Questions for Thought and Discussion

- Have there been any recent news stories that have defined the Gothic or Goths in contemporary society and politics?
- Do you think that the Gothic tribes really presented an alternative to the classical world and its values, or were they simply barbarians who destroyed civilization?
- We all know about Henry VIII, but how important is the Reformation in understanding the Gothic?
- The Gothic used to be political and associated with Protestantism, parliamentarianism, and progress. Do any elements of this Gothicism survive in politics today?
- What is the connection between the Gothic and the Middle Ages?
- What Gothic Revival (i.e. nineteenth-century) buildings do you know? Do these buildings evoke feelings or inspire values today?
- Gothic novels and films are supposed to be able to explore social taboos and trauma: what sort of taboos and traumas?
- Why are so many Gothic novels and films characterized by the ‘undead’? What does this suggest about contemporary attitudes to death and dying?
- What recent novels or films could be characterized as Gothic and why? Are they really ‘mock Gothic’ or do they avoid irony despite using well-worn clichés?
- Is Gothic a particularly English style? How does American Gothic differ from English (or British) Gothic?
- Is horror essentially different from the Gothic in fiction and film?
- Vampires are everywhere today – what is their attraction? (And would you like to be one…?)
- Does the Gothic have any future as a style, or in films or novels, or has it been exhausted?

Other books by Nick Groom
The Union Jack: The Story of the British Flag (Atlantic, 2006)
The Forger’s Shadow: How Forgery Changed the Course of Literature (Picador, 2002)
Introducing Shakespeare (Icon, 2001)
The Making of Percy’s Reliques (Clarendon Press, 1999)
Hallowe’en and Valentine: The Culture of Saints’ Days in the English-Speaking World (Oxford University Press - forthcoming)

Further Reading
Chris Brooks, The Gothic Revival (Phaidon, 1999)
Teresa A. Goddu, Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation (Columbia University Press, 1997)
Peter Heather, The Goths (Blackwell, 1996)
Christopher Frayling, Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula (Faber and Faber, 1991)

Recommended Music
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Murder Ballads (Mute, 1996)
Daughters of Elvin, Galdrbok: Medieval Songs of Love and Enchantment (n.p., n.d.)
Fields of the Nephilim, Elizium (Beggars Banquet, 1990)