**Lesson 1: Introducing Dracula**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to introduce *Dracula* to the students and consider the central themes and motifs used in the text. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Understand the context of *Dracula* and the effect it has on the book
2. Be able to name at least three central themes of the book and explain the way in which these themes are explored and developed
3. Be able to understand the connotations of vampire stories, and why the mythology behind them is important to understanding *Dracula*

**Plan:**

* Begin the class with a general discussion of the book. What did the students enjoy about the book? What did they not enjoy? What was interesting about the way the book was written? Ask the students to note down three things they liked and three things they did not and discuss this as a class
* Ask the class to now write down as many things as they can about vampires, what they eat, what they fear, where they live etc. Where have they got these ideas from? Are these ideas solely from *Dracula* or do their influences lie elsewhere?
* Watch the video outlining the history of vampires and vampiric mythology. Why is this important to know when reading *Dracula?*
* Now begin to introduce the students to facts about Bram Stoker. What information can they glean from this that can help them understand the novel?
* Discuss the idea of ‘turn-of-the-century’ anxiety regarding increasing modernity. How could this have contributed to the fear of outsiders apparent in the novel? Discuss the late-Victorian era worries that many readers see reflected in the novel, such as xenophobia.
* Remind students of the concept of a semantic field. Brainstorm what would be in the semantic field encompassed within *Dracula,* what recurring symbols, themes and motifs can they find in the book (i.e. otherness, isolation, madness)?
* Ask the students to pick one theme and find two different examples within the book where this theme is explored or developed. Demonstrate an example of this with the theme of “otherness”, using two extracts from the text to highlight the theme’s effect.
* Facilitate a discussion on what the class think Stoker was trying to say with *Dracula.* Thinking about the historical context, is there a particular message or moral that can be identified? How do they think Stoker felt about people who were not like him?

**Homework:** Choose between the two questions below:

What do you think the moral of *Dracula* is? Explain your answer with reference to the text and the wider historical context of the late 1800s, thinking about the mythology of vampires we learnt about in the lesson.

**OR**

Why is it significant that *Dracula* was published at the turn-of-the-century? Explain your answer with reference to the text and the wider historical context of the late 1800s, thinking about the mythology of vampires we learnt about in the lesson.

**Lesson 2: Exploring Style and Narrative**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to enable to students to think more broadly about the way in which *Dracula* is written. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Be able to talk confidently about the unusual narration and perspective in *Dracula* and its effect on the way the story is told
2. Be able to identify the genre of the novel, linking this to the historical context
3. Discuss the blurring of the line between reality and illusion in the novel

**Plan:**

* **Start the lesson by discussing the genre of *Dracula.* What do the students think the genre could be off the top of their heads? Put a list of different genres on the board to help**
* **Watch the video on genre, asking the students to focus in particular on the ideas of ‘the Gothic’. How does this relate to the book? Do they agree that *Dracula* is a gothic novel?**
* **Introduce more elements of gothic literature, focusing on the setting. Discuss this in relation to the historical context we studied last week, thinking particularly about the theme of anxiety and fear**
* **Discuss the unusual narrative style of *Dracula.* Ask the class what is so unusual about it?**
* **Identify as a class the effect of the novel being written through a collection of diary entries, letters and other written records. Introduce the idea that this adds to the sense of immediacy of the novel, building suspense for the reader. Tell the class this makes *Dracula* an example of an** epistolary novel
* **Ask the class what effect it has that we hear the perspectives of many different characters. How does this add to the sense of horror that gradually creeps up on the reader? Ask the class if there is anyone we *don’t* hear from. Why might that be?**
* **Each student should now choose a scene and write it from Dracula’s perspective. They should try to mirror the language used in the original, and can either write it as a letter or a diary entry. For example, how might Dracula describe Harker upon first meeting him?**
* **A few students should volunteer to share their work with the class. How would it change the novel if we heard Dracula’s perspective?**
* **Discuss the blurring of the lines between dreams and reality in *Dracula.* How does this create a sense of disorientation for the reader? Does it have any implication on how real the events of the novel are? Could we read this novel as a story of Harker going mad?**
* **As a finishing activity, summarise *Dracula* in one sentence. Ask the students to really think about what they think is important enough in the book to be included in their very short summary. What is the essence of this novel, what is it all about?**

**Homework: Choose between the two questions below:**

**What is the role of sleeping and dreams in *Dracula?*** Explain your answer with reference to the text and try to use quotations

**OR**

**Do you think Dracula is a real character or merely an evil presence?** Explain your answer with reference to the text and try to use quotations

**Lesson 3: Close Textual Analysis**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson will aim to make students more comfortable with close textual analysis and how to incorporate it into their essays. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Be able to use close textual analysis when analysing extracts from the novel
2. Understand the way in which setting and tone is important in *Dracula,* identifying how Stoker uses these elements to create a sense of claustrophobia and suspense
3. Be able to understand critical evaluations of *Dracula* that point out some of the novel’s flaws, and to form some of their own

**Plan:**

* **Begin the lesson by discussing the setting of *Dracula.* Ask the students to write down three words that describe Transylvania. How does the setting increase the sense of Harker’s entrapment? Would they say this is a very claustrophobic book?**
* **Introduce an excerpt from the book which describes Dracula’s castle. The class should briefly analyse it, finding three examples of powerful language. What is the tone of this description? Does it match the adjectives they came up with before?**
* Consider the mirror incident in the novel, where Jonathan’s uneasiness about Dracula begins to grow. What can we infer from this scene? How does Stoker create suspense? What key features of a vampire does this reveal?
* **Discuss the tone of the novel. How is atmosphere created throughout? Touch on ideas such as symbolism and foreshadowing**
* Ask the students to consider what brings Harker to Transylvania in the first place. They should write their own version of the job advert that enabled Dracula to lure a lawyer to his castle. How can they used similar techniques as Stoker to build suspense and suggest something creepy behind the advert?
* Now, introduce the idea that some of the ideas in *Dracula* are outdated. Draw attention to the racism and anti-Semitism apparent in the book.
* Introduce the class to the concept of ‘critical reading’, whereby they can consider the ways in which *Dracula* has a complicated legacy as a novel
* Why is it important that we should discuss these issues in books? Facilitate a debate on this question in the class
* Read the article about anti-Semitism in *Dracula,* and relate it to the history of the time.
* For the last few minutes of the lesson, facilitate a wider discussion on what they have learnt from *Dracula,* what they think is the most powerful theme or message and why?

**Homework:** Write a newspaper report about Dracula’s death. Think about how a reporter from the late 19th century would talk, how they might feel about Dracula’s death and how they might portray the characters involved. Remember to use a newspaper template to make it look realistic, and to use appropriate language to describe the events of Dracula’s death.