

## Approved for use in English IV

### Summary of the Work:

*The Haunting of Hill House* takes place over a single week in the 1950's rural America. The story begins with Dr. John Montague, a psychic researcher, who realizes Hill House, built some 80 years before, is a true haunted house. Dr. Montague seeks out volunteers including Eleanor, thirty-two, who comes to the attention of Dr. Montague because of an incident involving a poltergeist when she was twelve. She has spent most of her life caring for her invalid mother, and is shy, repressed, and looking for her identity. The physical horror of Hill House is subtle; more disturbing is the emotional torment Eleanor endures. Eleanor's summer stay at Hill House along with the three other guests proves to be a psychological journey of the imagination turned evil.

### Rationale:

English IV, M\*A\*S\*H, mystery, adventure, suspense and horror, is a section of the required English IV course. This course emphasizes the analysis of non-fiction and novels. Students should have an appreciation for and love of reading.

*The Haunting of Hill House* is a classic novel from the horror genre. It uses the subtle techniques that were part of the early horror genre. Elements of *The Haunting of Hill House* can be found in Stephen King and other horror fiction writers. Shirley Jackson is an important American writer whose short story "The Lottery" is a part of the American culture.

*The Haunting of Hill House* has been the premise for a number of horror films. Students will be familiar with the plot.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

<http://somanycbooksblog.com/2007/09/24/the-haunting-of-hill-house/>

<http://www.theharrow.com/columns/reviews/hillhouse.html>

<http://www.lambdasf.org/lfsf/books/reviews/haunting.html>

\* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

\* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

### Noted Distinction:

- See Titlewave for Awards.

### Readability:

- Lexile Score: 990
- Readability Level: 7.1

### Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: *(link)*

### Approval:

### Submitted to Committee:

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### Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

The story is a psychological exercise that twists and turns and, finally, controls the mind of Eleanor Vance, emotionally the weakest of four visitors to Hill House. But, the true horror of the book is learning that the house, itself, is evil-without explanation or apology, it is just evil. The representation of a ghost without visible representation is often more terrifying than a physical presence.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

- American female writer
- Horror genre
- Psychological terrorism elements
- Character development
- Themes of isolation, oppression

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*

*The Haunting of Hill House*, 1963, starring Julie Harris and Claire Bloom. Jackson was pleased with the movie. It adheres much more closely to the story line and effects of the novel than do most movie adaptations.

*The Haunting* (1999) directed by Jan de Bont.