Background to the story

In *Dracula*, Bram Stoker used the traditional vampire legends of south-east Europe as the setting for his story. Stories about vampires have existed in this part of the world for thousands of years, but vampire stories became very popular in the eighteenth century.

Stoker was born and brought up in Ireland, and worked first as a civil servant in Dublin, where he married Florence Balcombe, a Dublin girl who had once nearly married Oscar Wilde. Stoker, like Wilde, was fascinated by the theatre, and in 1878 he moved to London, where he became the business manager of the famous actor, Sir Henry Irving.

Stoker himself said that the idea of the story of *Dracula* came to him in a bad dream (interestingly, Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was also the result of a nightmare). After a large meal of crab meat, Stoker dreamed that he was being attacked by an enormous crab, and this, combined with the stories he had already heard about vampires, became the basis for the story of *Dracula*.

Before reading

Here are some ways to help your students approach the story:

1. Give students the title of the book and show them the picture on the cover. Ask them to try and guess what kind of story it is.
2. Ask the students to read the text on the back cover of the book, and the story introduction on the first page. Then ask them a few questions about the story, or use the Before Reading Activities in the back of each Bookworm.
3. Use the pre-reading activity in this worksheet.
4. If there is a recording of this title, play the first few pages and stop at an interesting point.

The story

Jonathan Harker works as an estate agent in England. He is asked to buy a house in England for Count Dracula, who lives in Transylvania. After buying the house, Jonathan has to go out to visit Count Dracula, because he has to take him some papers to sign. Dracula lives in a strange old isolated castle, and he himself is very strange. In particular, one day, Jonathan notices that he cannot see Dracula in a mirror.

One night, Jonathan sees the count on the wall of the castle. He is climbing down the wall, with his head down, like a horrible black bird. Another night, he meets three women, who all want to kiss him. Dracula appears, and chases the women away. At this point, Jonathan realizes that they must be vampires. One day, Jonathan finds a strange room, with about fifty coffins in it, full of earth. In one of the coffins lies the count, neither dead nor alive. Jonathan realizes that he must escape from the castle.

While Jonathan is in Transylvania, his fiancée Mina and her friends Lucy and Arthur are in Whitby, in England. A Russian ship is wrecked on the coast. Shortly after, Lucy falls ill and Mina notices that there are two strange drops of blood on her neck – clearly Dracula has come to England. Lucy dies, and then strange things begin to happen. Lucy’s body is leaving her coffin at night and going out as a vampire, looking for young children. This can only be stopped, and Lucy left in peace, when a piece of wood is hammered through her heart.

Jonathan has now returned to England and is married to Mina. But, one day, Dracula manages to drink her blood. Jonathan realizes that she will die – but that unless they can kill Dracula, she will remain a vampire for ever.

Jonathan, Arthur, and their friends Jack and Van Helsing, learn that Dracula is returning to Transylvania. They pursue him, find him in his coffin, and hammer a piece of wood through his heart to kill him.
Dracula

Pre-reading activity

Match the words with the pictures

To the teacher

Aim: To introduce the students to the story and its principal characters
Time: 10–15 minutes
Organization: Give one copy of the worksheet to each student, or to each group of students (this activity can work very well in pairs). Ask the students to match the picture with the correct caption.
Key: 1c, 2g, 3a, 4f, 5b, 6e, 7d. When they have done this ask them the following questions:

1 Which of these pictures do you think is nearest the beginning of the book?
2 Which of these pictures do you think is nearest the end of the book?
3 What do you know about Dracula?
4 What is a vampire? What do they do, how do you protect yourself against them and how do you kill them?

Key: 1 picture 7, 2 picture 6
Dracula

While reading activity

What next?

Look at these possibilities for what will happen before the end of the story. Mark the appropriate answer with a tick (√). Then add three more of your own suggestions and mark these as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certainly Happen</th>
<th>Perhaps Happen</th>
<th>Probably Not Happen</th>
<th>Certainly Not Happen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dracula will kill Jonathan and drink his blood.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Jonathan will marry Mina.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Dracula will marry Mina.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Dracula will drink Mina’s blood.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Jonathan will escape and return to England.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Dracula will go to England.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Mina will come to Castle Dracula.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Jonathan will marry one of the three women in the castle.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Jonathan will become a vampire.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Mina will become a vampire.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Jonathan will die.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Mina will die.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Dracula will die.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Jonathan will stay in Transylvania.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Mina will visit Transylvania.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the teacher

Where: At the end of Chapter 2
Aim: To help students predict using the knowledge of what they have just read
Time: 15-20 minutes
Organization: Give each student, or group of students, a copy of the worksheet. Ask them to predict whether these things will happen or not. The students are not expected to predict accurately how the story will develop. Once they have filled in their charts, they should keep them and see how accurately they have predicted as the story develops.
Dracula
After reading activity

Character crosswords

Look at the character crossword for Mina.
Can you make similar crosswords for some of the other characters.

MARRIES JONATHAN
FINDS LUCY IN THE CHURCHYARD
IN DANGER FROM DRACULA
SAVED IN THE END

To the teacher

Aim: To revise character
Time: 20–30 minutes
Organization: Give each student, or group of students, a copy of the worksheet and ask them to make character crosswords following the example given for Mina.