

Literature

with Dr Sayaka Oki

Talking points

Knowledge

1. What does comparative close reading involve?
2. What is an Oedipal structure?

Comprehension

3. How does an Oedipal structure manifest in *Little Red Riding Hood*?
4. What similarities exist between Aurelie in Hoffman's *Vampyrismus* and Eleanor in Buffini's *A Vampire Story*?

Application

5. If you were to write a story about adolescence, what metaphor(s) would you use, and why?

Analysis

6. Why do you think Sayaka studied *Little Red Riding Hood* in addition to vampire narratives?
7. Why do you think the conflict between desire and prohibition is a key motif in stories about adolescence?
8. In the vampire narratives that Sayaka studied, how do supernatural transformations represent psychological challenges of adolescence?
9. "Vampirism has multiple symbolic functions in literary history, representing disease, sexuality, social transgression and cultural anxieties, in addition to adolescent identity," says Sayaka. How and why do you think vampirism acts as a metaphor for these?

Evaluation

10. To what extent do you agree that literature allows young people to reflect on their own experiences? How can you relate the last book you read or film you watched to your experiences as an adolescent?

Activity

Analyse how adolescence is portrayed in literature

Choose a selection of 3-4 books or films that feature adolescents as primary characters (you could choose to focus specifically on vampire narratives, like Sayaka, or you could study literature from different genres).

Closely read/watch your chosen books/films and make notes on how adolescence is portrayed in each one. Pay attention to how words, imagery and symbols are used to describe adolescent characters and any struggles they face.

Compare and contrast the different literary works. What motifs appear in multiple narratives? How do characters negotiate conflict and desire, and how do they grow throughout the story? How does each narrative discuss issues of identity and societal expectations for adolescents?

Write your own version of *Little Red Riding Hood*

The classic folktale of *Little Red Riding Hood* has been retold many times, with many different interpretations about the story's meanings. What do you think the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* represents?

Write your own version of the tale that highlights your ideas and interpretations. Be creative! For example, you could set the story in modern times, tell it from a different perspective, or swap the roles of characters. What will your story teach readers about adolescence and identity?