

By the end of studying **Letter 2** I need to know:

Plot: Robert Walton is writing another letter (3 months on from letter one) to his sister Margaret.

Ideas: Robert Walton is prejudiced against the sailors as he feels he is intellectually and socially superior; this makes him feel lonely.

Vocabulary	<p>Encompassed Enthusiasm Cultivated- Harvested, looked after. Walton is suggesting his level of intellect here. Capacious- Large</p>
Hinterland knowledge	<p>Maritime life- Masters of ships were known for their brutality- working the sailors hard and punishing those who disobeyed orders. Interestingly, this contrasts with the master of Walton's ship- who earns respect from his men through treating them with respect and not abusing his power.</p> <p>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner- Walton references 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' when he assures his sister that he will 'shoot no albatross'. His attempt at extolling humour initially serves to highlight his arrogance- he wishes to reinforce his level of education through his obscure references. However, the story itself shares remarkable parallels with the novel. In the story, the mariner is sailing to the South Pole when his ship becomes stuck in ice. Shortly afterwards, he spots an albatross flying overhead, which he shoots, a short while later the ship is released from ice but the crew are cursed and many of them die from dehydration. The mariner, repentant of having shot the albatross and believing they are being punished for this sin, travels the world warning others about killing one of God's creatures. Similarities are evident- the creature is the albatross (the figure that appears when a ship is stuck in ice) and Victor is our mariner. Just like the mariner, Victor too has played God and now serves a warning to Walton- except rather than killing one of God's creatures Walton has attempted to create one of God's creatures.</p>
Context (To inform interpretation)	<p>Romanticism Walton is open to finding a new friend (juxtaposed against the idea in letter 1 where he believes he is superior to his shipmates)</p> <p>Treatment of women- During the time period, women were expected to adhere to the rules and expectations as governed by men. Significantly, in order to highlight the noble and virtuous qualities of the master of the ship, Shelley has the master subvert traditional expectation by him allowing his betrothed to marry whomever she loves and even providing a dowry for the marriage. This, in turn, further reflects the hypocrisy and prejudice of Walton; he desires a friend yet the master, who possesses qualities of equity that one would want in a friend, is not worthy merely based on his level of education.</p> <p>Class system- Walton is clearly governed by the rules and expectations of society and his social class. Throughout the novel, we see characters of a higher class believe that their status gives them superiority. This is evident here; the sailors are those who will make or break Walton's endeavours- and yet he does not have the courtesy to show them respect.</p>
Themes	<p>Loneliness: Significantly, Robert's loneliness- like Victor's later when he shuts himself away at university is self-inflicted. Firstly, Walton has decided to voyage to the North Pole, therefore opting for loneliness and isolation. His lamentations that he has 'no friend near [him]' to celebrate his success stems from his own prejudices- he believes he is socially superior to the sailors.</p> <p>Masculinity/Class: Robert wants a companion onboard the ship but he can't decide who. The captain and the lieutenant are possible choices but neither seem to fulfil that role.</p> <p>Prejudice: Walton has a dislike for the captain of the ship, even though he is an admirable fellow- he respects him but won't be friends with him. He believes he has no one round him that possesses as 'capacious and cultivated' mind as he does. [This also explains why, in Letter 4, he develops a connection to Victor Frankenstein and isolates him away from the rest of the sailors].</p>

Reading:

Robert Walton- travelling to the North Pole.

Margaret Savile- Robert Walton's sister.

Read to the punctuation.

Links across the text:

Comparing the self-imposed loneliness of Walton with that of Victor. Also, worth exploring the forced loneliness of the creature- stemming from prejudice (as it does here)

Treatment of women- The Master shows a greater deal of respect for his betrothed in comparison to other male, mostly upper class figures. It's worth here comparing the Master to Felix and the turnkey in terms of them showing greater respect to their partners, whilst all belonging to a lower class.

<p>Deeper understanding</p>	<p>A discussion is based around his education (this seems to be linked back to letter 1, could also highlight his superiority and a general reminder to the reader that his education is of an importance?)</p> <p>Class and prejudice plays a considerable role in this letter. Walton laments how he as 'no one near me... possessed of a cultivated and capacious mind'. He sees himself as superior intellectually, because his status has provided him with an education, whereas the seamen have not been given that luxury. This also reflects his own arrogance- that he believes himself intellectually superior- and how he only deems those who can match his intellectual ability as worth of companionship. This is further explored through his positive depiction of the Master as an 'amiable fellow', someone who possess the worthiness of being a friend but who is 'wholly uneducated'- his level of education and social status being the only thing that Walton can criticise of him.</p> <p>The depiction of the Master is significant. Walton relates how the sailors like him, as he doesn't abuse his power over him- compared with the typical expectations of captains at that time, and the brutal treatment of sailors, this marks the Master out as someone who upholds high moral integrity. This integrity is further revealed through the Master's decision to allow his betrothed to marry a person of her choosing- as well as providing the finance to allow that marriage. Again this separates the Master from the majority of male characters in the novel- most of whom perceive women as objects that belong to them. It is interesting to note his social status- a common thread amongst the text is the greater freedom afforded to women by the working class, this is something that is certainly prevalent here. Despite being aware of, and sharing these attributes with his sister, Walton still deems him unworthy of friendship, despite ow he 'bitterly feel[s] the want of a friend'.</p>
<p>Quotes and references</p>	<p>"I greatly need a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my mind."</p> <p>"I bitterly feel the want of a friend"</p> <p>"When I am glowing the enthusiasm of success"</p> <p>"remember me with affection, should you never hear from me again"</p>
<p>Terminology</p>	<p>Constant use of complex sentences to highlight his descriptions of his surroundings.</p> <p>Metaphors</p>