

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

You'll find out what the marks are for when you read the next page.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of Scene 1 of *Frankenstein*.

SD1: From the darkness comes a deafening crash of thunder and a flash of lightning.

SD2: The curtain rises, and a spotlight reveals Mary Shelley, our storyteller, standing in a corner.

Mary Shelley: Long ago, in the German town of Ingolstadt [ING-guhl-shtaht], a young scientist had a dream.

SD3: The stage lights slowly come up on Victor Frankenstein standing in his cluttered laboratory. Candles struggle to illuminate the gloom.

SD1: Victor is surrounded by body parts—legs, arms, heads, eyeballs.

SD2: On the table before him is the body of an enormous man. He is 8 feet tall.

SD3: Shelley slowly walks across the stage. Victor does not see her.

Shelley: For two years, Victor Frankenstein has been collecting bones and organs, stitching together muscles and arteries. He has been constructing this creature from a collection of corpses.

SD1: Rain lashes against the roof.

Shelley: And now, in the dead of night, his quest to create a living human being is nearly complete.

Victor (*whispering*): Will nature reveal to me the secrets of life?

SD2: The candles flicker.

Victor (*louder*): If my experiment is a success . . .

SD3: Wind rattles the window.

Victor (*very loud*): . . . I will be able to bring back the dead!

SD1: Thunder rumbles through the room.

Victor (*shouting*): And a new species will bless ME as its creator. ME!

SD2: Lightning cracks violently, shaking the table.

SD3: Just then, the creature opens his eyes and parts his lips.

Creature (*gasping for breath*): Guuuh!

SD1: The creature's limbs twitch.

SD2: Victor jumps back, a look of disgust on his face.

Victor: Watery yellow eyes, sallow skin, misshapen arms and legs . . . You . . . you were supposed to be beautiful . . . but . . .

SD3: Another clap of thunder!

Victor: You are hideous!

SD1: Victor runs out of the room and the lights fade.

Here are two words that could be used to describe the mood of the scene:

suspenseful, spine-chilling

Something *spine-chilling* makes you feel terrified excitement. It sends shivers up your back.

Now let's look at what creates this mood.

1. Plot

Complete the sentences below to explain how what is happening in the scene helps create the suspenseful and spine-chilling mood.

In this scene, Dr. Victor Frankenstein is trying to _____.
_____. This is a _____ situation.

2. Setting

Complete the sentences below to explain where the action is happening and how this helps create the mood.

This action takes place in a _____.
_____. This setting adds to the suspenseful and spine-chilling mood because _____.

3. Dialogue

What the characters say and how they say it helps create the mood.

We underlined one line of dialogue that helps create the suspenseful and spine-chilling mood. **UNDERLINE** two more lines of dialogue that do this.

4. Word Choice

Look at all of the vivid verbs the playwright uses! These verbs help create the mood.

We circled one verb that helps create a suspenseful and spine-chilling mood. **CIRCLE** at least three more vivid verbs.

5. Imagery

The imagery the playwright uses also helps create the mood. (Imagery is description that appeals to the reader's sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch—also known as sensory details.)

We placed a star by one sensory detail that helps create the suspenseful and spine-chilling mood. **PLACE A STAR** by at least two more sensory details.

6. Set the Mood

Imagine that you are the set designer for a theater that plans to put on this play. Write an email explaining your vision to the rest of your crew—the makeup artists, lighting team, music and sound team, props master, etc.—so that they understand the atmosphere you want to create in Scene 1.