Unit 1: A History of Horror

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

Transfer

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

- 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

- 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

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 flim/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

- 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.