Teachers' Notes: KS4 Frankenstein and Science

Content outline

This interactive online workshop will support students in exploring the scientific background and inspiration behind Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*.

Setting the novel in the context of science and the Enlightenment, we will investigate how Shelley harnesses Frankenstein's fascination with old forms of knowledge like the occult along with new discoveries in scientific fields such as chemistry and electricity in the late 18th and early 19th-centuries.

Students will discover more about objects and images from the Museum's collection.

Oil painting believed to be of chemist Humphrey Davy (inventor of the Davy Lamp) with his assistant. HSM Inv. 56577

Learning

Students will:
- Learn about developments in science during the time of Mary Shelley including chemistry, electricity and medicine
- Analyse passages of text for references to science and relate these to the context of the Enlightenment
- Analyse the symbolic significance of science and technology in *Frankenstein*

Curriculum

The session links to the following areas of the curriculum:

English literature:
- Frankenstein and gothic novel
- Science in society

History:
- Science and the Enlightenment

Pre-session activities

Explore online resources:
- *Watch the film* **Frankenstein and electricity:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75xm4fidqH4&t=2s or at
https://www.hsm.ox.ac.uk/online-learning-secondary#collapse2958601

- *Science Fiction: The science that fed Frankenstein*
https://www.nature.com/articles/535490a
- *Knowledge and discovery in Frankenstein: BBC bitesize*
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z8hf82p/revision/2

Post-session activities

Check out the additional resources available on the Bodleian's website include further references and a Frankenstein timeline:

https://visit.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/learning/resources-teachers/frankenstein-revisited-resource

IT set-up requirements and resources

This session would normally be delivered to a whole class using a VDU positioned at the front of the classroom and a link supported by an approved platform such as **Microsoft Teams** or **Google Meet** which can be set up by either the school or the Museum.

The workshop facilitator would normally expect to have a camera view of the classroom and microphone to pick-up sound in order to facilitate Q&A interaction which may need to be supported by the classroom teacher.

The workshop facilitator would normally expect to text the link with the class teacher at an agreed time at least 2 days before the workshop takes place in order to allow time to remedy any IT issues.

Activity resources needing printing would be emailed to the class teacher in advance of the workshop and printed copies should be handed out to the students before the session starts.