

# Unit 1: A History of Horror

Content Area: **Language Arts Literacy**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **September**  
Length: **8 blocks**  
Status: **Published**

## Transfer

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The genre of horror has shifted alongside with the social and cultural concerns that create it. Each subgenre has distinct traits and qualities that all find themselves in King's work.

## Enduring Understandings

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- The Gothic Romance can be divided into four subgenres: historical Gothic, natural or explained Gothic, supernatural or inscrutable Gothic, and equivocal or ambiguous Gothic.
- The Residual Gothic Impulse shifted the focus from physical fright to psychological fear and the haunted psyche.
- Cosmic Horror presents otherworldly visions and connections to apocalyptic forces with a very serious (often wordy) tone.
- Antiquarian Horror presents characters who are intelligent yet still set themselves up for disaster.
- Modern Horror presents themes of psychological alienation; the human is alone in an absurd universe.

## Essential Questions

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- How does each period of horror resonate with the time in which it was produced?
- What patterns are evident in the evolution of horror?
- What classic works of literature are present in the subgenres of horror and how do they meet the criteria of the period?
- In what ways does Stephen King's personal life intersect with his literature?
- Is it possible for a work to convey multiple genres of horror and if so, what elements provide the bridge of classification?

## Content

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### Works of Study

- *Horror Literature: a historical survey and critical guide to the best of horror*
- *Stephen King: The Art of Darkness*
- *The Stephen King Companion: Four Decades of Fear from the Master of Horror*
- *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*
- A variety of film/literary excerpts to accompany / help differentiate the periods of horror:

- The Gothic Romance - *Suspiria* by Dario Argento or *Crimson Peak* by Guillermo del Toro
- The Residual Gothic Impulse - *It Follows* by David Robert Mitchell
- Cosmic Horror - *Interstellar* by Christopher Nolan
- Antiquarian Horror - *Blue Ruin* by Jeremy Saulnier
- Modern Horror - *28 Days Later* by Danny Boyle

## **Skills**

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- Differentiate between the five subgenres of horror and physical/psychological horror.
- Identify qualities of the subgenres of horror in literature and film.
- Examine the historical context of each period of horror and identify social, cultural, and political influences.
- Cite details from the text to justify a given inference or conclusion about ideas discussed in the text.
- Summarize the text by identifying central ideas/topics or key events in chronological order, and by citing relevant supporting details without extraneous information.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.