

General Thoughts about Including Literature in the AP Language Curriculum: Literature as Argument

(I'll use Frankenstein for my example)

1. Brainstorm the ideas on which the work focuses. Make sure these are singular abstractions.

e.g. *Frankenstein*: Isolation, Over-Industrialization, Knowledge, Revenge, etc.

2. Have students then fill in this template about one of the abstractions (but make sure they use absolutely NO "YOU" statements):

(Author's last name) writes (Title) in order to illustrate that (idea) (what the author seemingly suggests (implies) about the idea that is universal to most, if not all, people)).

e.g. *Frankenstein*:

1) Shelley writes *Frankenstein* in order to illustrate that revenge often begets greater tragedies rather than providing solace.

2) Shelley writes *Frankenstein* in order to illustrate that knowledge, and the obsessive pursuit of acquiring more, has the potential to instigate moral decline.

3. Have them summarize events in the book that prove the thesis statements (the author's argument(s) based on step 2) that they generate to be true.

e.g. *Frankenstein*

1. The Monster and Victor drive each other to the arctic seeking revenge, and it neither receive the satisfaction of killing the other. Instead, they just consistently cause each other more pain. etc.

2. Victor refuses to admit his guilt at Justine's trial. Victor's quest in studying and obsessing over his monster at the University of Ingolstadt. Victor agreeing to make a mate and then refusing to do so. etc.

4. Now they have arguments with evidence to dispute. They can decide if what the author is claiming is true/partially true/ or not true, and they then have the opportunity to engage in the argument by countering literary examples with other examples from their lives. If you are studying American lit, find two pieces that may suggest differing perspectives about the same ideas and let students prove the other author's literary argument wrong by using examples from the contrasting author you have provided.

e.g.

Although Shelley makes a good point that there may be limits to what humans should know, she neglects to recognize the important discoveries that have been made when scientists pursue morally "questionable" tactics. ---Follow this with a stem cell article reference or something like that--