

# Gothic architecture and literature

with Professor Dale Townshend and Dr Michael Carter

## Talking points

### Knowledge

1. What was the purpose of medieval ghost stories?
2. When was the genre of Gothic literature born?

### Comprehension

3. What are the similarities and differences in the definition of 'Gothic', when applied to architecture compared to literature?
4. Why did Dale and Michael use ghost stories to increase public interest in heritage sites?

### Application

5. If you were evaluating the impact of the creative writing workshops, what questions would you ask participants to understand how the workshop affected their experience of the ruins?

### Analysis

6. Why do you think Gothic architecture features so heavily in Gothic literature?
7. How did the changing religious landscape in England influence the idea of the 'Gothic'?

### Evaluation

8. How important do you think it is for people to engage with their national history and heritage? Why?
9. Why do you think some people 'feel alienated from 'official' notions of history'? How successful do you think Revenants and Remains was at engaging these people with heritage, and why?

### Creativity

10. If you were performing the ghost stories of Lanercroft Priory, how would you include the ruins themselves to enhance the experience for your audience?

## Activities

### Use ghostly inspiration to get creative!

#### 1. Write a ghost story inspired by ruined architecture.

Crumbling castles, dilapidated farms and abandoned warehouses are all perfect locations for spooky stories. How will you capture the creepy atmosphere in your writing? What role will the ruins play in the narrative? Who is haunting your ruins, and why? Do living humans encounter the ghost, and if so, what happens?

#### 2. Take Gothic, ghostly photos.

Experiment with angles, lenses and filters to convey a Gothic mood in your images, and experiment with props, lighting and movement to add an element of the supernatural. It does not matter if you do not have access to ruined buildings or Gothic architecture – you can apply Gothic concepts to any images. Can you take a photo that expresses 'roughness, wildness and even barbarity' and which 'turns its back upon the Classical laws of composition'?

Share your ghostly stories and photos with Dale and Michael by emailing [revenantsandremains@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:revenantsandremains@mmu.ac.uk) or uploading them to social media and tagging the team (X – @rev\_and\_rem; Instagram – [revenantsandremains](https://www.instagram.com/revenantsandremains))

## More resources

- Learn more about the Revenants and Remains project: [www.revenantsandremains.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.revenantsandremains.mmu.ac.uk)
- Read the ghostly stories and poems written during Rosie's creative writing workshop and view the ghostly photos taken by students in Sarah's photography workshop: [www.revenantsandremains.mmu.ac.uk/creative-writing](http://www.revenantsandremains.mmu.ac.uk/creative-writing)
- The Revenants and Remains photography workshops were in partnership with Shout Out Loud! This English Heritage initiative aims to engage young people with heritage sites: [www.shoutoutloud.org.uk/project/revenants-remains](http://www.shoutoutloud.org.uk/project/revenants-remains)
- Listen to Dale and Michael's podcasts about haunted ruins: [www.revenantsandremains.mmu.ac.uk/podcasts](http://www.revenantsandremains.mmu.ac.uk/podcasts)