

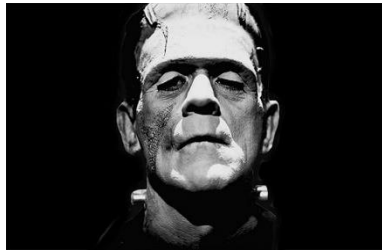
# TOPICS TO DISCUSS

## MONSTERS

Exercise 1: Do the activity " Speaking: Good & Ugly" on pages 78-79 of the book:

-Match the famous “monsters” with their pictures. One of them really existed. Which one?

A. The Monster of Dr. Frankenstein→ NUMBER 3:



B. The Elephant Man→ NUMBER 1:

He really existed, the True History of the Elephant Man is a biography of Joseph Merrick written by Michael Howell and Peter Ford.



C. Quasimodo→ NUMBER 2:



-Erik, just like the three “monsters” above, suffered because of his horrible appearance. What about you? How important is a person's physical appearance? Talk about this with your partner, and then present your ideas to the class. Use these questions to help you.

**1. Do you want your boyfriend or girlfriend to be attractive?**

Honestly, I think when it comes to having a partner, it doesn't matter the physical. I think what's really important is the feelings you feel about the other person, and everything else, it's not that necessary.

**2. How important are the clothes a person wears?**

Obviously, the clothes a person wears don't matter. If this person wears them, it will be because he wants to and because he can. You don't have to put too much emphasis on what a person is wearing.

**3. Do you want your friends to be attractive?**

On the other hand, I also don't think that to have friends, they have to be attractive. What is really important is that they help each other, that they appreciate each other and that they love each other very much.

**4. How do you react to a person who has a serious physical disability?**

When I see a person with a major physical problem, at first I'm surprised but when I meet him, and I see that he's a completely normal person, I don't care about everything else.

**5. How do you think most people in your school react?**

In my opinion, my school would react the same way I would. When they would see the person, they would stand still, but then they would normalize it and the disability would go unnoticed.



Exercise 2: Do the activity " Speaking: Good & Ugly" on pages 78-79 of the book:

-Then, let's investigate a bit more on other "monsters".

## 1. ORIGIN STORY

In literature, the Monster propagates the earliest myths, be they Greek, Sumerian, Chinese, Aztec, or whatever—we are a people rooted in fear of the “other.” Monsters like the Cyclops in *The Odyssey* are not just antagonists to the Hero, they are malformed roadblocks who require physical as well as mental agility to overcome. Often the Monsters are unnatural crosses between threatening creatures, such as the Sphinx who riddles Oedipus. Some Monsters, for example the Sirens who lure Odysseus, require closer inspection to recognize their deformities. Whatever the form, Monsters represent human fear of the unknown, unnatural, and unexplained.

## 2.CHARACTERISTICS

The English word Monster comes from the Latin *Monstrum* which means abnormal or supernatural in appearance. It can also mean wonder or miracle. Of course, the most common connotation is a repulsive or abhorrent character. Yet we cannot discount the wonder or miracle part of the definition. It is there that the Monster becomes “other”—a thing that is beyond the norms of human comprehension. While we may only think of the Monster as threatening, this character, who can be male or female, is instead a manifestation of what humanity cannot explain and therefore fears.

## 3.FAMOUS FACES

Greek myths and epics are rampant with monsters, as are most folktales and fairy tales, no matter their culture. The Gothic era gives us *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Mary Shelley’s *Monster*, in particular, is a fantastic look at who is the monster and who is the man as the creature (who is incidentally just called “The Creature”) is juxtaposed with his egomaniac creator, Dr. Frankenstein. Horror, the descendant of Gothic, is ripe with literal monsters, as are fantasy and science fiction Perhaps the greatest Monster in fiction is *Beowulf*’s Grendel who is so dark and twisted that he hates anything related to happiness. John Gardner gives Grendel his own narrative, humanizing the bloodthirsty killer by shifting the perspective.





# MONSTERS

Exercise 3: Find information about them and fill in the grid:

	THE MONSTER OF VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN	QUASIMODO	THE ELEPHANT MAN
REAL PERSON OR CHARACTER ?	He's a character.	He's a character.	He's a real person, named Joseph Merrick.
WHO CREATED HIM?	The scientist Victor Frankenstein.	He it's adopted by a priest.	Nobody created him, he was born with a physical disability
WHEN ?	When this scientist was in the university.	This story takes place in 1482.	August 5, 1862.
BOOK HE BELONGS TO	Frankenstein by Mary Shelley.	The Hunchback of Notre-Dame by Victor Hugo.	The Elephant Man by Christine Sparks.
HIS PROBLEM	He has a horrible appearance, and he's always alone and he's always in misery	He is forbidden to leave the cathedral, because the hypocrite and prejudiced people would not accept him.	Merrick was apparently normal until about the age of five, when he began showing signs of a strange disorder that caused abnormal growths of much of his skin and bone.
COULD HE BE HAPPY?	No, because when the monster goes back to Victor Frankenstein and demands that Victor create a wife for him. When he refuses, the monster kills Frankenstein's wife, Elizabeth, on their wedding night.	He could not be happy because in the end, Esmeralda (the woman of his dreams) does not end up with him.	No, because he had to spend most of his life locked up at home because of his physical condition.
HOW DID HIS LIFE END?	At the end, Victor Frankenstein dies wishing that he could destroy the Monster he created. While he dies feeling disturbed that the Monster is still alive, the Monster is reconciled to death: so much so that he intends to commit suicide.	When Quasimodo sees Frodo smiling cruelly at Esmeralda's execution, he turns on his master and throws him to his death from the balcony in rage.	Merrick's death was ruled accidental and the certified cause of death was asphyxia, caused by the weight of his head as he lay down.