Language Techniques Worksheet

Match the quote with the correct technique and explain why it is effective.

onomatopoeia	exclamations	adjectives	verbs	alliteration

Quote	Technique	Effect
Watery, shriveled, dreary, black		
chattered, convulsed, rushed, threw, escaped		
Miserable monster		
Beautiful! Great God!		
The rain pattered dismally against the panes		

Copyright 2022 Online Teaching Resources Ltd

This extract is taken from the Mary Shelley's 1818 novel, Frankenstein. In this passage, the narrator (a young scientist named Victor Frankenstein) describes the night he brought a dead body back to life.

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Now answer questions 1 to 5 below

Q1: What is the time of day and year and what is the weather like in paragraph one?

[2 marks]

_____

_____

_____

Q2: Pick out four things from paragraph two about the creature's appearance.

[4 marks]

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Q3: How does the writer use language to create a sense of horror in paragraph three?

[8 marks]

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q4: Think about the whole of the extract. How has the writer structured the text to engage the reader?

You could write about: [8 marks]

- What the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- How and why the writer changes this focus as the extract develops
- Any other structural features that interest you

Q5: Remind yourself of paragraphs three, four and five. A student, having read this part of the text said: "In this part of the story, the writer makes you feel sorry for the narrator."

To what extent do you agree? [20 Marks]

In your response, you should:

- Write about your own impressions of the narrator
- Evaluate how the writer arouses our sympathy for him
- Support your opinions with quotations from the text