

Introduction

The television series **Not As Good As The Book** examines five well-known literary texts which have inspired several adaptations, either for television or cinema.

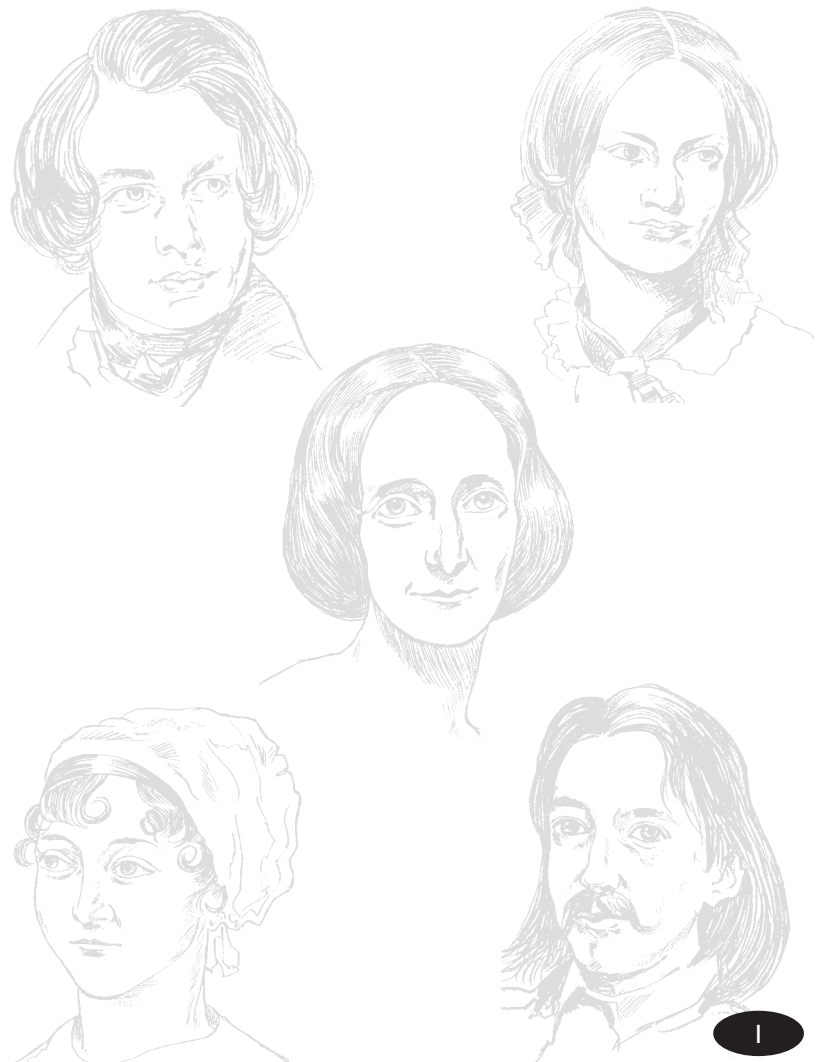
The programmes examine the potential or suitability of each text for the screen and highlight the relationship between the original text and the adaptations. As such, the programmes will be useful for all students who are studying literature or who are involved in media studies. It is hoped that they will be encouraged to explore the text and film versions more thoroughly on their own.

The notes for each programme are designed to support students who may be working independently, or as part of a group, with a varying degree of teacher mediation. For each programme, background information about the author is given and some of the main themes of the text are discussed. A brief summary of the adaptations used in the programme is then provided and questions raised to encourage reflection. The notes then focus on a few of the important issues that arise when considering the adaptations and encourage the student to answer key questions.

It would be most helpful if the programmes were recorded so that the student can refer to them while working with the study guide.

CONTENTS

Programme 1 Pride and Prejudice	2
Programme 2 Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	6
Programme 3 Jane Eyre	11
Programme 4 Great Expectations	16
Programme 5 Frankenstein	21
Further reading & viewing	25
Credits	25



Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen was born more than 220 years ago yet her humour, her irony and her attitudes seem to reflect the media's stereotype of a 'modern woman'. She looks at the norms of her society and questions them. Like Elizabeth Bennet, she gently – and sometimes not so gently – pokes fun at them.

Austen was born into the family of a country rector. She and her sister, as well as their five brothers, were educated at school but they lived a fairly quiet, middle class life in rural Hampshire. Her activities would have been similar to those enjoyed by Elizabeth Bennet.

Women were not expected to work and therefore it was important that they should marry well.

- ◆ What role in society should women have? Should they work?

Should a woman rely on support from a husband?

What if she doesn't marry?

Austen never married nor did her writing provide sufficient income. She and her unmarried sister were initially supported by their father and later by their brothers. There were two romances in Austen's life which almost led to marriage. In response to the second proposal she accepted and then changed her mind because she was not in love.

- ◆ What should be the basis for a marriage?

Compatibility? Financial considerations? Love?

Pride and Prejudice was Austen's third novel and, as with all her publications, it features a young, female central character. It has often been said that Elizabeth Bennet is the closest of Austen's heroines to herself.



Elizabeth is also part of a large family but she faces the prospect of a future in which there are no brothers to rely on. The Bennets have five daughters – none of them married. It is the primary aim of their mother to see them settled. When Bingley arrives in the neighbourhood she is even willing to risk her eldest daughter, Jane's health to throw her into Bingley's path.

There are four engagements and

subsequent marriages in the novel.

- ◆ Consider each of the couples. Why did each couple marry?

Which marriage(s) will last? Which couple(s) will be happy?

Pride and Prejudice opens with these famous words:

'It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.'

Austen gives these words to the narrator. They provide a thematic establishing shot, simultaneously presenting the norms of society and ironically questioning them. The reader is immediately invited to identify with the narrator and in that way with Austen's own point of view.

At the beginning of the novel, Mrs Bennet and her husband discuss Mr Bingley's arrival at Netherfield. Mrs Bennet represents society's views while her husband playfully pretends to be unaware of them. Much of the characterisation in *Pride and Prejudice* is achieved through such dialogue which is one reason why it makes ideal source material for screen adaptations.

From page to screen

Much of Jane Austen's writing is presented as dialogue. She was a great observer of character. In *Pride and Prejudice* the themes are universal and the characters are young and appealing. What broadcaster or studio could fail to be interested?

When looking for financial backing Andrew Davies, screenplay writer of the 1995 BBC adaptation, and his partner producer, Sue Birtwistle, described the project as:

'...simply the sexiest book ever written. Well, there's five girls aged 15 – 22 years old and their mother is desperate to get them married to rich men because, though some of them are very beautiful, they are poor...'

- ◆ In approaching a broadcaster or studio how would you describe *Pride and Prejudice*?



Pride and Prejudice

(Dir. Robert Z. Leonard/MGM, 1940)

Made in black and white and with a running time of only 116 minutes, this Hollywood version presents *Pride and Prejudice* as a comedy of errors. Starring Laurence Olivier and Greer Garson, the film follows a script which concentrates on the central characters and their romance. In true MGM style it ends with all five daughters married. This film is really an adaptation of Helen Jerome's play which was based on the novel but which misses a lot of its subtlety. The script, however, in which Aldous Huxley's contribution is significant, does display a significant amount of irony.



Pride and Prejudice

(Dir. Cyril Cooke/BBC, 1980)

A faithful adaptation written by Fay Weldon, this period-piece is typical of the type of costume dramas for which the BBC is renowned. It was broadcast in five episodes, with a total running time of 225 minutes thus allowing consideration of wider issues and the inclusion of minor characters. As with many 1980s dramas, it is studio-based. The production was co-financed with Australian television and stars David Rintoul (Dr Findlay) and Elizabeth Garvie.



Pride and Prejudice

(Dir. Simon Langton/BBC, 1995)

Producer Sue Birtwistle said of the novel, **'I'd like to do *Pride and Prejudice* and make it look a fresh, lively story about real people. And**

make it clear that, though it's about many things, it's principally about sex and money; those are the driving forces of the plot.'

Andrew Davies had the luxury of scripting an adaptation which would have a running time of 300 minutes. The production was shot on film and used a significant amount of location shooting.

- ◆ In what ways do each of these adaptations reflect the period in which they were filmed?
- ◆ How does each adaptation reflect the contemporary house-style of the production company?
- ◆ What did the 1995 production gain by shooting on location?

Austen's work has become very popular with film-makers. Four of her six novels have been adapted for the screen between 1995 and 1996. In the case of *Emma*, three screen versions were made in the same year.



Sense and Sensibility

(Dir. Ang Lee/Columbia Tristar, 1996)

Emma Thompson received an Oscar for her adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*. Her use of language is very close to Austen's own style.

- ◆ Listen to or read the section of the script in which Edward Ferrars first meets the young Margaret Dashwood. Margaret's character is considerably changed from that in the book. In the film she is more significant and given a 'tomboy' personality.
- ◆ Why do you think Thompson has altered Austen's character?
- ◆ What does this scene reveal about the personalities of Elinor and Edward? How did Austen reveal such characteristics?
- ◆ In what ways are the characters in *Sense and Sensibility* similar to those in *Pride and Prejudice*?

The BBC also made a screen version of *Persuasion* which was subsequently given a cinema release. After *Pride and Prejudice*, they decided to film *Emma*. The production team which made the BBC version of *Pride and Prejudice* also produced an adaptation of *Emma* which was screened on ITV. At the same time Buena Vista released a cinematic version starring Gwyneth Paltrow.

- ◆ List the elements of Austen's novels which could account for their popularity on screen in the 1990s.

Opening shots

While Austen uses literary devices to tell readers her ideas, film and television writers and directors have to **show** the audience.

In the 1995 BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, Andrew Davies chooses to open with a shot of horses galloping. He argues that he wants to show Bingley and Darcy as bringing new blood to the area. He portrays them both as energetic and Bingley as impulsive.

'I wrote in a little opening sequence, which isn't in the book at all. It shows Bingley and Darcy riding their horses, and Bingley deciding to take Netherfield. It then moves to Elizabeth seeing them from perhaps half a mile away... Of course she doesn't know who they are but, almost as if inspired by the galloping of their horses she turns and runs downhill towards Longbourn. So right from the beginning one's trying to express some of the vitality.'

Andrew Davies, screenplay writer

The sequence also introduces Elizabeth and the audience is very quickly positioned to see events from her point of view.

There is almost no dialogue in this opening sequence. It is the screen equivalent of a description of the setting and the main characters.

◆ Look again at the opening sequence from the 1995 adaptation and answer the following questions:

- 1 What impression is given of the two horsemen in the opening three shots?
- 2 Explain in detail how this impression has been created. Refer to *mise-en-scène*, camera angle, camera movement, composition, music and dialogue.
- 3 How are the similarities between the two horsemen underlined?
- 4 How are the differences between the two horsemen highlighted?
- 5 The musical score is used to introduce a third character. What does it tell us about her?

- 6 How does the editing establish the fact that this character is **watching** the horsemen?
- 7 Why is Elizabeth first shown out of doors in a rural landscape? What impression does this give of her?
- 8 List three techniques which have been used to create links between Elizabeth and the horsemen.
- 9 Why is Elizabeth shown running down the hill?
- 10 Comment on the relationship between Elizabeth and her younger sisters.

How does the use of voiceover help to illustrate the relationship?

- 11 Comment on the relationship between Elizabeth and her father. What techniques are used to suggest their closeness?
- 12 How does *mise-en-scène* help to establish the characters of Mrs Bennet and her three youngest daughters?
- 13 What information is given about Mrs Bennet and her younger daughters by the dialogue?
- 14 Why is Jane shown coming from a different room?
- 15 Why are Jane and Elizabeth shown in a two-shot?
- 16 In what way do dialogue and costume underline their closeness?

The camera, or the director behind the camera, acts as a narrator of events, selecting what the audience can see and from whose point of view. Some characters, such as Collins, the camera ridicules, others it makes heroic or lingers over. *Pride and Prejudice*, as Austen wrote it, offers Elizabeth's point of view. There are no behind-the-scenes glimpses of a smouldering Darcy. His transformation from proud and arrogant aristocrat to sensitive and supportive suitor is as much a surprise to the reader as it is to Elizabeth. Austen is writing from the woman's point of view and Darcy is as much a mystery to Austen as he is to Elizabeth.

Andrew Davies, on the other hand, makes it clear in the BBC adaptation that he is aware of two viewpoints. The audience sees beyond the pride as well as behind the prejudice.

Film or videotape?

'Although videotape is the dominant medium for television and works for current affairs and documentaries, I don't feel it serves drama well. It always looks undernourished; it's too present, too literal.'

Sue Birtwistle, producer

Shooting on film is more expensive. Each episode cost in the region of £100,000. It is also more time-consuming. The production involved 100 days of shooting – each of over 10 hours – and on average three to four minutes was completed each day.

- ◆ What has been gained by shooting this production on film? You may wish to compare similar sequences with the 1980 serial.
- ◆ Which scenes in particular have benefited from the depth and quality of the medium of film?

But it's not in the book

Andrew Davies says that every reader is an adaptor, visualising scenes and settings, drawing characters in their mind. He was fortunate enough to have six million pounds to make his own images and impressions a reality.

In Davies' opening sequence he illustrates the characters and situations of Darcy and Elizabeth. The audience does not need to be told about their relative wealth. It's there on the screen.

The sequence in which Darcy jumps into the lake was also added by Davies. He justifies it by explaining that he wanted to show another side to Darcy. He wanted to show a Darcy who escapes to another element, who in many ways feels just as trapped by society as Elizabeth does. This 'backstage' Darcy is also seen when he is shown fencing or taking a bath. Neither scene was in the original novel. Davies shows Darcy enjoying '...a brief respite from duty and from the tumult of his own tormented and unhappy feelings'.

- ◆ Do such sequences help the audience to identify with Darcy?
- ◆ Look again at the three 'backstage' sequences which Davies added.

What impression is given of Darcy in each sequence? How is his interest in Elizabeth communicated each time?

Although it was a very short film, the MGM adaptation of 1940 also added sequences. It was a way of showing characteristics quickly. The rivalry

between the Bennets and the Lucases was shown in a carriage race.

- ◆ Try to think of a new sequence which could be included in an adaptation which would show the competition between Mrs Bennet and Mrs Lucas. Refer to the novel for details but invent a new sequence and storyboard it. Remember that camera angle and camera movement can be just as important as action.

Prejudice meets pride

When Darcy first sees Elizabeth, the 1940 MGM film shows him as a figure of fun; snobbish and a little ridiculous. In the 1995 BBC adaptation, there is a hint of sadness and isolation behind his bravado.

In the novel Austen explains that Elizabeth is not dancing because there is a scarcity of partners. This explanation heightens Darcy's arrogance when he says, 'I am in no mood to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men'. The reader does not know or understand Darcy's motivation.

As Austen wrote it, Elizabeth's pain is felt as she alone hears his comments. She is left to consider the slight and chooses to turn it into a joke by telling others. Her liveliness and humour are illustrated. His pride is not in doubt.

Several changes were made to the novel's dialogue and action in the 1940 film. The director paints with very broad strokes. In this adaptation Elizabeth overhears Darcy's comments from a hidden booth. There is an element of farce as she and Charlotte Lucas listen to his conversation with Bingley.

- ◆ Why did the director choose to cross-cut between Darcy and Elizabeth?

What is lost by forcing Elizabeth to mock Darcy rather than allowing her to mock herself?

What is lost and gained by changing Darcy's dialogue to 'I am in no mood to give consequence to the middle classes at play'?

In the same incident in the recent BBC adaptation Elizabeth is again on her own. She brushes past Darcy who is left to feel the pain. He clearly regrets his words.

- ◆ Identify three sequences in the 1995 adaptation in which the camera lingers on Darcy looking at Elizabeth.

Why have these shots been included? How do they allow the audience to understand Darcy's thoughts?

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Robert Louis (originally Lewis) Stevenson is a Scottish writer often associated with children's adventure stories such as *The Black Arrow* and *Treasure Island*. He married a woman who had three children and took delight in creating stories for them. Like Dickens and Mary Shelley, he also wrote for periodicals and his works were sometimes serialised.



He started writing in his teens and travel columns led to his first books in the late 1870s.

These were about his experiences in France and Belgium. He eventually settled in Samoa, his own treasure island, but as with Austen and Brontë, he died in his early forties. Although most of his work is aimed at younger readers, shortly before his death he wrote *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. It was written to be published as a 'shilling shocker' because he was short of money.

- ◆ Make a list of novels by Robert Louis Stevenson. How many of them reflect the author's love of travelling?
- ◆ Read the opening chapter of *Treasure Island*. Is it possible to see Stevenson's background as a travel writer influencing his work? Select an extract in which he describes the island and compare it with travel articles in a newspaper. How does each writer create an impression of the exotic location?
- ◆ What do you think would have been required in stories to be published as 'shilling shockers'? List the elements in terms of typical plots, typical characters and likely genres.
- ◆ Does the story of Jekyll and Hyde fit this pattern?

Some of the film adaptations are merely screen versions of a 'shilling shocker'; others have tried to find a deeper meaning in the novel.

- ◆ What do you think Stevenson was trying to say? Are there more serious themes being considered in this novel or is it just a cheap thriller?

It was a common convention in Victorian literature to suggest personality traits in a character's name.

- ◆ Why do you think Dickens chose Pip as the name for his central character in *Great Expectations*? Read the opening of the novel again.

- ◆ Can you think of other Dickensian characters whose personalities are suggested by their names? List the characters and explain how they live up to their names.
- ◆ Why is the creature in *Frankenstein* not given a name at all?

The names of the main characters in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* are very significant.

- ◆ What does 'je' mean in French? What does Stevenson mean by 'je kyll' or 'je kill'? Explain how this is a suitable name/description of Jekyll.

- ◆ Hyde is the darker side of Jekyll. Why is 'hyde' or perhaps 'hide' a suitable name for this character?

In many of the film versions – especially the more serious ones – Hyde is not only a character who comes out at night, but he is also shot in shadows and often hidden by a cloak. In the 1996 film he is described as if he 'came out of the night'. In the accompanying flashback we witness a dark figure rush past in the fog.

- ◆ Why is it appropriate to use low key lighting for sequences which feature Hyde?

The opposite tradition is to shoot honest open characters in high key lighting, as if they have nothing to hide.

- ◆ Look at the way Jekyll has been lit in *Mary Reilly*. What does the lighting reveal about his character as the film progresses?
- ◆ Imagine that you are writing a screenplay. Begin by creating the two central characters. The plot, whatever it is, revolves around these characters.

Describe each character in a few paragraphs and decide on a name which would tell the audience about them.

Tell another student the names you have chosen and ask them what they think the characters will be like? Were they right? Did they have different ideas?

Je

- ◆ Find out what your own name means. Do you live up to it? Or is there another side to your personality? What name would best describe you?

From page to screen

The first screen adaptation of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was made as early as 1920. This silent movie was the first of many. It was a popular film and starred John Barrymore, who had the looks of a 'matinée idol'.

- ◆ Find out what a 'matinée idol' was.

Why have directors continued to cast attractive actors in the role of Jekyll?

One of the difficulties in bringing the story to the screen lies in the transformation of Jekyll into Hyde. In the early cinema, computer graphics and animation were unknown.

- ◆ Look again at the sequence from the 1932 film in which Jekyll first turns into Hyde. How does the director try to overcome the difficulties? How does he use the camera to help disguise what is happening?
- ◆ Compare this with the transformations in the film *The Mask*. Is it sometimes more effective to leave details to the imagination of the audience?



Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

(Dir. Rouben Mamoulian, 1932)

For many cinema-goers this old black and white film is still the best screen version of the story. The cause of Jekyll's troubles is identified as sexual in this adaptation. He is frustrated by delays in his marriage plans and his inability to deal with this is directly related to his transformations into Hyde. Just before the point of change the director has included a diagonal wipe linking Jekyll with his fiancée.

Wipe patterns are not often used in films today because the technique disturbs the 'reality' of the story. It is too obvious that someone is behind the camera. Television, on the other hand, still uses wipes to move from one item to another in news bulletins, and 'youth television' makes significant use of wipes because of the stylistic impression and apparent disturbance.

- ◆ News wipes are vertical. One picture knocks the other off the screen. Why is it more disturbing in *Jekyll and Hyde* to use diagonal wipes?



Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

(Dir. Victor Fleming/MGM, 1941)

Typical of MGM this is a very glossy production but the brutality of Spencer Tracey's Mr Hyde and the coldness of his Dr Jekyll make it difficult for the audience to identify with the main character. This means that they do not feel Robert Louis Stevenson's moral point that 'it could be you!'.



Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde

(Dir. Roy Baker/Hammer, 1971)

A new twist is added to the original tale when Jekyll becomes a female Hyde. This femme fatale lures East End prostitutes to their death to allow Dr Jekyll to use them in his experiments. In keeping with the style of the studio this adaptation emphasises the horror aspects of the story. The period of production is also reflected in the very British, almost 60's London script. The writer was Brian Clemens, who also wrote *The Avengers* and there is evidence of a certain black humour characteristic of Hammer.

- ◆ Describe the type of films typically made by MGM and those typically made by Hammer.



Dr Jekyll and Ms Hyde

(Rank, 1995)

Again Jekyll faces the problem of being transformed into a woman. This film is advertised as a comedy and the light-hearted approach makes little of the darker themes of the original novel although the central character is portrayed as a descendant of the doctor on whom Stevenson allegedly based his story.

- ◆ What is the name of the main character in this film? Why is that significant?



Mary Reilly

(Columbia Tristar, 1996)

The latest screen adaptation, in which Julia Roberts stars as Jekyll's maid, tries to add another dimension. Hyde is younger and more attractive than Jekyll and the maid falls for him. Hyde in this film is definitely 'bad'.

- ◆ How has the use of the word 'bad' changed in recent years? What does Michael Jackson mean when he says, 'I'm bad'?

Who is Mr Hyde?

Is Mr Hyde a free spirit? In the extract from *Mary Reilly* he is described as a 'mad dog'. In the novel Stevenson describes him in the following way:

'He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why.'

Hitchcock films are frightening because evil has a pleasant face or, at the very least, an everyday appearance. This makes the threat stronger and reinforces Stevenson's point that there is evil in us all. Shakespeare says that 'one may smile, and smile, and be a villain'. Robert Louis Stevenson takes this one stage further and suggests that all do smile but that all are villains.

Most screen adaptations of *'Jekyll and Hyde'* have failed to express Stevenson's point and have made Hyde a kind of monster. By doing this the audience is let off the hook and perhaps like Jekyll can then say, 'it was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty.' And thus our consciences slumber?

Perhaps *Mary Reilly* with its attractive villain is nearer to the original story than at first appears.

- ◆ Analyse the appearance of Jekyll and Hyde in *Mary Reilly*. What techniques have been used to make

the hidden side of Jekyll's nature more attractive than his usual self?

Films communicate in pictures and it is often easier – although less effective – to suggest evil by some kind of physical deformity, outer incompleteness suggesting inner corruption. However, the 'monster' isn't always bad, as *King Kong* and *The Elephant Man* have shown.

- ◆ Watch the ending of Steven Spielberg's *E.T.*

How does he show that the creature is good? What cinematic techniques are used to encourage the audience to sympathise with the alien?

- ◆ Look again at the transformation sequence in the 1932 film. Jekyll's features become, in some ways, negroid. His lips are fuller, his face fuller and his hair curlier. Do you think there is an element of racism in this representation? Explain your answer.
- ◆ Why do you think there was a protest about the recent Benetton poster shown below?

American films often represent the English as evil. In *The Dead Pool* Clint Eastwood struggles against an English psychopath.

- ◆ Find out the titles of other films in which very English characters are the source of evil. (You could do this by using reference books, by going to the video shop or by searching on the Internet.)



© Benetton

Two sides of the coin

Explain the meaning of this 1996 Conservative party poster in which Tony Blair appears to have a darker side. Why was it important for the Conservatives to suggest that there was another side to Tony Blair?



With thanks to M & C Saatchi

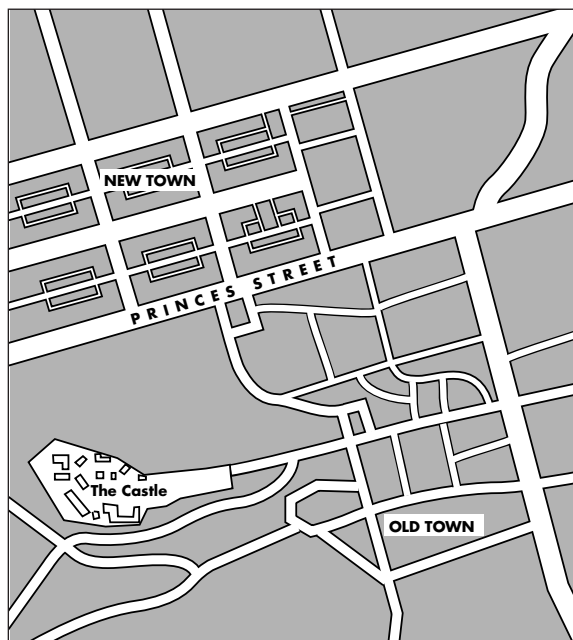
- ◆ Try to design a poster for a film in which the central character is evil but not obviously so. Use photographic techniques such as camera angle and lighting but do not make the character unattractive. You should also consider the use of colour.

Two sides of the city

The Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde is set in London but the story reflects Stevenson's Edinburgh upbringing. Edinburgh looks like two different cities, either side of Princes Street. Stevenson lived with his parents in the respectable Georgian New Town but was attracted by the 'bright lights' of the more squalid Old Town with its labyrinth of streets and closes.

- ◆ Look at this street map of Edinburgh which still reflects two sides to the city although nowadays the Old Town has been renovated to attract tourists and the New Town houses commercial and business activity.

As with all horror movies the secret lies in contrasting the relative safety of the respectable side of the city with its more seedy underside. London is another visual representation of Jekyll and Hyde, two sides of the coin. Victorian London with its smog and shadows seems to offer the ideal setting for things which come out of the fog, out of the darkness.



All towns and cities have two sides.

- ◆ Make a split collage to represent a nearby town or city: Newcastle, Aberdeen, Cardiff, Liverpool or perhaps Glasgow.

On one side put tourist images or happy, positive images. On the other side illustrate the less attractive side of the town.

You could select photographs from newspapers, magazines or brochures, or plan and take your own.

- ◆ What type of film would be more likely to use the positive images? What genre might be set in the less attractive areas?
- ◆ Imagine that you are a local screen agency anxious to bring film productions to the area. Write a few paragraphs about both sides of the town/city, explaining what types of films these areas would be suitable for and why.

... And Sister Hyde?

In the original novella there are no significant female characters. In every screen adaptation female characters have had a varied but always significant contribution to make.

- ◆ Why have film-makers introduced female characters?
- ◆ List the main characters from Stevenson's novel. If you were to write an adaptation of the novel for film or television which characters would you include? Which characters would you exclude? Which additional characters would you introduce? Why?

The original Eve

The Rouben Mamoulian version of *Jekyll and Hyde* seems quite explicit.

- ◆ Look again at the extract in which Jekyll is criticised for kissing a woman. The female character is a prostitute. The audience is left in no doubt. Explain how this is communicated. (Consider the way in which the camera lingers, the dialogue and the type of editing.)
- ◆ From what you know about MGM why do you think the equivalent character is a barmaid in the 1941 film?

The 1932 film was made before the Hayes Code was introduced.

- ◆ Find out what this code involved and when and why it was introduced. How do you think it influenced the 1941 film?

A new man. An old threat.

Two recent adaptations have made the feminine side of Jekyll's character evil. Neither of them are very serious considerations of Stevenson's work but perhaps they do place the 'new man' in danger. Femininity appears as a threat to the good and noble Jekyll. Both of these films were directed by men. The presenter of the programme suggests that they illustrate modern men's fears that women are taking over control.

- ◆ In what way might women be said to be 'taking over control'?
- ◆ Give evidence from the films to show that the male Jekyll is a victim of the female Hyde. Victims are often made to look vulnerable. How is Jekyll

made to seem vulnerable in these films? How is he shown to have lost control?

In *Mary Reilly* the masculine Hyde, if not Jekyll, is back in control. The maid on the other hand, always seems to be a victim.

- ◆ Julia Roberts is actually quite tall. How is the impression created that her character is small and vulnerable? Give evidence from the film. (Consider camera angles and set designs.)
- ◆ Does this suggest that men are back in control or is it more evidence of their fear of women? What do you think?
- ◆ Julia Roberts has often played a female victim. List films in which she plays women who could be described as victims. Why are so many films featuring this kind of issue being made at present?

A sign of the times?

As with the novels themselves, film adaptations illustrate the period in which they were made. The original plot is seen through the prism of the present.

- ◆ Look again at the extracts of the *Jekyll and Hyde* films used in the programme and if possible watch each film on video.
- ◆ How far would you agree with the following summaries:
 - 1 1932 **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**
Emphasis on sexuality?
Questioning of male & middle class double-standards?
 - 2 1941 **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**
Emphasis on brutality?
Questioning of male violence?
 - 3 1971 **Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde**
Emphasis on horror genre, style & black humour?
Questioning of traditional gender roles?
 - 4 1995 **Dr Jekyll and Ms Hyde**
Emphasis on female threat to masculinity?
Questioning of recent female roles?
- ◆ Could each film be said to reflect the concerns of the period in which it was made?

Select one of the films and investigate the major issues of the production date. You will be able to do this by researching in the library or accessing a CD-ROM encyclopedia. Find out the major public concerns of the period and consider whether or not you think the film was influenced by them.

Jane Eyre

Charlotte Brontë, like Jane Austen, was the daughter of a clergyman. She and her sisters spent very little time away from the confines of their Yorkshire parsonage, which was surrounded by the churchyard. The scene was one of bleakness. Forty per cent of children in the area died before the age of six. As adults the Brontë sisters were taken up with caring for their alcoholic brother. They created their own world and channelled their energy through their writing. Charlotte, being the most ambitious, sought publication.



Jane Eyre was her first and most successful novel, originally published under the title *Jane Eyre, An Autobiography* edited by Currer Bell. Each of the Brontë sisters initially used male pseudonyms.

- ◆ Why might a Victorian woman publish using a male name?

The Brontë sisters wrote novels which reflected their environment and experiences. Emily wrote of the wild Yorkshire moors in *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte of a plain woman who falls in love with her employer. In Charlotte's only period away from the family she worked in Brussels and in similar circumstances to those of her heroines.

Disease and disability are central to the plots of the Brontë novels. Two older sisters had died in childhood as a result of their time at Carus Wilson's School, not unlike Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre*, and having nursed their brother, Emily and Anne themselves became victims of consumption and died by the age of thirty. Charlotte survived until her early forties but, as with Jane Austen, her life ended while she was still young.

The concerns of Victorian novels are a reflection of the concerns of society at that time.

The central character in *Jane Eyre*, just as in *Great Expectations*, is an orphan.

- ◆ What other major novels of the period featured an orphan in a central role?

Why do you think this was common in literature of that time?

- ◆ What themes recur in novels being published today?

What events and issues are common in modern bestsellers?

Find out which books are in this week's top ten. What are their concerns?

- ◆ Why do these issues interest readers today?

Another Victorian convention was to turn the plot on a coincidence.

After her wedding has been stopped, Jane wanders the moors in desperation. She is alone in the world. Into this situation come St John and his sisters who look after the destitute Jane. Through this 'happy coincidence' Jane discovers that she is heir to a fortune and that her rescuers are also her cousins. She is no longer in need and no longer alone.

- ◆ Most adaptations have missed out this subplot. Why?

What does it add to the novel?

Modern films don't always avoid coincidences. In *Independence Day*, Mr President just happens to be a fighter pilot. In the *Die Hard* movies the character played by Bruce Willis is always in the right (wrong?) place at the right time. Soap operas are full of unlikely coincidences with long-lost or even previously unknown relatives arriving from afar.

- ◆ Think of any recent films in which an unlikely coincidence was important to the development of the plot.

Can you still enjoy a work of fiction if it is beyond belief?

From page to screen

Jane Eyre has never been out of print since it was first published over 130 years ago. Modern directors continue to be attracted to the story and the latest film adaptation was made in 1996. It contains all the elements which hold an audience: mystery, horror and romance.

A particular difficulty which arises in adapting *Jane Eyre* is due to the way it is written. It is told in the first person, that is the narrator is telling her own story and speaks directly to the reader. She leaves the reader in no doubt about her feelings. Read the following extract from the beginning of the novel.

'I was glad of it: I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgina Reed.'

- ◆ As a child how did Jane feel at the time? As an adult telling her story how does she feel?
- ◆ How could a director show such feelings? What actions, words, camera angles, music could convey the way in which Jane reacts?
- ◆ Read the paragraph again, then script and storyboard the sequence to convey Jane's feelings. You may decide not to include any dialogue.
- ◆ Compare your storyboard with a number of screen adaptations of the novel.



Jane Eyre (Dir. Robert Stevenson/
Twentieth Century Fox, 1943)

Like many of the adaptations of classic novels made in the 1940s, this one is often regarded as a particularly good screen version of the original. The plot may have been largely reduced to a 96-minute romance filmed in a stylistic Gothic setting but many of the difficult sequences are shot in a way which conveys deeper meanings. The musical score by Bernard Herrmann makes a significant contribution to the success of the film. Herrmann worked on a lot of Hitchcock films. Scriptwriters included Aldous Huxley who was also involved in Robert Leonard's *Pride and Prejudice*.

- ◆ Look at the opening shot of the candle wavering in the long, dark corridor. Why does the film open in this way? What does it represent?



Jane Eyre
(Dir. Delbert Mann, 1970)

Released briefly in British cinemas, but more widely distributed on American television, this production reflects the period in which it was made. It is something of a Laura Ashley production. Mann also directed *David Copperfield* and *Kidnapped*. The theme of the plain governess is undermined by casting a very attractive Susannah York as Jane.

- ◆ Why is it important to the theme of the novel that Jane should not be beautiful?



Jane Eyre
(Dir. Julian Amyes/BBC, 1984)

As with all BBC serialisations there is time in this adaptation (238 minutes) to explore the issues raised by Charlotte Brontë. Serialisation also leads to packaging the plot in six episodes.

- ◆ Identify where each episode ends. Why has each point been chosen as a suitable break?



Jane Eyre (Dir. Franco Zeffirelli/
Miramax, Rochester Films, 1996)

The latest adaptation stars William Hurt and Charlotte Gainsbourg and is directed by Franco Zeffirelli.

- ◆ Find out what other films Zeffirelli has directed.
- ◆ Which cinematic techniques could be described as typical of Zeffirelli?
- ◆ Some critics have described his style as 'beautiful but vacant'. Is this true of *Jane Eyre*?
- ◆ Select one sequence from *Jane Eyre* which illustrates Zeffirelli's style. Explain the ways in which his style of direction is evident.
- ◆ Charlotte Brontë was very particular about the Yorkshire accent. Does it matter that William Hurt is an American whereas most of the other actors are British? Does it affect the credibility of the film?

Woman's business

Charlotte Brontë, as Currer Bell, first published her work using a man's name. Her sisters used the names of Acton and Ellis Bell. It was not thought appropriate for women to earn a living. Another famous writer of the period, Mary Ann Evans also published using a man's name – George Eliot. Her novels too – *Middlemarch* and *Silas Mariner* – have been adapted for the screen. These were talented writers but aware of the conventions of their society.

Listen again to the poet-laureate letter to Charlotte Brontë.

'Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and, it ought not to be.'

- ◆ Why is it important that women should be involved in the arts (writing, painting, directing, composing)?
- ◆ Make a list of recent films which were directed or scripted by women. Is there any evidence in these films that they were the product of female talent?

Much of *Jane Eyre* is autobiographical, a woman writing from a woman's point of view.

- ◆ Can a man identify with a woman's point of view?

What difference might it make if an adaptation of the novel were directed by a woman?

- ◆ What other groups in society are underrepresented in the film industry?

Why is this important? How could it be overcome?

Zeffirelli has used a range of techniques to illustrate that the plot of the film is being presented from Jane's point of view. An example of this would be the first person narration (the voice-over by Jane). Some directors would have avoided this technique as too literary.

- ◆ Why do you think it has been included? Does it help the audience to 'see events from Jane's point of view'? Can a modern audience accept such a direct address by a character?

In Oliver Parker's 1995 film of *Othello*, Kenneth Branagh not only addresses the audience but he is in shot as he does so. This has the benefit of including

the audience in Iago's manipulation of Othello. Why do you think most directors avoid directly addressing the audience?

Zeffirelli has also used visual techniques to illustrate that the story is being told from the woman's point of view.

- ◆ How is the camera used to select and prioritise Jane's viewpoint?
- ◆ Can you identify sequences in which Zeffirelli has allowed the camera to show Rochester's point of view? Why has he done so at this point in the story?

Jane Eyre – the first suffragette?

The young Jane is without doubt a very spirited character.

- ◆ Find evidence from the novel to support this view.
- ◆ Consider one of the screen adaptations and explain how this childhood spirit has been shown. You should explain the contribution of script, actions, cinematography and music.

Several arguments have been raised to support the idea that *Jane Eyre* is a feminist novel. She struggles throughout to be independent and to support herself. Even when she is an employee, she is not afraid to give her opinion. It is one of the characteristics which attracts Rochester. To readers of the time she was somewhat shocking. She was after all a governess who 'did not know her place'.

Charlotte Brontë set out to write about a plain woman who was interesting and powerful, about herself perhaps. Her publisher described her as '...a tiny delicate, serious little lady...' with an '...independent, indomitable spirit'.

At the end of the novel Jane has her own money and her marriage appears to be an equal partnership. She says, 'I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine.'

One American critic has described Jane as 'lame'.

- ◆ Is the adult Jane – at the end of the novel – an independent woman?

Support your ideas with evidence from the text.

And a wife in the attic makes three

Many American reviews of the 1996 film described the Gothic elements of the story as 'absurd', particularly the fact that Rochester's wife has lived for years in the attic, apparently unknown to most of the neighbourhood. This aspect of the plot is central to the storyline. Without it, there would be nothing to stop the wedding.

- ◆ How did you react to this element of the plot? Why do you think that Charlotte Brontë included such an unlikely turn of events?

Rochester's wife is described as 'mad'. Her character is no more than an obstacle to Rochester's romance with Jane.

- ◆ How has Brontë avoided the portrayal of Jane as 'the other woman'?
- ◆ How do Jane's actions illustrate that she is not to be seen as the 'scarlet woman'?

Jane Eyre has been praised as a feminist text but it can also be criticised as another story in which the central male character explains that 'his wife doesn't understand him'.

- ◆ Does the role of Rochester's wife in the story suggest that this is not really a feminist text? Explain your ideas.

It's a man's world

Film-makers – almost always men – have shown Jane as an independent child but softened the image of the adult Jane.

They have also tended to focus on the story of the adult Jane and cut the childhood events to a minimum. For the first twenty minutes of the 1996 film Jane is shown to be strong-willed.

- ◆ What incidents of Jane's childhood have been included? What events have been cut? Can you explain why Zeffirelli has made these choices?
- ◆ Look again at the 1943 Twentieth Century Fox film and identify sequences in which Jane is shown as dependent on Rochester.

The ending of the film adaptations seem to return to the male point of view.

- ◆ List the shots in the closing sequence when Jane returns to Rochester.
- ◆ Explain how the director has framed these shots to show Rochester's dominance.

Have any other cinematic techniques been used to highlight his masculinity?

(Camera angle, mise-en-scène, music, lighting.)

Rochester: A new man?

In the 1996 adaptation Rochester is played by William Hurt.

- ◆ What other films has Hurt appeared in? What type of character does he usually play?

Why do you think he was chosen for this role?

- ◆ Look again at the 1996 film and list the shots in the sequence when Jane returns to the blind Rochester.

The film was directed by Franco Zeffirelli. In what ways does his interpretation of this key scene differ from Robert Stevenson's in the 1943 film?

- ◆ How does Zeffirelli show the changes in Rochester? What words is he given? How does he behave? How does the camera frame him? Is lighting used to enhance his image?
- ◆ Compare how Jane appears in this sequence with how she was shown at the end of the 1943 film.

Zeffirelli's use of light and shade is very significant throughout his film. He often represents Jane's mood through his use of light. Many of her happiest moments are shot in clear morning light. On the other hand much of the film is shot in low key light in which the shadows are as important as the light. This symbolic use of light becomes particularly significant when it is revealed that Rochester has been blinded.

- ◆ Describe and explain Zeffirelli's use of light and shadow in the closing sequence.

Into the sunset

Charlotte Brontë's story includes another chapter and ends ten years after Jane's return. She and Rochester are still happy. Jane brought Adèle back to the family home and they also have a son. St John's sisters have also married happily while he has remained single and has become a missionary working in India.

- ◆ Why does the 1943 film end with the reunion?
- ◆ How might a modern television serial end?
- ◆ How does the 1996 adaptation end? Why has Zeffirelli chosen to end the film at this point?
- ◆ Why do you think he chose to include the words 'THE END'?
- ◆ Was this effective? Did you think it was effective or was it too much? Why?

Better than the book

One of the ways in which films communicate is in their use of colour. They are, after all, visual texts.

The Brontë gloom of *Jane Eyre* is illustrated in Zeffirelli's film by his extensive use of browns, blacks and greys. These are the predominant colours.

Nevertheless, two sides of the Rochester–Jane relationship are highlighted by his use of reds and whites.

- ◆ What emotions would you associate with these two colours?
- ◆ Select a sequence in which red is used to illustrate passion. How has this been suggested?
- ◆ Identify a sequence in which white seems to illustrate reason overcoming passion. How has this been achieved?
- ◆ Can you suggest other ways in which Zeffirelli has used colour to tell the story?

Governess meets her master

The story of *Jane Eyre* remains very popular and there are many novels and films which concentrate – as Hollywood has been prone to do – on the unlikely romance or on some other aspect of Charlotte Brontë's original tale.

- ◆ Watch the 1940 Hitchcock film of *Rebecca*, based on Daphne Du Maurier's novel. Like the 1943

version of *Jane Eyre* this film stars Joan Fontaine in the central role.

- ◆ What other similarities are there between Hitchcock's film and Stevenson's film?
- ◆ In 1949, Fred Wilcox directed an early adaptation of the Francis Hodgson Burnett novel, *The Secret Garden*. Try to see the original film or the recent remake.

What aspects of the *Jane Eyre* story have been included in *The Secret Garden*? Classic novels are often considered as suitable for children. What has Francis Hodgson Burnett omitted from the Brontë novel in her reworking of the basic story? Why have these parts been left out?

One of the most popular films of the 1960s was *The Sound of Music* starring Julie Andrews as the governess who falls in love with her reserved and remote employer. The film was a musical with music and lyrics by Rodgers and Hammerstein.

- ◆ Find out what other classic novels were made into musicals in the 1960s. Why do you think they were popular at the time?
- ◆ How do you think the conventions of this genre affected the content and themes of the original sources?

The tendency to retell this basic Cinderella tale took a new twist in the 1990 film of *Pretty Woman* but at heart it's still a story of girl-made-good. *Pretty Woman* – coming at the end of the 1980s yuppie period – is a celebration of the new man which Richard Gere's character becomes, very much in the Rochester tradition.

Film-making is not the only industry to borrow Charlotte Brontë's ideas. Publishers have also made significant profits out of retelling and repackaging similar stories.

Mills & Boon is one of Britain's most successful publishers. Their speciality is romance.

- ◆ Look at a recent Mills & Boon catalogue and make a list of novels which have similar plots to *Jane Eyre*. Note beside each title which aspect of the plot is similar to the Charlotte Brontë novel.
- ◆ Why do you think this story and all of those with similar plots and ideas are so popular? What attracts film and television producers and audiences to this novel?

Great Expectations

Charles Dickens was brought up by a father who, although not unkind, caused the family to face poverty and hardship, including the Marshalsea, a debtor's prison. Initially the boy's education was basic and intermittent. His mother was anxious that he should contribute financially to the family. The works of Charles Dickens often feature inadequate and uncaring adults.

His first novels were published in magazines and periodicals and therefore had to be written as serials.

The Pickwick Papers, *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* were all published in twenty monthly instalments. By 1840, every episode of *The Old Curiosity Shop* was selling 70,000 copies. Dickens' work features accurate and at times cutting dialogue. It is easy to imagine such prose being dramatised. Dickens himself gave public readings of his novels and in 1868 a reading tour of America earned him £20,000.

It has been suggested that this gifted writer would be working in television if he were writing today, possibly writing serial drama or soaps.

Dickens' novels have many characters and lots of dramatic events happen in their lives. The stories often involve ordinary people as in the case of *Oliver Twist*, for example.

- ◆ What similarities are there between the novels which Dickens wrote and modern soap operas?

If *Great Expectations* were adapted as a serial drama (soap) the storylines might follow the lives of Estella and Joe Gargery as well as that of Pip. The novel concentrates on Pip's story.

- ◆ How are stories in soaps generally structured?

Many of the novels reveal the poverty of Victorian England in graphic detail. Dickens wrote about contemporary society in ways which frequently caused uproar. He featured characteristics and conditions which some people would have preferred not to have been highlighted.



- ◆ Why did Dickens present society 'warts and all'? What was he trying to do?
- ◆ To what extent can Dickens be described as the Tarantino of his day?
- ◆ Do you think that violence must be shown if it is to be condemned?
- ◆ Should poverty or cruelty be graphically portrayed in novels and films?

Great Expectations first appeared in twenty parts in *All Year Round*. It was serialised in the magazine

between December 1860 and August the following year. A young man comes into unexpected wealth and with his newly acquired independence he turns away from his family – an unpleasant sister who had been responsible for his upbringing and her more kindly husband.

Pip instead turns to Estella, the adopted daughter of Miss Havisham with whom he had spent time during his adolescence. He fancies himself in love with Estella. His hopes are dashed when it is revealed that his inheritance comes not from Miss Havisham but from a convict he had been forced to help when a child. He is further broken by the knowledge that Estella has married the undeserving Bentley Drummie. As it happens she is also the daughter of Magwitch, his criminal benefactor.

Eventually Pip goes abroad to become a clerk. He later meets up with Estella.

- ◆ In the novel how does Pip change when he becomes wealthy?
- ◆ How are these changes illustrated in the 1946 film adaptation?
- ◆ Are such changes in personality realistic?
- ◆ How would you react if you won the Lottery? How would you spend the money?
- ◆ How do you think it would affect your relationships with friends and family?

From page to screen

Great Expectations is full of intrigue and suspense.

There is much information which the reader suspects but which is hidden from Pip. There are many cliff-hangers, climaxes and anti-climaxes. Dickens had to ensure that readers would 'come back next month for more', and in that sense the structure of the novel is similar to a television serial.

- ◆ Briefly summarise each chapter of the novel and identify where you think each of the original twenty instalments ended.

Justify your choice of break-points.

In a six-part television adaptation where might each episode end?

Remember that you must finish each episode with some kind of 'cliff-hanger'. Each of the six parts must be the same length – fifty-five minutes – but do not just divide the number of chapters by six. That would have no dramatic impact. Look for the dramatic elements. Some episodes may rush through many chapters from the novel, while others may only cover one or two chapters.

Film-makers have been adapting *Great Expectations* for the screen since as early as 1917 and they continue to be interested in this story.



Great Expectations (1917)

The novel was originally adapted as a silent film by Famous Players and Paramount Pictures.



Great Expectations (Nordisk Productions, 1920)

Another early silent film which is very true to the harshness of Dickens' descriptions. Look again at the sequence in which Miss Havisham accidentally sets her dress on fire. Both the techniques and the detail may come as a surprise. In early cinema there were as yet no regulations guiding producers.



Great Expectations (Dir. David Lean/Cineguild, Rank, 1946)

This is considered by many to be the classic screen version of *Great Expectations* and indeed one of the best screen adaptations of Dickens' work. It was actually the second sound movie based on the story and it manages to convey the bleakness of Dickensian society and raise the major issues of the novel.

- ◆ Look again at the opening sequence of the 1946 film.

What cinematic techniques has David Lean used to instil fear in the audience?



Great Expectations

(Dir. Joseph Hardy, PolyGram, 1974)

Made for television, this film was originally planned as a musical. The songs were deleted and without them the production seems overlong, although only 119 minutes.

The coincidences and melodrama which are all part of Dickens' novels are over-emphasised and there seems to be a certain lack of conviction.

- ◆ What coincidences in the plot are difficult to believe?

Why has Dickens included such events?



Great Expectations (BBC, 1981)

This production is typical of the studio-based costume dramas of the time. It is faithful to the original and was produced as a serial.



Great Expectations (Australia, 1983)

A full-length animation of the story which, like some other screen adaptations of Dickens' novels, was filmed for the children's market.

- ◆ What aspects of *Great Expectations* make it suitable for children? What might have to be cut?



Great Expectations

(Dir. Kevin Connor/Disney Channel/HTV, 1989)

Although very nostalgic for a Victorian era that never was, this adaptation successfully communicates the kind of sentimentality of which Dickens himself was accused.

- ◆ Which parts of *Great Expectations* could be described as sentimental?



Great Expectations (1997)

This version was made in America and starred Robert de Niro in a central role.

- ◆ Find out other films in which Robert de Niro has appeared.

How would you describe the type of roles that he has often played? Is his role in *Great Expectations* in keeping with this?

Dickens: a Victorian screenplay writer?

Cinema celebrated its centenary in 1996. Dickens was writing fifty years before the first films were screened and yet he seems to encourage his readers to visualise the stories, to make their own adaptations. As well as giving his own public readings, Dickens was aware that his novels were read aloud as family entertainment. Thus he provides dialogue for many different voices and his prose often appears like a script.

- ◆ Read the following extract from an early encounter between Pip and Magwitch.

“Leave any for him? Who’s him?” said my friend, stopping in his crunching of pie-crust.

“The young man. That you spoke of. That was hid with you.”

“Oh, ah!” he returned with something like a gruff laugh. “Him? Yes, yes! He don’t want no wittles.”

“I thought he looked as if he did,” said I.

The man stopped eating, and regarded me with the keenest scrutiny and the greatest surprise.

“Looked? When?”

“Just now.”

“Where?”

“Yonder,” said I, pointing, “over there where I found him nodding asleep, and thought it was you.”

- ◆ In what way does this extract from the novel resemble a screenplay?
- ◆ David Lean is arguably the most successful British director and his great talent lies in his ability to tell stories in pictures. This first became apparent in his 1940s adaptations of two Dickens classics, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*.



Dickens, like Lean, almost appears to use shot composition to tell the story.

- ◆ Read the following extract from the beginning of the novel.

‘...the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and ...the low leaden line beyond was the river; and ...the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing was the sea...’

- ◆ How does Dickens manage to give the impression of a three-dimensional landscape? Why has he included this description?

- ◆ Why has director David Lean shot this sequence in wide angle? Why has he included it?

- ◆ Look again at the opening sequence of the 1946 film.

As with Lean’s *Oliver Twist*, there is no dialogue in the opening sequence. (In fact there is no speech during the first five minutes of *Oliver Twist*.)

In the churchyard the shots are much tighter, moving in to a close-up of Pip. The sounds of the wind, the trees and an owl frighten the boy and the camera moves in close to show his fear and ultimately to show the man of whom he is afraid.

Listen to how Dickens creates the same effect by giving detailed description. (In a series of close-ups?)

‘...the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip...’

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared, and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.’

- ◆ What is the effect on the audience of moving from wider shots to closer shots at this point?

Class Act

In the 1946 film, David Lean includes a shot of Pip after he has received word of his inheritance, in which the camera tilts to reveal Pip. The audience sees Pip in his new clothes. This shot and the camera movement are used to highlight the difference in Pip's character. Later, when visited by Joe Gargery, the change in his personality is communicated in a look. No words are required; the look from Pip to Joe and from Joe to Pip is enough.

- ◆ Look again at the 1946 film. What other methods has the director used to illustrate the effect of Pip's inheritance?
- ◆ Listen to the dialogue and consider the structure of the story. How has the scriptwriter tried to illustrate the impact of the money?
- ◆ In your opinion, does the 1946 film version encourage the audience to identify and/or sympathise with Pip? Give reasons for your answer?
- ◆ Compare the representation of the newly rich Pip in the 1997 film with this earlier production. How does the money appear to change Pip in the recent release? How has the screenplay writer tried to suggest this? How has the director demonstrated it?

Does the 1997 adaptation invite sympathy for Pip? How do you know?

Great screen expectations

It has been suggested that films of *Great Expectations* belong to a number of different categories. Clearly they are an adaptation of a classic novel. What does this mean?

- ◆ List the techniques and conventions which are typical of an adaptation.

How else could *Great Expectations* be described?

A thriller? A horror? A romance? A comedy?

- ◆ Identify the parts of the story which could be described in the following ways.

Thriller Horror Romance Comedy

Pre-production

- ◆ If you were a film producer what would you make of *Great Expectations*?

What kind of film would you want to make?

Give reasons for your ideas.

Imagine that you have decided to make a new screen version of the novel.

Without giving away the title, outline the main selling points to a potential backer.

What will make this film a success? What will attract the audience?

Audiences also associate particular stars with different types of film.

- ◆ What type of adaptation would star Macaulay Culkin as the young Pip?
- ◆ What genre might be made starring Keanu Reeves as the grown-up Pip?

Above-the-line costs

- ◆ In this film version of *Great Expectations*, for which you are taking on the role of producer, assume that you have been given the green light to go ahead with production. You must put together the key players in the production team: the cast, the director and the screenplay writer.
- ◆ List the central characters of the novel and identify a suitable actor for each role. Remember if the film is to be profitable the central characters are likely to be played by stars. Will you cast American or English actors?

Above-the-line costs (before production begins) also include the fees for the director and the writer.

David Lean is the most famous of the directors who have adapted *Great Expectations*.

- ◆ Find out what else he has made. Why do you think he was chosen?
- ◆ Who would you appoint as director of your screen version of the novel? Why?
- ◆ Select one film which you consider to be well written. Find out who wrote the screenplay and whether they have written other filmscripts. Identify the strengths of the script; for example, do they lie in the dialogue, the structure or the characterisation?
- ◆ Decide who you would want to write the screenplay for your *Great Expectations*. Explain why you have chosen this writer.



Great Expectations (1997)

- ◆ Can you explain why the cast, director and scriptwriter for the 1997 version might have been chosen? What is there in their previous films which would suggest their suitability for this production? In your opinion were these appropriate choices? Were they successful?

Audience

Dickens was very aware of audience expectations and reactions. In publishing his novels as serials he was able to judge the popularity of twists and turns in the plot. Audience expectations had to be met at all costs. Action and excitement had to be maintained. While *Martin Chuzzlewit* was being published circulation fell from 60,000 to 20,000. In the next instalment Martin departed for adventures in America. Much of the American episode is irrelevant and the 1994 BBC adaptation made very little of it, but in 1843, America was still very exotic and this was a way of maintaining audience figures.

- ◆ What parts of the plot would you choose to emphasise in your film of *Great Expectations*? Are there any sections or sequences that you would miss out?

The end, take two

Aware of audience reaction, Dickens changed the original ending to the story of Pip. In his notes he planned to send Pip abroad to take up the work of a clerk. Boy did not get girl or even the money. Great expectations, little to show for them. Dickens' view of society was often very dark.

- ◆ What changes did Dickens make to the end of the novel? Why?

David Lean's film ends with light, hope and romance. It was made in 1946, just after the end of the Second World War and the audience's view of the future was optimistic. Lean appears to have shared their view. There are shots of London buildings such as St Paul's Cathedral which almost seem to show a pride that the buildings, like the people, had survived the war.

- ◆ What other shots seem to suggest to the world that London is still there, still intact?

How would you end your film of *Great Expectations* today?

Trailer

- ◆ Select the extract(s) from the novel that you would include in a trailer for your new film.

List the extracts down the left-hand side of your page and detail the shots and camera angles. Your trailer is for the cinema and should be no more than 45 seconds in length.

On the right-hand side give the voice-over script and details about the type of music to be used.

Remember the genre you have decided to make. Include typical conventions of that genre.

What will the audience expect from this type of film and trailer?

How will *Great Expectations* be able to satisfy them?

Selling Dickens

There have been over 100 screen adaptations of Dickens' work. Modern audiences – especially Americans – love his work, even if, as in the most recent adaptations, the impression given of Victorian England is somewhat nostalgic.

- ◆ What is the stereotypical movie image of Victorian London? In what way is this different from Dickens' view of the city? Try to find examples from *Great Expectations* where the description is very different from the rosy-cheeked carol singers of Disney Dickens.

Producing films today almost inevitably involves a huge marketing campaign, with anything from frisbees to freebies, T-shirts to toys and CDs to CD-ROMs.

- ◆ Imagine that your adaptation of *Great Expectations* is to be accompanied by such a campaign. List the items which you think would sell and explain why those products would be successful.

The CD-ROM for *Independence Day* included a behind-the-scenes database which consisted of interviews and details about those involved in the production as well as storyboards and sketches; details about Area 51, a location in the film; arguments for and against the ideas presented in the film, and an interactive computer game. With such a volume of work and so many screen adaptations a CD-ROM of *Great Expectations* would have a wide range of references.

- ◆ Investigate the CD-ROMs which have been released at the same time as other films. List appropriate contents for a CD-ROM to accompany your new screen version of *Great Expectations*.
- ◆ Why might it seem inappropriate to make so much commercial gain from the story of Pip?

Frankenstein

Mary Shelley is best known for her Gothic novel *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* although she wrote five other novels, a novella and more than 24 tales and stories.

Frankenstein was written in response to a task which Byron set for himself, Shelley and Mary Shelley: each was to write a supernatural story. Initially Mary Shelley found it difficult and could think of nothing. Apparently she had 'writer's block'.

Later she lay down and almost dreamt the story of a scientific student and the thing which he created.

- ◆ Find out what a 'Gothic' novel is. What are the characteristics of such a genre? What kind of characters? What kind of settings? What are the thematic concerns?

It is sometimes difficult to write in examinations or when a subject is given by a teacher and yet this is the way in which Mary Shelley worked. Topics were suggested and she wrote stories to meet the requirements. After *Frankenstein*, she went on to write tales for an annual publication called *The Keepsake*. It was published each year in time for the Christmas market and contained a range of stories from different writers. As many as 15,000 copies were sold in a month. The poetry and prose were illustrated by engraved plates of works of art. In fact these were often selected first and writers commissioned to write fiction which would embellish each illustration.

In *The Dream*, an important scene had to be set in a pleasant garden because of the illustration. It had originally been set in a gloomy place to create atmosphere. In *The Brother and Sister*, a character's name was changed from 'Angeline' to 'Flora' in order to match the name of the engraving. The meaning suggested by the original name was lost.

Ironically Mary Shelley was writing prose adaptations of visual images; the novelisation of paintings. Novels adapted from film – rather than screen adaptations of



novels – are becoming very popular.

- ◆ Find out which recent films have led to the publication of novels. Which companies have published such novels? Is there any connection between the film distributor and the publisher? Why are 'novelisations' of screenplays/films being published?

Writing for *The Keepsake* meant that the length of Mary Shelley tales was decided by the editor. In *The Trials of Love*

she was forced to cover two years of the plot in three paragraphs. The 'annuals' influenced the development of the modern short story in which writers include only a few characters and the plot revolves around perhaps one event.

- ◆ Look at the illustration below and create a short story based on it. Write a prose adaptation of the image and do not exceed 650 words.



Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus was a bestseller for thirty years and yet it was initially rejected by two publishers.

- ◆ Why might publishers of the 1800s have turned down the novel?
- ◆ What elements of the story may have caused offence?

From page to screen

Frankenstein was published in 1818 and by 1820 it had been adapted for the stage. Just as with *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* the plays based on the novel tended to concentrate on external actions. Some of the internal disruption faced by the characters was lost and film versions of the stories have tended to illustrate the same emphasis on actions and looks. Today most people's knowledge of *Frankenstein* is gained from films and television. Listen to the street interviews in the programme.

- ◆ What do people think *Frankenstein* is about? How is this different from the themes of the novel?

As early as 1910 Thomas Edison made a screen adaptation of *Frankenstein*. Since then over 140 films – at the last count – have been based on Mary Shelley's story. Here are details of a few of them.



Frankenstein (Dir. J. Searle Dawley/Prod. Thomas Edison/Edison Corporation, 1910)

This is a 16-minute version of the novel complete with contemporary 'stars'.

- ◆ Given the extremely short running time of this film what do you think it contains? What would you include in a 16-minute version of *Frankenstein*? Try to find out what the actual 1910 film included.



Frankenstein (Dir. James Whale/Universal, 1931)

This is considered to be the classic screen adaptation of the novel. It established the visual look which many subsequent films gave to the 'monster'. It also starred Boris Karloff in the role of the creature and for many people Boris Karloff is synonymous with *Frankenstein*. Several other *Frankenstein* films were made by Universal.



The Curse of Frankenstein (Dir. Terrence Fisher/Hammer, 1957)

This is one of many *Frankenstein* films made by the Hammer studio. This film was the product of Terrence Fisher and starred Peter Cushing, a Hammer regular who often appeared in *Frankenstein* movies.

- ◆ In the table below list *Frankenstein* films which involved either Whale, Karloff, Fisher or Cushing. Some films involved more than one of them. Try to suggest what kind of *Frankenstein* each of them represented.



Frankenstein (Dir. James Ormerod/Yorkshire Television, 1983)

This is a British television adaptation directed by James Ormerod who had also directed *Upstairs, Downstairs*. It's a faithful adaptation in which the theme of rejection is explored and unlike the Hammer films the creature is portrayed as a victim and audience sympathies are aroused.

- ◆ Look at the extract in which Frankenstein is slashed with a broken bottle. How does the director help the audience to identify with the creature? What techniques does he use?



Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (Dir. Kenneth Branagh/Columbia Tristar, 1994)

This is the most recent screen adaptation of the *Frankenstein* story and it returns to many of the concerns of the original. In this film the creature talks, just as he does in the novel. Branagh says he was presenting a Gothic fairy tale.

- ◆ What evidence is there in the film that it was based on the Gothic tradition? List the conventions of Gothic literature and try to find examples of how Branagh has incorporated these into the film.

Actor/Director	Frankenstein films	Emphasis
James Whale		
Boris Karloff		
Terrence Fisher		
Peter Cushing		

Whose name? Who's to blame?

In its first two editions, the novel *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* was published anonymously. It was felt that the public would be unable to accept such a macabre tale as the work of a teenage girl. Just like the Brontës, Mary Shelley found it difficult to be taken seriously as a female writer. Some writers associated with a particular type of literature have used a different name when writing in another genre. Later editions included an introduction by Mary Shelley's husband, the poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, in which he all but claims he is the author. The mystery surrounding the author seems to have increased the novel's popularity. Creators' names raise expectations in the audience.

- ◆ What do you expect of a Stephen King novel? What is characteristic of a Dickens novel? What are the typical ingredients of a Steven Spielberg film? What is unique about a David Lean film?

In *Frankenstein*, the creature is not given a name; only the creator – Victor Frankenstein. There has been some suggestion that this name was based on Benjamin Franklin, who was conducting experiments with electricity at the time.

- ◆ Find out about Benjamin Franklin's work. If the name is taken from him what does it suggest about Mary Shelley's point of view? Why do you think she chose the name 'Victor'?
- ◆ Why was the creature not given a name? Why is this important? What does it tell us about the issues explored in the novel?
- ◆ Look at the extract from the 1994 film in which the creature explains that he was never given a name. Why is it ironic that most people think that the creature is called Frankenstein?

The novel was subtitled *The Modern Prometheus*.

- ◆ Find out who Prometheus is. What is significant about the chemical element promethium? Why has it been given this name?

In 1994, Kenneth Branagh directed and starred in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. The film was made in association with Francis Ford Coppola's Zoetrope Productions. Two years earlier the company had been behind *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

- ◆ Why do you think the original authors' names were included in the film titles? What does it suggest about the films?
- ◆ Summarise the plots of Mary Shelley's novel and Kenneth Branagh's film. What differences are there between them? In what sense is the 1994 film *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*?
- ◆ Make a list of other films in which Kenneth Branagh was either an actor and/or director. What do these films have in common? Describe their common characteristics and give evidence from his films.
- ◆ What would an audience expect of Kenneth Branagh's version of *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*? What characteristics of a Kenneth Branagh movie are evident in this film? Give examples.

Frankenstein and Frankenstein and...

- ◆ What makes the story of *Frankenstein* so popular?
- ◆ Why do you think there have been so many screen adaptations of *Frankenstein*?
- ◆ Look at the list of adaptations below. Remember that over 140 *Frankenstein* films have been made, each one trying to do something a little different. From the titles can you tell the film genres?

1935	The Bride of Frankenstein
1943	Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man
1966	Frankenstein Created Woman
1969	Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed
1973	Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell
1973	Frankenstein: The True Story
1974	Young Frankenstein
1988	Frankenstein General Hospital
1991	Frankenstein: The College Years

- ◆ Check your ideas by accessing the Internet Movie Database where you can find out about a wide range of *Frankenstein* films.
- ◆ Cross-reference the directors and stars. Which film-makers have made a career out of *Frankenstein*? Do they always present the same image of the 'monster' in their films?

Internet Movie Database <http://www.imdb.com>

Frankie goes to Hollywood

It can be argued that *Frankenstein* remains popular because each generation reads into the story warnings about its own preoccupations. Consider how the focus of the following screen versions of the *Frankenstein* story reflect the period in which they were made.

1931: 'Someone's son'

Boris Karloff's make-up took over six hours to apply. It was based on photographs of wounded soldiers from the First World War. It was not beyond belief and was designed to arouse sympathy rather than condemnation. The scene in which the creature throws the little girl into the lake was originally cut from the American release of the film. Boris Karloff insisted that it was too horrific and that the audience would not be able to relate to his character. The film was the *Pulp Fiction* of its day. The sequence was cut at the point where the creature advances towards the little girl. However, by editing out the action, the audience was left to imagine what had happened.

- ◆ Is it worse to read about or to see horrific events on screen? Why?

The creature is shown like an innocent baby reaching for the sunlight, like a joyous child throwing flowers in a lake and then like an adult who has become a savage killer. His development follows the pattern of human growth.

- ◆ What difference would it have made if the creature were shown to be immediately brutal?
- ◆ What is this film saying about people like the creature? What similarities are there between the creature in this film and Lenny in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*?
- ◆ How does this film reflect the concerns of the Great Depression of the 1930s?

1957: 'The mad scientist'

The 1957 'monster' is also a victim.

- ◆ In what ways does the creature in this film resemble a victim of a nuclear attack? Why was this significant for the audience at the time?
- ◆ What were typical plots for science fiction films made in America in the 1950s? What does this tell us about American society and its worries at the time?

- ◆ What stories were told in contemporary British science fiction? How does this reflect British concerns? The Hammer *Frankenstein* film made in 1957 was called *The Curse of Frankenstein*. What does this suggest?

1994: 'He was my father'

In the 1994 adaptation, the concern is once again for the creature. Robert de Niro as Frankenstein's 'monster' is easier to relate to than his psychopathic character in *Cape Fear*.

In this version the creature is allowed to talk, just as he did in the novel and this helps to illustrate his point of view.

- ◆ Select an extract from *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* in which the camera also gives the creature's point of view. List the shots and explain why positioning the audience in this way is important.
- ◆ Kenneth Branagh's Victor Frankenstein pursues his research with little regard for the consequences. What happens to him in the end? In what way can this be seen to be a warning to society?
- ◆ Choose one sequence from the film in which the scientist is shown to be irresponsible. What techniques have been used to create this impression of him?

Alfred Hitchcock was one of the first directors to challenge the notion of the stereotypical evil character as one who could be instantly recognised by his unattractive looks. In his films, the murderer is often very attractive, and attacks frequently take place in settings previously thought to be safe, for example the shower sequence in *Psycho*. Hitchcock's films often shocked by showing that one could smile and still be a villain.

The Frankenstein story illustrates the other side of this idea. The 'monster' – always shown as grotesque – is also shown in many ways as an innocent victim.

- ◆ How does the 1994 film highlight this aspect of the 'monster'?
- ◆ What was Mary Shelley saying about deformity? Was she saying that inner corruption is reflected in outer disfigurement? Or was she challenging the idea that physical deformity is evidence of moral decay?

Further reading and viewing

Film education

Classic Books, Classic Films Ian Kelly

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein Ian Wall

Sense and Sensibility Rod Dixon

Jane Eyre Anita Russell

British Film Institute/BBC

Screening Middlemarch Cary Bazelgette & Christine James

I 874239 371

Penguin

The Making of Pride and Prejudice Sue Birtwistle & Susie Conklin

0-14-02557-X

World Wide Web sites

See the 4 Learning web site for up-to-date links with other resources.

Internet Movie Database <http://www.imdb.com>

Project Gutenberg <http://www.promo.net/pg>

Mary Shelley http://www.cybernex.net/~berardin/movies/m/mary_shellys.html

Pride and Prejudice http://www.cybernex.net/~berardin/movies/p/pride_pr.html

Dickens <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/experience/englC.html>

Recent adaptations of classic novels

<i>Persuasion</i>	1995
<i>Emma</i>	1996 – Three screen adaptations
<i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	1996
<i>The Mayor of Casterbridge</i>	1996
<i>The Woodlanders</i>	1996 – Channel 4
<i>The Wessex Tales</i>	1996
<i>The Return of the Native</i>	1996
<i>Jude</i>	1996
<i>Great Expectations</i>	1997

Credits

Not As Good As The Book was produced for
Channel 4 by Tetra Films Limited

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Producer **Alan Horrox**

Associate Producer **Sacha Whitmarsh**

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