

ASSN 1: Research Synthesis—Recreating Bram Stoker's England**Requirements in a nutshell: 5-7 pp (not counting WC), 5 scholarly sources, 1 image**

Although readers today commonly think of *Dracula* just as a gothic horror story, the novel tells us as much about Victorian England as it does vampires. As Nina Auerbach and David Skal argue, “In the guise of fantasy, Bram Stoker wrote a novel true to the dislocating experience of his bewildered contemporaries” as they tried to negotiate perceived threats from technology, immigrants, shifting gender roles, repressive sexual mores, infectious diseases, crumbling imperial policy, and the prospect of evolutionary reversion (xi). The editors also note “the staggering range of Bram Stoker’s knowledge and awareness”—everything from the latest research in neurology and psychiatry to the beginnings of feminism and new theories about sexual behavior. However, my guess is that most of us don’t have Stoker’s “staggering range of . . . knowledge” about Victorian England—knowledge we need in order to do justice to *Dracula*. So our starting point for understanding the novel is to teach each other as much as we can about the world Bram Stoker knew.

Your task is to choose a topic from the list below and research it thoroughly—you’ll become our class expert on this topic. Then write an informative research **synthesis** in which you share what you’ve learned with your classmates and me. That is, report on the **scholarly conversation** about the topic, using *They Say/I Say* templates to introduce controversies and authorial action, to explicitly give us a sense of scholars’ work in relationship to each other. Like any good synthesis, this one should not simply be a string of five summaries. Instead, organize your essay according to points about the topic, then use summary/paraphrase and quotes from your sources to illustrate these points. (Hint: look at your in-text citations—if you cite only one author for more than a page, you’re probably not synthesizing.) Because you’re synthesizing others’ research, much/most of your material will be attributed to an outside source. And because your purpose is primarily informative, you won’t make an explicit argument. However, you will **need a controlling idea** that tells us what’s interesting, important, surprising, useful about your information; tell us, that is, what to make of what you’ve found out.

Nota Bene: The research you present should deal with Victorian culture only. Although you will choose information that can be connected to the novel, **do not make those connections in this paper.**

In addition, you should **include at least one image** relating to your topic. Cut and paste it onto your paper if you have trouble incorporating one electronically. Be sure to list the image source in your Works Cited; your handbook has some forms for visuals, but I’ve posted further instructions on our eCollege site under Document Sharing. **[HINT: Your next assignment will be to give a PowerPoint presentation on this topic, so now’s a good time to begin collecting images.]**

IN ORDER TO DO THIS WELL YOU SHOULD:

- **Start with a research question.**
- **Use scholarly databases (not Google) to find at least FIVE SCHOLARLY sources** on your topic (not counting the source for your image), **two of which must be print sources** (books or journals or documents not from the Internet) and **at least one of which should be a primary source** (more is better). Use only websites by scholars, news media, government, educational institutions (libraries, museums), or archives—look for .edu, .org, or .gov tags. You may use specialized encyclopedias only (no *Britannica*, for example.) Your classmates will be using your research, so make it good!
- **Read and reread** your sources carefully so you can summarize the arguments accurately. Take excellent notes, being sure to clearly mark direct quotes you write down. You’ll be interweaving source material, so you’ll need to know exactly where (source and page!) individual bits of information come from.
- **Reveal your organization** to readers through thesis, topic sentences, and transitions. Always make it clear to readers what particular author you are summarizing or quoting at any given time; **use attributive tags** (signal verbs!) often to reinforce the fact that you are reporting someone else’s information or opinion.

- **Document** your sources completely and accurately by clearly marking source boundaries, using in-text parenthetical citations, and including a Works Cited list at the end of your paper. Your classmates will be using your research, so it needs to be properly documented.
- **Make photocopies** of two **major** sources and **highlight the information** you used. Indicate in the margins of the source the page number of YOUR paper where I will find this information. I will check your sources and ask you to rewrite any passages that show mosaic plagiarism.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Submit 3 ranked topic choices (FC, FS)	Wed 8/31
Dual-entry notes for three sources due	Mon 9/19
Partial draft due (3-4 pp.)	Mon 9/26
Complete draft due for conference with me	Wed 9/28 & Fri 9/30
Portfolio due	Mon 10/3

The Portfolio includes all work for the assignment:

Left side in this order: author's note, final draft, rough draft with my comments, 2 source xeroxes

Right side in this order: partial draft with peer comments, dual-entry source notes, research sketch

GRADING CRITERIA—A successful research synthesis will:

- have a clear controlling idea (an answer to your research question)
- present information that is relevant to the novel, that helps classmates understand Victorian culture, and/or that is intrinsically interesting
- truly synthesize information, not present a string of summaries
- be completely and thoroughly documented, with all research attributed to a source
- be well-written, well-organized, clear, and generally free from grammatical errors

CHOOSE A TOPIC that you're interested in enough to use for 3 major assignments. (Wikipedia is a good place to get enough general info to choose—and it often has good bibliographies and/or images.)

- Vlad the Impaler
- Henry Irving and the Lyceum Theater (x)
- Stoker's auto/biography (471, 472-note 4)
- Oscar Wilde
- Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*
- the corset
- new technologies (typewriter, telegraph, phonograph, railroads, etc.)
- Darwin's theory of evolution—its effect on Victorian beliefs (x, 39n)
- the emancipation of England's Jews, 1890 (and, more generally, British views on Jews and anti-Semitism)
- Victorian views on immigrants (reverse colonization), especially those from Eastern Europe
- censorship laws (469)
- Jack the Ripper, 1888 (This is a *hard* topic.)
- Irish-English relations (Stoker was Irish)
- Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle
- homosexuality in Victorian England
- gender roles (True Woman/New Woman; roles for men)
- Victorian studies of the occult: The Society for Psychical Research, 1882 (171n)
- Victorian attitudes toward race/criminology: Nordau's *Degeneration*, Lambroso's *Criminal Man*
- Victorian epidemiology, Louis Pasteur, germ theory, syphilis epidemic; medical practices in general
- Jean-Martin Charcot (171): Victorian neurology, hysteria, and psychiatry
- depth psychology