
5. Students will leverage X (formerly Twitter) to explore characterization.

Materials

- Computers/laptops/tablets
- Access to Literary Reference Plus
- Access to Poetry & Short Story Reference Source
- Access to X

Procedure

1. Instruct students on how to search Literary Reference Plus and Poetry & Short Story Reference Source. Here are some suggested works:

Full text available from Literary Reference Plus:

- *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *Dracula* by Bram Stoker
- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
- *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte

Full text available from Poetry & Short Story Reference Source:

- “The Red-Headed League” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- “The Secret Sharer” by Joseph Conrad
- “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe

Additionally, students can use a reference like *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters*, 4th edition, which provides character descriptions for major characters from novels. The full text for this title is also available on Literary Reference Plus.

2. Discussion Questions:
 - Have you ever been told that you looked exactly like someone else? How did that make you feel? How might this influence your interactions?
 - What characteristics/traits do doppelgängers possess? How might these traits impact the mood of a story? (Define mood as the emotion the story evokes in the reader.)
 - Why do authors use doppelgängers in their stories? How can a doppelgänger give rise to a story’s conflict?
 - How is the doppelgänger important to [insert specific story title here]? In other words, what is the existence of a doppelgänger meant to teach us?
3. Provide a choice of doppelgängers for students to work with or allow them to choose their own. Students may work alone or can work in pairs. Once each student or pair has chosen a doppelgänger:
 - Ask students to create a mock X profile for their doppelgänger to reflect the character’s personality (see handout and scoring rubric). Then have them answer the following questions:
 - Which characteristics define the doppelgänger?
 - What are the similarities between the doppelgänger and the main character?

- What are the differences?
- Which words or descriptions stand out?
- Identify 3 events from the novel. Ask students to respond to those events using tweets from the doppelgänger's point of view. How might the doppelgänger's responses differ from the main character's?

Extension Activities

- Choose 3 events from the time period in which the novel is set. Ask students to respond to those events using tweets from the doppelgänger's point of view.
- Choose 3 current events. Ask students to respond to these events using tweets from the doppelgänger's point of view.
- An alternative approach to the original assignment would be to have students pair up with one student creating an X profile for the story's main character and one creating an X profile for the doppelgänger and have the two "tweet" back and forth to each other about events from the novel or from the time period in which the story is set.

Assessment

Formative Assessment

The formative assessment will help students identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as help educators recognize where students are struggling. After students complete creating X handles and tweets in response to events, educators can conduct formative assessments including observations, questioning, discussions, practice presentations, think-pair-share, and constructive quizzes.

Summative Assessment

The summative assessment is designed to measure student achievement at the end of instruction. After students complete creating X handles and tweets in response to events, educators can conduct summative assessments including quizzes/tests with items such as multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill in the blank, and/or one or two sentence response to assess students' understanding of the chosen works or passages.

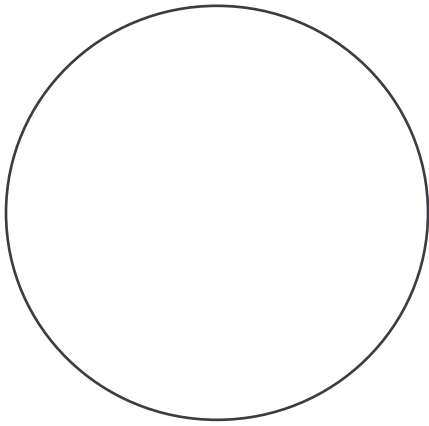
Doppelgänger X Profile Worksheet

Student name(s): _____

Character/Doppelgänger name: _____

Twitter handle: @ _____

Profile image:



Bio:



Location: _____



Website: _____



Joined Twitter: _____



Birthday: _____

Who am I following? (List three handles)	Who follows me? (List three handles)

Student Name(s): _____

Date: _____ Class Period: _____

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Profile Scoring Rubric

Possible Points	Category
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____/15	Twitter profile is complete and correctly set up with appropriate handle, picture, bio, etc.
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____/5	Required number of tweets are present; each tweet does not exceed 140 characters.
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____/10	Tweets are clearly written in character.
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____/15	Tweets are thoughtful and make sense in the context of the novel.
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____/5	Twitter profile and tweets use proper spelling and grammar.
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____/50	Total points earned
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Comments: