Exploring Gothic Horror in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* Unit of Work

(Suitable for all state-based curriculums for the Australian English Curriculum: Year 8)

Unit overview & lessons based on developing student knowledge of and skills in writing the horror genre and studying *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman

SHELLEY McNAMARA

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Shelley McNamara
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Unit of work:	*Exploring Gothic Horror in Neil Gaiman's* Coraline	**Year:**	8
Duration:	8 weeks	**Assessment:**	Write a horror short story for a young audience
Text types:	Narrative, reviews, multimedia texts	**Language:**	language of horror, text connectives
Concept:	Transformation and narrative		

Learning experiences:

- Reading
- Writing
- Viewing
- Listening
- Creating

Links to other learning areas:

- History
- Science

General capabilities:

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Information and communication technology capability

Essential Learning Goal	Overarching Question	Key Learning Ideas
Understand and use the structural and language features of horror short stories to create an entertaining horror short story for teenagers that creatively adapts existing texts.	What makes an effective horror short story for teenagers?	What are the language and structural features of horror short stories? Developing writing skills for creating written features of a horror short story Experimenting with writing horror short stories

Exploring Gothic Horror in Neil Gaiman's Coraline *Unit of Work*
Links to Australian English Curriculum: Year 8

Language

Sub-strands	Content descriptions	Elaborations
Text structure and organisation	Understand and explain how the text structures and language features of texts become more complex in informative and persuasive texts and identify underlying structures such as taxonomies, cause and effect, and extended metaphors (ACELA1531)	• learning about the structure of the book or film review and how it moves from context description to text summary and then to a text judgment
Text structure and organisation	Understand that the coherence of more complex texts relies on devices that signal text structure and guide readers, for example overviews, initial and concluding paragraphs and topic sentences, indexes or site maps or breadcrumb trails for online texts (ACELA1763)	• analysing the structure of media texts such as television news items and broadcasts and various types of newspaper and magazine articles • writing structured paragraphs for use in a range of academic settings such as paragraph responses, reports and presentations

Literature

Sub-strands	Content descriptions	Elaborations
Responding to literature	Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620)	• Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620)
Responding to literature	Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts (ACELT1621)	• identifying stereotypes, prejudice and oversimplifications in texts • exploring ethical issues in literary texts drawing on a range of examples from the texts to illustrate and substantiate the views expressed
Responding to literature	Discuss aspects of texts, for example their aesthetic and social value, using relevant and appropriate metalanguage (ACELT1803)	
Examining literature	Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and	• analysing and explaining the structure and features of short stories discussing the purposes and appeal of different authorial choices for structure and language

	discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches (ACELT1622)	• exploring traditional stories from Asia and discussing their engaging features, for example use of the oral mode, visual elements, verse, use of puppets to convey the narrative • analysing writers' depictions of challenges in texts, for example those faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • discussing a text's intended audience, whether the text is typical of its type and whether it has fulfilled its purpose
Creating literature	Create literary texts that adapt stylistic features encountered in other texts, for example, narrative viewpoint, structure of stanzas, contrast and juxtaposition (ACELT1625)	• using aspects of texts in imaginative recreations such as re-situating a character from a text in a new situation • imagining a character's life events (for example misadventures organised retrospectively to be presented as a series of flashbacks in scripted monologue supported by single images), making a sequel or prequel or rewriting an ending • creating chapters for an autobiography, short story or diary
Creating literature	Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using rhythm, sound effects, monologue, layout, navigation and colour (ACELT1805)	• experimenting with different narrative structures such as the epistolary form, flashback, multiple perspectives • transforming familiar print narratives into short video or film narratives, drawing on knowledge of the type of text and possible adaptations necessary to a new mode • drawing on literature and life experiences to create a poem, for example ballad, series of haiku
Literacy		
Sub-strands	**Content descriptions**	**Elaborations**
Interpreting, analysing, evaluating	Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose (ACELY1721)	• identifying the purpose and possible audience for a text • explaining the relationship between text features and structures and audience and purpose, such as identifying which group would be the most likely target for the information in an advertisement and justifying why on the basis of textual features
Interpreting, analysing, evaluating	Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722)	• identifying cause and effect in explanations and how these are used to convince an audience of a course of action • inferring the tone and emotional intent of a character in dialogue in a narrative
Interpreting, analysing, evaluating	Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources (ACELY1723)	
Creating texts	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual, and	• compiling a portfolio of texts in a range of modes related to a particular concept, purpose or audience, for example a class anthology of poems or stories

	audio features to convey information and ideas (ACELY1725)	• using appropriate textual conventions, create scripts for interviews, presentations, advertisements and radio segments • writing and delivering presentations with specific rhetorical devices to engage an audience
Creating texts	Edit for meaning by removing repetition, refining ideas, reordering sentences and adding or substituting words for impact (ACELY1726)	

ACARA *Australian English Curriculum*. Accessed Jan 10, 2018.

Content descriptions	Quality Teaching Framework	Lesson Outline	Suitable for homework	Resources
Literacy **Interpreting, analysing, evaluating** analyse and evaluate the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose (ACELY1721)	Deep understanding	**Audience and purpose of horror stories** **Guidance** 1. Explain, discuss or read notes from the 'Horror stories audience and purpose' worksheet about the audience and purpose of horror stories. 2. Choose a horror short story. For example, *Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allen Poe. Read the short story in its entirety. Consider asking students to choose their own horror short story to bring to class to work on. 3. Discuss and ask students to complete the exercise below: **Exercise** 1. With a partner, brainstorm the following about this horror short story: a. name and description of the main character b. name and description of one or two other characters c. description of the subject matter d. an outline of what happens in the story e. type of images accompanying this story (if any). 1. Answer the following questions about your horror short story. a. What age group would this horror short story appeal to? Explain why you think this by referring to two visual and/or written elements that show you this. b. What gender would this horror short story appeal to? Explain why you think this by referring to two visual and/or written elements that show you this. 2. Choose a potential purpose of horror short stories. (*Tick option*) • challenge conventions and ways of thinking • read texts at different levels • interpret, question and reflect on human behaviour • learn morals, values and beliefs • expose readers to different cultures and societies • other 4. Explain why you think this is the purpose by referring to a horror short story you have read or seen. **Diversity of Learners** To differentiate the curriculum, implement the alternative approaches and/or discuss and ask students to complete the exercises below:		Horror stories audience and purpose worksheet Horror short story, e.g. *Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allen Poe Self-selected horror story

		Extension 1. Choose a different horror short story. What societal values and beliefs are represented through the visual and written elements of the horror story? Discuss your ideas with a partner. 2. Are there any groups in society who would be offended by the ideas in this horror story? Explain why you think this. **Special educational needs** 1. Complete the activity with a partner. Minimise number of activities to complete.		