

CSI-BOOKS

DOCTOR FRANKENSTEIN'S OTHER MONSTER

WRITTEN BY NIGEL GRAY

ILLUSTRATED BY CRAIG SMITH

TEACHERS NOTES by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

*Introduction*

*Themes & Curriculum Topics*

Study of history, society and environment

Visual literacy .....

English language and literacy .....

Aural Literacy.....

Creative arts .....

*Further Topics for Discussion & Research*

*Conclusion*

*About the Author*

*About the Illustrator*

*Blackline Masters*

*Bibliography*

*About the Author of the Notes*

## *Introduction*

“Hello,” he said. “Can I play?”

Poor old Doctor Frankenstein just wanted to make a son called Frank Junior, but he made another monster! This is a funny story about how a monster escapes his maker and finds himself at large in the world. It is also a touching story about finding a friend to play with.

This illustrated chapter book is a ‘reinvention’ of the classic tale of Frankenstein which was written by Mary Shelley in 1819. It is also a witty, whimsical and wise little tract about feelings.

## *Themes & Curriculum Topics*

This picture book relates to themes and curriculum topics for middle and upper primary school students in the following suggested areas:

### **STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT**

- *Individuality*

**Discussion Point:** Most people look at Frank as if he is frightening, ugly and scary. They don’t see the person underneath. Discuss the need to really appreciate each person’s individual qualities and not to judge them on face value.

**Activity:** Invite your students to make a list of the endearing things about Frank which make him special. Examine the pictures and read the text carefully before you begin your list.

- *Friendship*

**Discussion Point:** Nigel Gray has said that he may have written this story because he ‘had ‘no friends as a kid’. Frank tries to make friends but everyone he meets rejects him because of his looks. Ask students if they have ever experienced the sort of loneliness which Frank suffers until he meets Cherry Stone. Discuss how this makes students feel.

**Activity:** Make a list of things which you look for in a good friend.

- *Communication*

**Discussion Point:** None of the people Frank meets listen to him or communicate with him. They are all so frightened of the ‘monster’ that they run away rather than trying to find out what he wants. Discuss the need to communicate with people, even if they are strangers or seem different to you.

**Activity:** What forms of communication are demonstrated in both the written and visual text of this book? Make a list with students of the various forms of communication suggested in

this book in words and images: eg Diagram, reference book, speech, label, advertising poster, logo, billboard, map. What else might you add to this list?

- *Family*

**Discussion Point:** Doctor Frankenstein creates Frank because he wants a son named Frank Junior, but Frank runs away because he wants to play. Later Frank finds a friend named Cherry who suggests that they play families and that he can be the baby, to which Frank says: “I’d like that,”... “I never was a baby.” (p 41) This idea therefore forms the structure of this book. Picture books often work like this in a thematic structure, which has more resonance on reflection after one has read the text. Discuss the importance of the idea of family in this book. (See **English Language and Literacy – Refracted Tales** below.)

**Activity:** Frank’s comment reminds the reader that by being invented as a full grown child he has missed out on all sorts of things, such as being cuddled, being read to, being hugged and kissed by a parent. He has also missed out on being encouraged to play. Invite students to write about what they remember about being a baby.

**Discussion Point:** There are several mums in this story (Darren, Carol, Wayne and Cherry’s mums). Are they alike or different? What sort of mums are they? What do you think, for example, of Cherry’s mum leaving her sitting on the kerb while she’s in the club?

- *Imagination and Play*

**Activity:** When Cherry Stone and Frank begin to play they create a whole world out of imagining they are a family (parent and child). They use boxes to make Cherry look like Frank. Invite students to act out scenes in this book, but encourage them to be creative and to use a variety of materials.

- *Values*

**Discussion Point:** What values or qualities does this story suggest that Frank has?

**Activity:** Make a list of values which you think are important?

## **VISUAL LITERACY**

The visual text of a book works with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book’s design and illustrations, as explored below:

- *How is a Book Made and Who Makes It?*

**Activity:** Start by discussing with students how they think a book might be made. Who is involved? Discuss the roles of Writer/Editor/Illustrator and Designer.

- *What Does the Illustrator Do?*

**Discussion Point:** Outline the illustrator's role. He or she reads the manuscript/researches ideas and background to the story/ compiles references/ starts sketching roughs/ rejects some ideas and refines ideas for characters/ decides on an approach, style and medium/ develops characters/ develops backgrounds/ develops storyboard.

- *Drawing a Character*

**Activity:** Develop your students' drawing skills using this book and follow the steps in Craig Smith's **Drawing Tutorial** to discover how he works:

1. *The Written Text: The Story Starts Here.* (Tip: Ask yourself questions which you need to think about in drawing a character.)
2. *Research for Ideas: For Reference and Inspiration.* (Tip: Find artwork which really excites you – this gets your brain ticking over.)
3. *Character Roughs: Shapes and Contrast.* (Tip: It's useful to do roughs on tracing paper.)
4. *The Messy Sketchy Outline: Shapes and Proportion.* (Tip: Sketching lightly is a way of working out what goes where.)
5. *The Approach and Style* (Tip: Maybe start by copying, or try illustrating in a simpler style you really like.)
6. *The Stick-Figure Skeleton* (Tip: It's not necessary to draw these skeleton lines, but get into the habit of imagining where they would be if they were there!)
7. *The Real Skeleton: The framework of the body.* (Tip: Including a bit of movement can add life to your drawing.)
8. *The Muscles, the Fat, the Weight of the Body.* (Tip: Neck, or no neck? Tense or relaxed?)
9. *What Sort of Person: Ethnicity, Age and Gender?* (Tip: Drawing different sorts of folks adds interest to storytelling)
10. *What are they Wearing?* (Tip: Where and When is the Story Set? This question will guide your choice of clothing.)
11. *Persona: Personality and Attitude.* (Tip: Often it may be more fun exaggerating what the characters are doing rather than how they look.)
12. *Point of View: Direction* (Tip: It is useful to shift the viewpoint around: think of it like a movie.)
13. *Looking Which Way?* (Tip: Sketch the nose first. It's a useful pointer.)
14. *Facial Expression: Which Features Give the Most Expression?* (Tip: Expressions that use stretching and squashing are fun to draw – particularly when used sparingly.)
15. *Body Language: Mood and Attitude.* (Tip: Use a mirror to try out poses.)
16. *Point of View: Eye-level.* (Tip: If you've drawn from a dramatic viewpoint, always ask yourself how you *feel* about the result.)
17. *The Mirror: A Very Useful Drawing Tool!* (Tip: Another fun thing to do is place a mirror at angles that are different to what you are used to.)
18. *Point of View: Scale, Size and Proportion.* (Tip: Remember, the things closer to you appear larger).
19. *Scale: Extreme ...* (Tip: Indoors or outdoors? Does the picture have a horizon?)
20. *Drawing Technique: Drawing is Mark Making Using Texture, Medium, Focus.* (Tip: Not everything needs to be 'in focus', or really carefully done).
21. *Background, Middle-Ground, Foreground.* (Tip: Start with simple shapes.)
22. *Background Rough: Sorting out the Detail.* (Tip: An eraser is useful!)
23. *The Neat Outline: Placement, Tonal Contrast, Light and Shadow.* (Tip: Use a lightbox.)
24. *Grayscale: Tonal Contrast.* (Tip: Many interesting details are in the shadows. Not everything needs to be clear.)
25. *Full Colour: Warm and Dark Colours.* (Tip: Use variations of the same small set of colours.)

**Activity:** Using the headings above, examine the pictures in this book to see what decisions the artist has made in creating these pictures of characters. eg **Persona:** Find examples of exaggeration in any of the images. **Point of View:** What changes in the points of view (pp 36-7)? **Facial expression and Body Language:** Examine the picture of the two policemen

with Mrs Singer (p 23). What does the picture tell you about their feelings towards Frank? [See also relevant headings below.]

- *Illustrator's Checklist*

**Activity:** In his **Drawing Tutorial (26.)**, Craig Smith also provides a checklist of things he'd like you to keep in mind. He says that:

*Apart from starting with a rough, it is in no particular order...*

1. **WHEN** and **WHERE** is the story set?

2. What will the characters **LOOK LIKE**?

*Tip: Do some Research*

3. What will they be **DOING**?

*Tip: Do a rough draft*

4. What **Point of View** to use?

5. What **MOVEMENT** and **EXPRESSION**?

*Tip: Use a MIRROR to try out poses,  
(think, WHERE is the backbone angled?)*

6. Will there be things in the **BACKGROUND**?

7. Plan for **CONTRAST**:

*(BIG... little, near... far, light and shadow,  
...dark, mid, light tones, warm and cool colours)*

**Activity:** Draw your own monster. If you were to create a monster, what would your monster look like? Would it look like a child (like Frank)? Or like an adult? Discuss monsters and what you think makes a really scary monster.

**Activity:** See a contrasting approach in *Robot Zombie Frankenstein* by Annette Simon (Candlewick, 2012). See an appreciation of it on Carter Higgins's 'The Design of a Picture Book' at <<http://designofthepicturebook.com/2012/11/23/robot-zombie-frankenstein/>>

- *Design a Book Cover, Endpapers, Half-Title, and Title Page*

**Activity:** The **cover** of this book is an important part of its message. This cover image plays on the origin of the story by showing Frank escaping from a Gothic –looking door (despite the contemporary setting of the story). What does the image suggest? Discuss the details used in this design, including font, then create your own cover for this book.

**Discussion Point:** This book has two **sequential wordless visual narratives akin to comic strips** drawn on its **front and back endpapers**, which are in three tones of **ochre and black and white**. The front endpapers depict the Doctor imagining his creation, and the back endpapers show Frank playing with Cherry. Design your own endpapers, by creating a sequential narrative like these two sets of images.

**Activity:** The **half-title page** depicts the head of Frank before he has been made into part of the monster. (It is actually a saucepan or canister.) There is **another preliminary image**

before the half-title page too, showing the Doctor looking at his own sketch of this creation. The **title page** depicts the Doctor obviously thinking about his design and holding a reference book. These are both images which explain something of what leads to the action in the book. Discuss with students the idea of using another image or even a symbol on the half-title or title pages. Then have them create their own title page image for his book.

- *Discuss Approach and Style*

**Discussion Point:** Discuss with students how an artist decides what **approach** to take to a manuscript. Should it be scary, funny, ironic, satirical, realistic, fanciful? Read Craig Smith's *Where's Mum?* by Libby Gleeson (Omnibus Books, 1992) to see how he created several visual stories within the framing story suggested by the text. Read Mem Fox's *Guess What?* (Omnibus Books, 2008, 1998) to see how Vivienne Goodman made a haunting visual text which extended the written text to make something unexpected out of it.

**Activity:** Discuss the different **styles or techniques or mediums** which an artist might employ (eg collage, comic, pen and ink, gouache, charcoal pencil etc.) Visit sites such as The Style File <<http://www.thestylefile.com/>> to examine the different styles used by Australian illustrators. Visit some individual artists' websites (including Craig Smith's) to see what they say about the illustration process.

**Activity:** Craig Smith has used pen and ink and pencil drawings overlaid with watercolour as the **medium or style of art** in this book. Discuss the medium and then invite students to create their own painting of Frank.

- *Discuss Format and Design*

**Discussion Point:** The **format** of the book is portrait (22cmH x 14.5cmW). It is smaller than the average picture book and well-suited to being handled as a chapter book or reader. Could this book have been larger? How might that have changed the experience of reading this book?

**Discussion Point:** The **layout of the storyboard** is varied with illustrations sometimes encompassing the whole double spread (pp 16-17) while others depict two separate images (pp 8-9). Why do artists vary format in this way?

**Discussion Point:** The **font** used is Minion Pro which is a very readable font; but on the cover he uses a very elaborate Gothic text. Why does the designer do that? What does the font suggest?

**Activity:** Choose one scene and re-imagine it as a **comic strip**. Create your own storyboard for this scene.

- *Observe Colour and Tonal Contrast*

**Discussion Point:** How does **colour** convey meaning in this book?

**Discussion Point:** What techniques are used to create **tonal contrast**? eg Are there shadows in these images?

- *Contrast, Perspective, Point of View, Proportion, Framing*

**Activity:** Examine any image in this book and discuss its **composition** in terms of these aspects of the artists' work. (See **Drawing Tutorial**.)

**Discussion Point:** Re-imagine this image using a different **contrast**, and from another **perspective** or **point of view**, and change the **proportion** or **framing**.

- *Pictures Need Planning and Thinking Time*

**Discussion Point:** Discuss with students how pictures require **planning**, how an image is 'worked up' from these initial ideas, and how they might also use 'references' and drafts to build a finished artwork.

- *Intertextuality*

**Activity:** Illustrators often include in their artwork references to things which are not immediately obvious in the written text ie they create a visual 'Subtext'. Recognising such visual references is sometimes called 'Intertextuality'. For example, Frank's nose is an electrical socket which might be seen to be a reference to him being 'brought to life' or 'switched on' by his inventor. Encourage students to study the images for further such references or visual asides.

- *Illustrator Study*

**Activity:** Have students research Craig Smith's work. Then have them write a précis of **ten interesting facts** that they have discovered about him.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

- *Refracted Tales*

**Activity:** This is a re-telling of a well-known classic story in a 'refracted' version.

Discuss this concept with students and then have them read other such classic tales re-told or refracted. [See **Bibliography**.] Then have them choose another story and create their own version of it.

**Activity:** Frankenstein is a story about relationships, yearning, and loss. Read a modern retelling of the classic tale by Margrete Lamond *Frankenstein III* by Drahos Zak. (HarperCollins, 2005). Then read other stories which re-tell this well-known tale in a funny way such as: *Frankenstein: A Monstrous Parody by one Ludworst Bemonster* by Rick Walton and Nathan Hale (Feiweil & Friends, 2012) (This is a parody of *Madeleine* by Ludwig Bemelmans); *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich* by Adam Rex (Harcourt, 2006); *Frankenstein Takes the Cake* by Adam Rex (Harcourt, 2008); *Making Friends with Frankenstein* by Colin McNaughton (Walker Books, 2000); *Do Not Build a Frankenstein* by Neal Numberman

(Greenwillow, 2009); *Frankenstein's Cat* by Curtis Jobling (Hodder, 2008); *Frankenstein: A Pop-up Book* by Sam Ita (Sterling, 2010); *Even Monsters Need Haircuts* by Matthew McElligot (Walker Books, 2012).

**Discussion Point:** This story also falls into the type known as a **cumulative tale**. It includes a **sequence of events** in which Frank meets people who misunderstand him, and his mission or journey. At nearly every meeting someone **repeats the words** 'Look at that ugly Monster!' So each time he meets someone he encounters a **problem**, and then the **climax or turning point**, and then the **resolution** leading up to a **final encounter** and a **final resolution** in his friendship with Cherry Stone. Discuss the cumulative structure and share other books which employ it.

- *Narrative Person and Tense*

**Activity:** This story is told as a **third person, past tense account** of Frank's creation. Re-tell the story in first person as if it is being told by Frank, and see how much this changes the story.

- *Word Play*

**Activity:** Some of the **characters' names** in this book are plays on well-known phrases. eg 'Carol Singer' and 'Cherry Stone'. Make up your own list of names like these. eg Crystal Ball.

**Activity:** A **number of phrases** used in this text include the word 'Monster' eg Monster Burgers, Monster Sale, Monster Shake-up. What other phrases including the word 'Monster' can you think of? [See also **Blackline Master 3** below.]

- *Comprehension*

**Activity:** Test your students' comprehension by having them answer some quiz questions. [See **Blackline Master 2** below.]

- *Author Study*

**Activity:** Have students research Nigel Gray's work. Then have them write a précis of **ten interesting facts** that they have discovered about him.

## AURAL LITERACY

**Discussion Point:** After reading the book listen to the audio track accompanying it on <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?>> Is the narrator's voice what you had expected to hear? Why/why not? How did the narrator portray Frank Junior?

**Discussion Point:** There is music playing on this video too; a violin. What does this remind you of, or suggest to you?

## CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

- **Create a life-size monster like Frank.** Collect the parts you will need.
- **Improvise a scene** from one of the paintings included in this book. Try to convey the emotions which the illustration suggests to you.
- **Have a Monster Party!** Create costumes like Frank's or Cherry's. What would monsters eat and drink? What **music** would you select to play at a monster party?

## Further Topics for Discussion & Research

- **Compare this book** to others by Craig Smith or Nigel Gray.
- **Use Frankenstein as a theme for a class project.** Organise a display of books about the area, and display the students' written and visual responses to their research.
- Invite an upper primary level class to create a **Book Trailer** based on this book. Visit websites with instructions to assist you in this activity. eg 'Book Trailers' *The Learning Place Ipswich District Teacher Librarian Network* <<http://learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=41987>>

## Conclusion

This book can be used as the basis for a variety of drawing and writing activities. It is a touching story about making friends, and being accepted, so it can be used to engage in discussions about these topics. It can also be used to examine the tropes of classic tales or folk tales. Most of all, though, *Doctor Frankenstein's Other Monster* is a charmingly entertaining story which will make students laugh – a lot!

## About the Author

**Nigel Gray** is a prolific writer for children and adults and has devoted much of his life to causes he believes in. He overcame a very unpromising start in life to become an internationally regarded writer and teacher of writing. His children's and adult books have won multiple awards. Some of his picture books include: *My Dog, My Cat, my Mum and Me* ill. by Bob Graham (Walker Books, 2008), *The Flood* ill. by Elise Hurst (Windy Hollow Books, 2008), *The Grocer's Daughter* ill. by David Mackintosh (Jam Roll Press, 1994) and *I'll Take You to Mrs Cole* ill. by Michael Foreman (Random House, 1985). He has been a literary magazine editor, a photographer, an actor and a traveller and lives with his wife in the Perth hills. Visit his website for further information <<http://www.nigelgray-author.com/>>

## About the Illustrator

**Craig Smith** Craig Smith grew up in the Adelaide Hills, later studying graphic design at the South Australian School of Art, graduating in 1976. He worked at a variety of jobs – including undercoating the Sydney Harbour Bridge – while slowly building a career as an illustrator. He has done the illustrations for over 370 picture books, junior novels and educational readers.

His titles include *Whistle Up the Chimney* (winner of the NSW Premier's Literary Award), *Dreadful David*, *Sister Madge's Book of Nuns* and *Billy the Punk*. Other notable titles include Duncan Ball's *Emily Eyefinger* series, Paul Jennings' *The Cabbage Patch* series. Phil Kettle's *Toocool* series and Rachel Flynn's *I Hate Fridays* series.

The humour and pathos of home and school life, and a fondness for unusual perspectives are features of his work. The recurring themes of his work are about an Australian childhood. A childhood lived in an Australian landscape – usually a suburb!

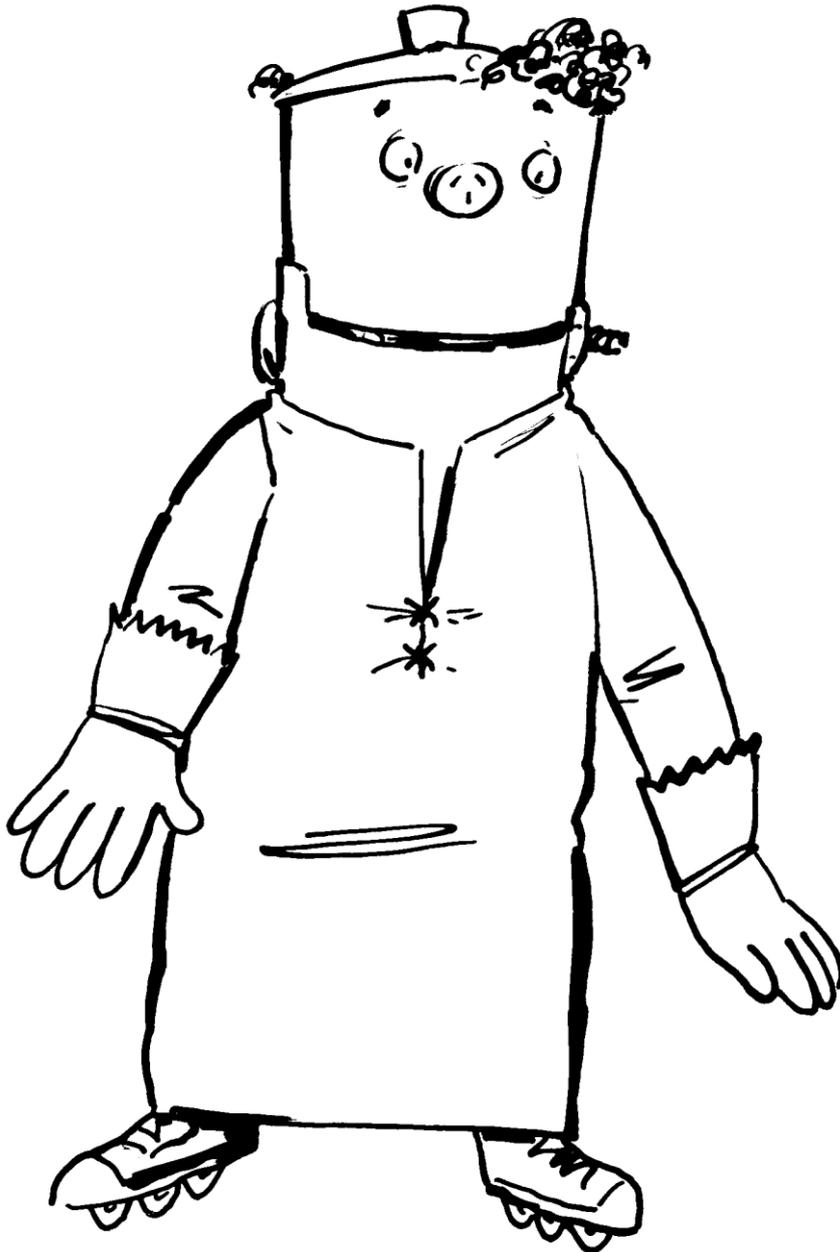
He is passionate about children learning to think with real curiosity, with humour, with imagination and with empathy. His books in recent years have seen a return to real painting and a turning away from rendering, or 'painting', on computer. His work has also been invigorated by visiting schools around Australia.

He lives in Melbourne, but loves getting out of it. When not drawing – or waiting for paint to dry – he loves gardening. Visit his website for further information:  
<<http://www.craigsmithillustration.com/>>

## BLACKLINE MASTERS

### BM 1 CREATE A COLLAGE PICTURE OF FRANK

Use a range of materials eg foil, cardboard, craft paper, feathers, newspapers, magazine images, to create a portrait of Frank. Then write something in a 'speech bubble' to go with the picture.



## BM 2 FRANK'S QUIZ

*These questions can all be answered by either reading or interpreting the art and text in this book.*

1. Finish this sentence: 'Doctor Frankenstein didn't have any ...?'
2. What book is the doctor studying as he makes Frank?
3. What does the doctor call his creation?
4. What is Darren Smart's mum planting when Frank looked over the hedge?
5. What sign on the bus tells the reader where the bus is heading?
6. What is Carol Singer's mum doing in the park?
7. What sort of pond does Frank throw the police officers into?
8. What are the customers in the Monster Burger shop wearing?
9. What form of transport do the soldiers use?
10. Look carefully: what sort of footwear is Frank wearing?

*Answers: 1.Children. 2. The Human Body and How to Make One. 3. Frank Junior. 4. A rose. 5. The Shops. 6. Reading a book. 7. A duck pond. 8. Paper hats. 9. Tanks. 10. Roller skates.*

## BM 3 WORD PLAY

Drawing on words used in this book, invite students to –

- Create another 2 word phrase with the first word in these pairs:

	Word 1	Word Pair	Alternative Word Pair 1	Alternative Word Pair 2
1.	Bus	Stop	eg Pass	
2.	Police	Officers		
3.	Monster	Burgers		
4.	Snack	Bar		
5.	Paper	Hats		

- Explain the meanings of:

Phrase	Meaning
How dare you!	
She's nuts	
Ran for his life	
Heads will roll	
Tied up	
Alternative meaning for 'Tied up'	

- Finish words for places which Frank visits or passes:

1. Ho??e,
2. g?r?en,
3. bu?-s?o?,
4. ?a?k,
5. p?n?,
6. s?a?k-?ar,
7. ?ive?,
8. s?o?e,
9. ?e?sa?ent
10. ?e?b

Answers: 1. house 2. garden 3. bus-stop 4. park 5. pond 6. snack-bar 7. river 8. store 9. newsagent 10. kerb.

## BM 4 FRANKENSTEIN'S POEM



Write an acrostic poem by using the letters in the word 'Frankenstein'.

F  
R  
A  
N  
K  
E  
N  
S eg scary  
T  
E  
I  
N

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### Junior Fiction and Picture Books – Frankenstein and Monsters

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Jobling, Curtis *Frankenstein's Cat* Hodder, 2008.

Lamond, Margrete *Frankenstein Ill.* by Drahos Zak. HarperCollins, 2005.

McElligot, Matthew *Even Monsters Need Haircuts* Walker Books, 2012.

McNaughton, Colin *Making Friends with Frankenstein* Walker Books, 2000.

Numberman, Neal *Do Not Build a Frankenstein* Greenwillow, 2009.

Rex, Adam *Frankenstein makes a Sandwich* Harcourt, 2006.

Rex, Adam *Frankenstein Takes the Cake* Harcourt, 2008.

Walton, Rick and Hale, Nathan *Frankenstein: A Monstrous Parody by one Ludworst Bemonster* Feiwel & Friends, 2012.

### Teaching Resources and Websites about Illustration and Art

Books Illustrated <<http://www.booksillustrated.com.au/>>

Dromkeen National Centre for Picture Book Art

<<http://www.scholastic.com.au/common/dromkeen/index.asp>>

Gleeson, Libby *Making Picture Books* Scholastic Press, 2003.

Gleeson, Libby *Writing Like a Writer: Teaching Narrative Writing* PETA, 2007.

The Literature Centre <<http://www.thelitcentre.org.au/>>

An appreciation of *Robot Zombie Frankenstein* by Annette Simon (Candlewick, 2012). See

Carter Higgins's 'Design of the Picture Book' at

<<http://designofthepicturebook.com/2012/11/23/robot-zombie-frankenstein/>>

'Picturing Books' (Site maintained by Denise I. Matulka) <<http://www.picturingbooks.com/>>

The Style File <<http://www.thestylefile.com/>>

## About the Author of the Notes

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright** has operated *justified text* writing and publishing consultancy services since 1997, and is widely published on children's and young adult literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was recipient of the Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, and in 2012 the Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature in Australia.