

Frankenstein Essay Prompts (based on theme log category)

DISTORTION

In questioning the value of literary realism, Flannery O'Connor has written, "I am pleased to make a good case for distortion because I am coming to believe that it is the only way to make people see." Write an essay in which you "make a good case for distortion," as distinct from literary realism. Analyze how important elements of Frankenstein are "distorted" and explain **how these distortions contribute to the effectiveness of the work as a whole**. Avoid plot summary.

MYSTERY

Many works of literature not readily identified with the mystery or detective story genre nonetheless involve the investigation of a mystery. In these works, the solution to the mystery may be less important than the knowledge gained in the process of its investigation. In Frankenstein, multiple characters confront a mystery. Write an essay in which you identify the mystery and explain **how the investigation illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole**. Do not merely summarize the plot.

TRAGIC FIGURE

According to critic Northrop Frye, "Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divine lightning." In Frankenstein, a tragic figure functions as an instrument of the suffering of others. Write an essay in which you explain **how the suffering brought upon others by that figure contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole**. Avoid plot summary.