

## ***Curse of the Were Rabbit* (dir. Nick Park & Steve Box, 2005)**

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### **Key Stage 3 English**

Students closely analyse *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*, and also develop their knowledge of both the Gothic genre and the Parody sub-genre of film.

This lesson should take place at the end of a Gothic Scheme of Work, where students discover what 'parody' is, and create their own parodies. Students should have a working knowledge of the conventions of the Gothic genre when this film is studied.

#### **Curriculum Links**

- Understanding conventions of genre; creative writing skills; knowledge of audience and purpose.

#### **Lesson Objective**

To understand what Parody is, and how *The Curse of the Were Rabbit* is a parody of the Gothic genre.

#### **You will need...**

- **Trailer:** DVD of *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*
- **Main Attraction:** 'How is it parodied?' resource.



## Activities

### TRAILER: WHAT IS A PARODY?

Before watching *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*, students need to understand what parody is. Explain that a parody, also called a 'spoof', is when an existing film, or genre of films (or book, or work of art), is imitated for comic effect. This comic effect is achieved in two ways: exaggeration and inversion (you may have to explain what these two words mean). To get the idea embedded into students' heads, show them some examples of parody. Before looking at an example, ask students to, while they are watching/reading, think about how the parody imitates the original and how it exaggerates or inverts it.

There are loads of examples, but some good ones are:

- Dr Evil making Evil Plans (language warning near the end of clip) – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-PIdaqCyU>
- Any French and Saunders parody (Lord of the Rings, Famous Five, Shopping Channel and Harry Potter are all good ones) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCYbRUmzIb0>
- The Twilight parody 'NightLight' is very funny for readers and watchers of Twilight and links nicely to the Gothic genre – Extract available at [http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20308569\\_20317217,00.html](http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20308569_20317217,00.html) (probably better suited to higher ability students)

Following each example, conduct a discussion with students to check understanding. Ask:

- How is this a parody?
- What aspects of the genre/original does it exaggerate and how does this add humour?
- What aspects does it invert – how does this add humour?

### MAIN ATTRACTION: HOW IS CURSE OF THE WERE RABBIT A PARODY?



Explain that *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* is a parody of the Gothic, and ask students what they might expect to be parodied (haunted houses, perverse vicars, monsters etc.). You could ask students to note these down and tick them off as they are watching, like a form of Gothic bingo.

Watch the film.

Following this, give the students the 'How is it parodied?' worksheet and get them to fill it in – they could work in pairs to do this. Once that is completed, talk through it as a class, and think about whether the film is a successful Gothic parody and why.

#### **END CREDITS: MAKE YOUR OWN**

Now it's your class' turn. Explain to them that they will be creating their own Gothic parody, where they exaggerate and invert conventions for humour. Depending on the skills and preferences of the class, this could be a piece of written work or a short drama piece.

Ask students to choose one or two of the conventions from the 'How is it Parodied?' worksheet and create their own parody of these conventions, either to be performed or read out.

If students are struggling to come up with their own parody ideas, here are a few for inspiration:

- The damsel in distress is actually the villain
- The damsel in distress ends up saving the hero, who turns out to be not as brave as previously thought
- The monster is something decidedly un-scary - a baby? Puppy?
- Weather is used at totally inappropriate moments of little to no tension

After students have performed or read each other's' parodies, make sure you discuss why their work was a parody, what about it was a parody and whether this was done successfully.

## Extras

### Other Ideas

- Use the 'Conventions Bingo' resource while you are watching the film.
- A tweaked version of this lesson (see separate plan) could be used to teach parody to Key Stage 5 students studying the Gothic at A-Level.

### Read

- *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen (1817)
- *The Wolfman* by Jonathan Maberry (2010)
- , *The Wolf's Hour* by Robert McCammon (1990)

### Watch

- *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (dir. Jim Sharman, 1975)
- *Little Shop of Horrors* (dir. Frank Oz, 1986)
- *Young Frankenstein* (dir. Mel Brooks, 1974)

CONVENTION	HOW IS IT SEEN IN THE CURSE OF THE WERE RABBIT?	HOW IS IT EXAGGERATED OR INVERTED?
Scary Monster		
Damsel in Distress		
Scary Settings		
Use of religious figures and churches		
Community come together to deal with threat		
Use of music and pathetic fallacy to create atmosphere		