

# **The Nightmare House by Sarah Allen**

## **Curriculum by Michelle Dam**

### Contents of Curriculum

- Journal Questions
- Creative Writing Project (Paper and Digital versions)
- Poetry Anthology Project (Paper and Digital versions)

## Journal Questions

Instructor Note: These questions are intended to be answered alongside reading the novel to help students reflect on the events and themes of the novel while also practicing reading comprehension and writing skills. For this reason, I have included the page number in parentheses after each question. The questions are largely independent of each other so use your own creativity to choose which questions work best for your learner. You may also notice that questions are less frequent as the novel progresses; this is to give students time to begin working on one of the two projects.

1. Pre-reading prediction: Look over the cover and read the book's description. Predict what you think will happen in the novel.
2. Penny struggles with her fears throughout the novel. What are you afraid of and what strategies do you use to cope with these fears? (5)
3. On pages 6-10, Penny meets the Fear Maker for the first time. Create a comic strip of this event. (10)
4. Describe your first week of school or your first time experiencing a new place. Did you have any fears? (15)
5. What is a special food that your family or loved ones eat together. Describe a memory that includes this food. (23)
6. Penny seems nervous when she meets Aarush, but he seems confident. How do you feel when you meet a new person. (30)
7. When Penny becomes overcome by fear and wakes up, she enters a garden where she no longer feels afraid. Imagine you have this experience and write a short story where you describe the most peaceful and safe place that you can imagine. (47-48)
8. Aarush encourages Penny to submit a poem to a poetry contest and she feels nervous. What type of contest would you join and how would you feel about the experience? (56-57)
9. Penny describes her sunflower seeds, her jar of pennies, and the book of her grandmother's poems as the "most protective things I have." What items give you comfort and what is the story behind them? (63)
10. When Penny goes to the library, she says that she drifts towards books her age and then towards self-help. What types of books do you drift towards? Are there any genres you like more than others? (76)
11. Penny notices a shift in herself after she began to have nightmares. Describe a core memory when you noticed a shift or change in yourself. (93)
12. When Penny meets the Gardener, she feels safe and protected. Imagine what this safe person would be like if you wrote your own version of this book. Describe them in detail (age, job, location, gender, looks, clothing, personality). (106)
13. Many times, Penny meets the Gardener in her dreams. Write a narrative version of one of your dreams or make up a story about a dream. (121)

14. Aarush draws the picture in Penny's nightmares. Draw or describe the scariest house you can imagine. (142)
15. On page 147, Penny discusses Sonnet 130 by William Shakespeare. Look over the poem and reflect on what makes it funny.
16. Make a Prediction: What do you think Penny needs to do next? (158)
17. Penny doubts her ability to do what needs to be done; what strategies do you use or what strategies have you seen others use to overcome self-doubt? (182)
18. Make a Prediction: Once they have entered the Fear Maker's house, what do you think they will find there? (190)
19. Penny shares the first poem she ever wrote; reflect on something you like to do and the first experience you had with it. (214)
20. How does Penny defeat the Fear Maker and why is this important? (247).
21. Reread the last poem, "My Monster's Eyes are Nothing: My Sonnet 130." What does it mean and how does it help you think about the events of the book and how they connect to you.

## Creative Writing Project (paper version)

In this project, we will create a personal poetry portfolio like Penny does in the Nightmare House. Below you will see two columns: one will have a list of topic prompts you can use to think of topics, and one will have a list of the types of poems in the novel. Feel free to choose topics or poem styles outside these lists if you have other ideas.

### Step One: Choose your Topics

1. Choose 10-12 topics that you might want to write about for this project. It's okay to change your mind later or decide you don't want to write about one of these. You can also write multiple topics from the same prompt. For example, you can write two different poems about different works of art.
2. Using the graphic organizer on the next page, brainstorm by writing a few words or sentences under each topic that you are considering. Feel free to take breaks in between topics or add more later.
3. Once you have written out your initial ideas, choose the 7 topics that you have the most ideas for and move on to step two.

Topic Prompts
Choose any chapter and turn it into a poem.
One of your teachers or an important role model.
A favorite picture or work of art
A memory with a specific friend or family member
Your favorite color
Imagine if your toys came to life while you are at school
Respond to a favorite song
Your favorite place
Something that scares you
Sit outside and look around, write about the nature where you are located
A moment you were proud of yourself or someone else
Choose an object in your room and describe it

Poem Styles
Free Verse – this style of poem does not have a set form
Haiku – a three-line poem where the first line has 5 syllables, the second has 7 syllables, and the third has 5 syllables.
Sonnet – a poem following a rhyme scheme with 14 lines.
Couplets – two lines that rhyme and share generally the same meter.
Limerick – a 5-line poem which follows an “AABBA” rhyme scheme.
Abecedarian poem – a poem where each line starts with the next letter of the alphabet, starting with a.
Ekphrastic - a poem that describes the piece of art and how it makes you feel.
Shape Poem – this poem is formatted into a shape based on the theme or topic of the poem.



## **Step Two: Choosing your Formats**

Review the topics you brainstormed in the previous step and the types of poems from the novel. Do any of your notes already start to connect to one of the poetry styles? Often writing can be intuitive and you may have a feeling that one of the topics will match a certain style. If you don't see an immediate connection, pick a topic and start writing, it's always easier to revise a poem than start from scratch, so any start is a good start. If you realize that one of your topics isn't working, just move to one of the topics you haven't used yet. You should have brainstormed a few extra, which gives you some room to change your mind.

## **Step Three: Revising your Poems**

When you get to this step, you should have 7 poems in a variety of formats. As you read over your poems, ask yourself the following questions and revise as you go:

1. Does this poem match the rules associated with the style?
2. Does this poem transition from one idea to the next well? Are there any places where it feels like information is missing?
3. Did I spell words correctly and capitalize the correct words?
4. Read it out loud. Does it sound like it has "flow?" This may seem difficult to answer but think about reading out loud the lyrics to a song and how they still have a beat.
5. Does it have a title and does the title match the poem and attract the reader?
6. Did you separate your poem into stanzas? Think of stanzas as sections for the "mini" ideas of your poem? Would it improve your poem to change or add stanzas?
7. Do you engage with your senses? Could you add descriptions that engage with sight, smell, touch, or hearing in more detail?
8. Consider the words you chose, could you choose a word that is more specific or one that matches the poem better.

## **Step Four: Create a Portfolio**

1. Get a binder or folder with prongs to put all of your poems in
2. On a clean sheet of paper write (or print out) your final version of each poem. Feel free to add pictures or color.
3. Organize your poems intentionally. Which ones go together well? Does placing them in a certain order tell a better story? Feel free to create sections.
4. Add all your finished poems and create a cover and table of contents. If you'd like, you can also add an author's bio before the table of contents.

## **Creative Writing project (digital adaptation)**

For the digital version of the project, steps 1-3 are generally the same, but your student will be using Microsoft Word, instead of pencil and paper. The primary difference will be step four, which is written below.

### **Step Four: Create a Portfolio**

When creating a digital portfolio, you can choose to do this in two different ways.

- A digital version of a portfolio in word which follows the same steps as the paper version, without the binder.
- A website which has links to additional poems.

### **Steps for the Website**

1. Create an account on Wix.com to build your website. Feel free to use other free website builders.
2. Build your home page. This should include a summary of the project, along with an author bio.
3. For each poem, or section of poems add a link on your home page to that poem.
4. You will need to create the additional pages for these poems. Feel free to add pictures or color.
5. Organize your poems intentionally. Which ones go together well? Does placing them in a certain order tell a better story? Feel free to create sections.
6. Add all your finished poems and finalize your home page.

## Poetry Anthology Project: Getting Started

When creating the poetry anthology, each student will write a connection to the poem where they analyze either a text-to-text, text-to-self, or text-to-world connection. This may mean connecting it to a historical moment or to another poem in this book or a poem or story outside of this book.

### Step One: Choose your Poems

Choose the 9 poems in the novel that you connect with most.

### Step Two: Brainstorm

Using the graphic organizer on the next page, jot down what this poem makes you think about. These don't need to be full ideas or even full sentences, just jot down what made you choose the poem, or what you like about it.

### Step Three: Make a Connection

Using your same graphic organizer, write down next to each poem what kind of connection you will make: text-to-text, text-to-self, or text-to-world. You don't need to have three of each, but there should be at least one of each type of connection.

- text-to-text – How does this poem connect to another text such as a novel, movie, poem, or play?
- text-to-self – How does this poem connect to you or events in your life?
- text-to-world – How does this poem connect to events in the world. Think about large events that have affected many people. You may need to do research for some of these connections.





#### **Step Four: Rough Draft and Revision**

Once you have completed the brainstorming, write an analysis of each poem where you explain why you chose the poem and its connection to either text, self, or world. Read back over your first draft and revise by answering the following questions.

- Did I explain clearly why I chose this poem?
- Is the connection clear and have I explained that event or text well? A 1-2 sentence summary may be needed for text-to-text and text-to-world connections.
- Are there any spelling or grammar errors that need to be fixed?
- Do I give specific examples from the poem to explain the connection?

#### **Step Five: Poetry Anthology project (paper version)**

1. Get a binder or folder with prongs to put all your poems and connections in it.
2. On a clean sheet of paper write (or print out) each poem you are reflecting on. Feel free to add pictures or color, especially if you are connecting this to a specific event or other piece of art.
3. You can either write your connection on the same paper or write in on its own page.
4. Choose how you are going to organize the poems and their connections. Do you want to organize it by types of connects, themes, etc.? Feel free to create sections.
5. Create a cover and table of contents.
6. Compile these into an anthology by putting everything into your finished binder or portfolio.

#### **Step Five: Poetry Anthology project (digital/website version)**

1. Create an account on Wix.com to build your website. Feel free to use other free website builders.
2. Build your home page. This should include an overview of your anthology and a summary of the novel.
3. Choose how you are going to organize the poems and their connections. Do you want to organize it by types of connects, themes, etc.? Feel free to create sections.
4. For each poem and connection, or section of these, add a link on your home page.
5. You will need to create the additional pages. Feel free to add pictures or color, especially if you are connecting this to a specific event or other piece of art.
6. Add all your finished poems and finalize your home page.

## Poems in *Nightmare House*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Page #</b>
The Dark	Free Verse	11
The Fear Maker	Free Verse	16-17
Haiku	Haiku	25
The Fear Maker's House	Free Verse	36-37
Crash Poem	Free Verse	40
Yellow	Free Verse	53
Pennies	Free Verse	60
Golden Spiral	Free Verse	69
Mashed Potatoes: A Poem	Free Verse	74
Sunflowers: An Ekphrastic	Ekphrastic	79
Magic Tricks	Free Verse	85
Back to Before	Free Verse	93
Alone	Free Verse	97
Seeds: A Poem	Free Verse	122
Starry Night: Ekphrastic #2	Ekphrastic	129
Chambers	Free Verse	134
My Monster's House	Free Verse	143
Limerick	Limerick	148
My Monster Sonnet	Sonnet	150
What If Little Red	Free Verse	160
Me?	Free Verse	167
Halloween: A Poem	Free Verse	175
Things You Can't Buy at 7-Eleven	Free Verse	177
A House	Shape Poem	184
Escape Room ABCs.	Abecedarian poem	190
Hickory Dickory Dock	Free Verse	199
This Room	Free Verse	203
The First Poem I Ever Wrote	Free Verse	214
Not Fair	Free Verse	222
Falling Poem	Free Verse	237
Heart Tree	Free Verse	248-255
My Monster's Eyes are Nothing: My Sonnet 130	Sonnet	262