

Lesson Plan: Historical Vampire Myths and Metaphors

OBJECTIVE: Students will learn how stories and myths can change over time, as they are interpreted by different authors at different points in history

TIME: 45 minutes (with optional 45 minute extension activity)

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- “Tall, Dark, and . . . Thirsty” from *A New Dawn*
- “The Great Debate” from *A New Dawn* (optional)
- “Dear Aunt Charlotte” from *A New Dawn* (optional)
- *Twilight* (optional) – lesson can be done without reading the book

INTRODUCTION: We’d all know a vampire if we ran into one in a dark alley. They have certain hallmarks: fangs, a thirst for blood, maybe a cape. But vampires have changed a lot since their first appearance in human culture. What makes vampires *vampires*? How have they changed? And why have they changed so much?

ACTIVITY:

Before class, have students read “Tall, Dark, and . . . Thirsty?” (*Optional:* Also have students read “Dear Aunt Charlotte” and/or “The Great Debate.”)

Review “Tall, Dark, and . . . Thirsty?” in class. Create an outline of the history of the vampire, listing characters and vampire traits from the essay and students’ other reading, watching, etc.

Discuss:

- What is essential to vampires? What is it about vampires that makes them vampires?
- What things have tended to change most about vampires?
- What different things have vampires have been metaphors for?
 - Discuss the influence of historical context.
- What do you think vampires stand for now?

Optional Extension (45 minutes)

Read “Dancing With Wolves” and discuss werewolves as metaphors.

FURTHER READING: *I am Legend*, by Richard Matheson; *Peeps*, by Scott Westerfeld; *Glass Houses*, by Rachel Caine

FURTHER WATCHING: *Dracula*; *The Lost Boys*