***FRANKENSTEIN* ESSAY**

**Below is a list of essay prompts. You may choose one to write about OR you may develop your own topic based off the discussion questions or the key vocabulary. For example: you may explore how Shelley uses gothic elements of terror to create suspense and fright; or examine elements of the sublime and the grotesque; you may take a psycho-biographical critique; or argue the degree to which *Frankenstein* can be considered Romanticism vs. Enlightenment; or Shelley’s treatment of entrapment. The essay must meet the following minimum requirements:**

* Demonstration of MLA research and formatting
* Documentation skills incorporating at least three sources including both primary (*Frankenstein*) and secondary sources
* Length of 4-5 pages (This means four FULL pages and on to the fifth.)

1. The horror story is just as popular today as it was in Shelley’s early nineteenth century England. What is the appeal of this genre? Discuss elements from *Frankenstein* that parallel characteristics of modern horror tales such as Stephen King’s, or contemporary films such as *Nightmare on Elm Street*. What are the effects of these elements on the audience, and how might that explain our fascination?

2. Dr. Frankenstein finds himself unable to “mother” the being he creates. Why does Shelley characterize Victor in this way? What does this choice say about the role of women during Shelley’s era? Discuss the significance of parent-child relationships and birth references throughout the novel.

3. Dreams and nightmares play a recurrent role throughout Shelley’s novel. Trace the use of dreams throughout the book, with emphasis on how they relate to changes in Victor’s character.

4. Why are there so many references to sickness and fever in *Frankenstein*? Trace these references throughout the novel. What broader theme might Shelley be expressing?

5. Ice is a prevalent image and an integral plot device in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. How is it appropriate that the novel ends in ice? What is the symbolism of ice for the characters and the story?

6. Harold Bloom asserts that “all Romantic horrors are diseases of excessive consciousness, of the self unable to bear the self.” Does this Romantic characteristic apply to Victor and his treatment of the creature? Explain. Consider the fact that Victor never gives the creature a name.

7. Consider the character of Justine Moritz. While her story only takes two chapters of Shelley’s novel, her role as a secondary character is significant. What is Shelley’s purpose in telling Justine’s story? What truths about her time is Shelley revealing?

8. The patriarchal society of *Frankenstein* is one in which men pursue their goals against hopeless odds. In light of this work ethic, is Robert Walton a failure when he turns his ship around at the end of the novel? How would Victor Frankenstein answer this question? What would Mary Shelley say? What do you think?

9. The subtitle of Frankenstein is The Modern Prometheus; to whom was Shelley referring? How does Prometheus compare and contrast to the character to whom Shelley was referring. What was the fate of Prometheus?

10. Choose a complex and important character in Frankenstein who might on the basis of the character’s actions alone be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might.