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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
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Mapping Frankenstein

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For eighth-grade students, even those who are academically gifted, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* remains a challenging and thought-provoking text. This unit utilizes the study of both geographical and conceptual maps to deepen comprehension of the novel. First, examining an ArcGIS Story Map and related artwork places the novel into the broader artistic and literary context of the Romantic movement. By analyzing historical maps of the North Pole from before, during, and after the writing of the novel, students practice observation and inferencing skills in order to gain insights into the personalities of Victor Frankenstein and Robert Walton and the themes of exploration and knowledge-seeking. While reading, students engage in concept mapping by constructing family tree diagrams to show the relationships and interactions among characters. These maps clarify the characters' motivations. Later, mood mapping expands students' literary analysis skills and builds social-emotional competency, as students develop a vocabulary to discuss and analyze mood in the text by mapping emotions onto the physical body. At the unit's conclusion, students create their own maps to gather textual evidence for a writing assignment analyzing how Victor Frankenstein and his creature develop, interact, advance the plot, or develop one of the novel's themes.

(Developed for Gifted English/Language Arts, grade 8; recommended for English, grades 9-12)

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