



elementary

R A I N B O W S

Young Frankenstein



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List of the grammar structures per level

BEGINNER • A1 (Breakthrough)

Nouns, short compound nouns, common adjectives, be, have, can, must, countable/uncountable nouns, articles, will future, imperative, basic prepositions of time and place, adverbs, numbers, some/any/no, personal pronouns, possessive adjectives/pronouns, 's, demonstrative adjectives/pronouns, present progressive, present simple, simple wh-questions, was/were.

ELEMENTARY • A2 (Waystage)

Structures of preceding level + longer compound nouns, past simple, past progressive, present perfect simple, could, future with going to/present progressive, some/any/no/every+compounds, comparatives, superlatives, quantifiers (a lot, much/many, a little/a few), conditional sentences (type 1), have to, less common prepositions of time and place, may, simple forms of passive, that/who/which (relative pronouns), would you like/shall we?

PRE-INTERMEDIATE • B1 (Threshold)

Structures of preceding levels + defining/non-defining relative clauses, don't have to/needn't, each other/one another, had to, might/could, should, ought to, question tags, common phrasal verbs, past perfect, more complex forms of passive, present perfect simple and progressive, for/since, reported questions/imperatives, conditional sentences (type 2), reflexive pronouns, will (offer), used to.

INTERMEDIATE • B2 (Vantage)

Structures of preceding levels + had better, have+object+past participle, less common phrasal verbs, indirect questions, have/make/let/get+object+infinitive, past perfect simple and progressive, conditional sentences (type 3), be used to, verbs of perception, wish, would rather, be able/likely to, so/neither, gerund and infinitive.

POST-INTERMEDIATE • C1 (Effectiveness)

Structures of preceding levels + idioms, other uncommon phrasal verbs, future progressive, future perfect, past conditional, inversion.

Young Frankenstein

Adaptation, dossiers and activities
by Paola Massara



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This book is freely drawn from the homonymous film directed by Mel Brooks.
Screenplay by Gene Wilder. © 1974 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

Young Frankenstein

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The film director

Mel Brooks



Mel Brooks is the grand master of movie satire and one of Hollywood's most successful film-makers.

He was born from a Russian Jewish family on June 28 in 1926 in Brooklyn. His career began in the forties while he was serving as a combat engineer in the US army.

During this time he organized shows for the soldiers. When he returned to the States he began working as a stand-up comedian¹. He didn't make money but he earned² great personal satisfaction. He became famous for his foolish and unexpected behaviour³; during an open-air show, for example, he jumped fully clothed⁴ into a swimming pool nearby. Then Brooks turned to television. He wrote variety programs, worked with such greats as Woody Allen and also received a Writing Emmy⁵. Throughout the fifties and sixties he produced plays and often appeared on television. He was considered one of the most spontaneously funny comedians.

After years of stand-up comedy and television, he ventured into⁶ movie making. During the production of his first film, *The Producers*, he discovered the talent of Gene Wilder, who would star⁷ in several Brooks films. Anyway, the following years were characterized by disappointment⁸ and failure⁹. In 1974 success came with *Blazing Saddles*, a comedy about a black western sheriff. In the same year Brooks directed *Young Frankenstein*, a fine parody of the Frankenstein movies. He won a prize¹⁰ for writing. In many of his films Brooks also starred because he felt he wanted a larger role¹¹. Brooks thought that parodies were a way to pay tribute to the classic films.

Spaceballs, produced in 1987, was a parody of science-fiction films and *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*, in 1993, made fun of the world of Sherwood Forest and of Robin Hood. In 1995 he co-wrote and produced *Dracula: Dead and Loving it*, a parody of the Dracula tale. He also founded a production company, Brooksfilm, which produced many notable¹² films.

1. *stand-up comedian*: comic actor.

2. *earned*: obtained.

3. *behaviour*: way of acting.

4. *fully-clothed*: completely dressed.

5. *Emmy*: (USA) television prize.

6. *ventured (into)*: risked doing something dangerous.

7. *would star*: would act in a film with a leading role.

8. *disappointment*: dissatisfaction, discontent.

9. *failure*: lack of success.

10. *prize*: something given to someone who wins.

11. *role*: part in a performance.

12. *notable*: important and deserving attention.



BEFORE READING

1 What do you know? Choose the right option.

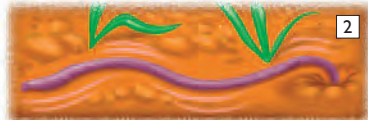
- a. Frankenstein was a
1. novelist
 2. monster
 3. scientist
- b. Mel Brooks is a/an
1. actor
 2. novelist
 3. film director
- c. Mary Shelley was a
1. novelist
 2. character in the story
 3. actress
- d. This film was made in
1. 1960
 2. 1974
 3. 1982

2 Have you ever seen this film on TV?

- Yes No

3 Match each picture with the appropriate caption.

- voluntary movement
- involuntary movement
- stretcher
- hop up
- worm



Mel Brooks Young Frankenstein

Scene 1

Dr Frankenstein is giving a lecture¹ at the University of New York. He is showing the difference between voluntary and involuntary movements. He also wants to show his students that, without nerve impulses, a man can't stand on his feet.

A patient comes in on a stretcher.

Frankenstein: Mr Hilltop has kindly offered his services.

Mr Hilltop, can you please hop up on your feet? Nice hopping. You have just witnessed² a voluntary movement.

Now let me show an example of involuntary movement.

You filthy³, rotten⁴, ignorant man!

Frankenstein kicks⁵ Mr Hilltop who involuntarily protects himself.

Frankenstein: As you can see these impulses work⁶ automatically.

But what happens if we block them for 5 or 6 seconds?

Frankenstein touches Mr Hilltop's neck and blocks his nerve impulses.

Frankenstein: You stupid bastard!

Frankenstein kicks him. Mr Hilltop groans⁷ but he cannot move.

Frankenstein: He is unable⁸ to move because I blocked him.

Mr Hilltop, in great pain⁹, exits.

1. *lecture:* a formal talk on a serious or specialist subject given to a group of people, especially students
2. *witnessed:* saw.
3. *filthy:* extremely dirty.
4. *rotten:* decaying.

5. *kicks:* hits with his foot.
6. *work:* have an effect.
7. *groans:* moans.
8. *unable:* not able.
9. *pain:* physical suffering.



Young Frankenstein

Frankenstein: As you can see everything depends on these nerve impulses. Without them, there is no way on earth¹⁰ to regenerate life in a human being. Any questions?

Student: Yes, Dr Frankenstein...

Frankenstein: Frankenstein, my name is Frankenstein.

Student: Ah, Dr Frankenstein, isn't it true that Darwin had just a piece of "vermicelli" and it began to move with a voluntary movement?

Frankenstein: Are you talking about worms¹¹ or spaghetti?

Student: Worms, sir.

Frankenstein: A worm, with few exceptions, is not a human being¹².

Student: But what about your grandfather's work? Isn't it true that your grandfather worked on the reanimation of dead tissue¹³?

Frankenstein: Rubbish¹⁴, he was a poor, mad man!

Student: But, sir...

Frankenstein: I am a scientist, not a philosopher!

A man arrives while Dr Frankenstein is having his lesson. When the lesson is over, he approaches¹⁵ the professor.

Stranger: Dr Frankenstein?

Frankenstein: Frankenstein.

Stranger: My name is Gerhart Volkstein. I'm here to bring you the will¹⁶ of your grandfather, Baron Beaufort von Frankenstein.

10. *on earth:* at all.

11. *worm:* small animal without arms, legs or bones.

12. *being:* person.

13. *tissue:* group of connected cells.

14. *rubbish:* worthless thing.

15. *approaches:* comes near.

16. *will:* document saying what should be done with somebody's money after their death.



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WORKING ON THE STORY

1 The story is funny. Different elements are used to make it humorous. Tick the elements that you find in this scene.

- language
- parody of gothic horror stories (frightening setting, monsters, secret passages, stormy weather)
- characters
- use of names
- unusual, funny situations

WORKING ON LANGUAGE

2 Frankenstein gives a lecture at University. The comic element emerges from the two levels of speech:

- formal-scientific
- informal-rude

Tick the informal ones:

- Mr Hilltop has kindly offered his services.
- Nice hopping.
- You have just witnessed a voluntary movement.
- Now let me show you an example of involuntary movement.
- You filthy, rotten, ignorant man!
- As you can see these impulses work automatically.

3 Now decide who Frankenstein is addressing each time to by writing S for *Students* or H for *Mr Hilltop* in the boxes above.

WORKING ON MEANING

4 Choose the right answers.

- a. Which of the following does Dr Frankenstein want to show through the experiment?
- Voluntary nerve impulses are more important than involuntary movements.
 - Life cannot be regenerated in dead tissue.
 - It is possible to bring back life in dead tissue.
- b. What is Dr Frankenstein's reaction to his grandfather's experiments?
- He admires him.
 - He says he does not know him.
 - He does not want to talk about him.
- c. Dr Frankenstein wants people to consider him
- a philosopher.
 - a magician.
 - a scientist.
- d. Why does he change his family name from Frankenstein into Frankenstein?
- Because he rejects his grandfather's experiments and does not want to be associated with him.
 - Because it is more American.
 - Because it is more modern.



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