

VAMPIRES

By

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Freshman English

Mrs. Strenge

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Good
Job!

Statement of Purpose:

^{in short,} Although vampires have become a staple in the entertainment of the developed world, many people still argue that this blood-sucking, undead being is only a figment of the imagination, while fanatics continue to argue its existence.

Outline:

I. Vampires are creatures of the night with many powers and weaknesses, along with an insatiable craving for blood.

~~A.~~ Vampires are said to be fallen angels that were cast out of heaven.

~~B.~~ Many vampirical powers make it easier for them to stalk their prey.

~~C.~~ Although vampires are very powerful creatures, they have many weaknesses and ways they can be destroyed.

II. The overwhelming mass of vampire myths throughout the world has led many to believe that this creature exists.

~~A.~~ Many cultures tell stories about vampire-like beasts in their folklore.

~~B.~~ Vlad the Impaler was the prince of Romania in the 1400s, and because of his ruthlessness, many believed he was a vampire.

~~C.~~ The Catholic Church became very involved in the hunting and slaying of vampires during the Middle Ages.

III. However, scientists believe that several real-life vampires, such as animals and human diseases, are the reason behind the vampire legends.

~~A.~~ Many medical conditions, especially diseases of the nervous system, have led some people to be labelled as vampires.

~~B.~~ Vampire bats feast on blood and may have been a source of inspiration for vampire legends.

~~C.~~ Corpses go through many changes during decomposition that have convinced some that the bodies are actually undead.

IV. Through many books and movies, vampires have been glamorized as creatures the world adores today.

~~A.~~ Several books, including Stoker's ^{Itc} Dracula and Stephanie Meyer's ^{Itc.} Twilight, have immortalized vampires through literature.

~~B.~~ Buffy the Vampire Slayer and True Blood are some examples of vampires appearing in movies and Television.

~~C.~~ Some cults exist in which the members behave like vampires.

In many parts of the world, garlic is hung in the windows and silver is kept by the beds to prevent one creature from coming into the house and transforming the family into demonic creatures that crave human blood.¹ This creature is known as the vampire (Scavone 11).² Vampires are creatures of the night with many powers and weaknesses, along with an insatiable craving for blood.³ The overwhelming mass of vampire myths throughout the world has led many to believe that this creature exists.⁴ However, scientists believe that several real-life vampires, such as animals and human diseases, are the reason behind the vampire legends.⁵ Through many books and movies, vampires have been glamorized as creatures the world adores today. In short, although vampires have become a staple in the entertainment of the developed world, many people still argue that this blood-sucking, undead being is only a figment of the imagination, while fanatics continue to argue its existence.⁶

I. A. Vampires are said to be fallen angels that were cast out of heaven.⁷

According to Dictionary.com, vampires are defined as "a corpse, animated by an undeparted soul or demon, that periodically leaves the grave and disturbs the living, until it is exhumed and impaled or burned," or "a preternatural being, commonly believed to be a reanimated corpse, that is said to suck the blood of sleeping persons at night" ("vampire").⁸ "The word 'vampire' comes from the Slavic 'obyri,' which evolved into the Bulgarian word 'vampir'" (Whyte).⁹ Every vampire has its own characteristic appearance, from the furry kuang-shi to the rotting revenant.¹⁰ Even so, the traditional vampire looks like a pale, fancily dressed, attractive man with long fangs (Bunson 8-9).¹¹ There are many different myths

concerning how the first vampires came into existence.⁸ Egyptian folklore says the first vampire was summoned by an act of sorcery (Radford)¹⁴. "According to the legends of Heaven, the creatures that we now call vampires were descended from three angels--Moloch, Ba'al, and Belial--who rebelled against God and fell from his grace" (Brooks 4)¹⁵. The three rebel angels were destroyed by the armies of the archangel Michael, and their bodies fell from heaven down to Earth.¹⁶ Upon reaching Earth, their essences were revived by a tribe of nomads, and after resurrection, Moloch, Ba'al and Belial developed a craving for the blood of man (Brooks 8)¹⁷. A third story of the vampire's origin comes from ancient Greek mythology.¹⁸ Ambrogio was an Italian man who fell in love with Selene, one of the servants of Apollo, god of the sun.¹⁹ In a fit of rage, Apollo cursed Ambrogio, making sunlight burn him like fire.²⁰ Desperate for a cure, Ambrogio sold his soul to Hades, and in the process, was also cursed by the goddess Artemis, making silver sear his skin.²¹ After realizing the trouble Ambrogio was already in, Artemis made him immortal and gave him fangs to help him hunt in the night.²² Since he possessed powers of immortality, Ambrogio and Selene could not have children, so Artemis allowed the two to mix their blood and fill other humans with it, creating vampires whenever they went through this procedure (Royal Mint Publishing)²³. Along with the myths of how the first vampire came to be, there are also many ideas of how one can become a vampire.²⁴ Being born with teeth, on a new moon, or as the seventh son can doom someone to become a vampire after death,²⁵ so can committing suicide, drowning, being a murderer, or not receiving a proper burial (Bunson 20)²⁶. Although these are all accepted ways

someone can become a vampire, the most popular myths say that vampires were ordinary people that transformed into a blood-sucker after being bitten by a previously existing vampire (Harris¹⁰). The story of Moloch, Ba'al, and Belial helps explain this process. After realizing their cravings, the original three vampires²⁸ decided that, in order to prevent vampires from overpopulating the world, they would each only turn three humans into vampires over the course of their lifetime, and this Rule of Three would apply to every other subsequently created vampire.²⁹

This is not the same thing as prey, who are people that vampires 'drink' to stay alive, similar to humans consuming food (Brooks¹¹ 4). Typically, vampires choose people with a desirable characteristic to become a new vampire.³¹ The vampire feeds on this Chosen One three times, and after the third feed, the person is entirely drained of blood.³² The existing vampire then fills the human with its own blood, and after a "blessing," the Chosen One becomes a vampire (Brooks¹² 8). Generally, vampires drink human blood, but any warm-blooded animal, particularly mammals, will nourish them, just with less effect (Royal Mint Publishing¹³). The necessity of the blood diet correlates to the fact that vampires are considered to be undead: since blood is essential for life, and vampires have no blood of their own, they must steal blood, or "life," so they can continue living (Scavone¹⁴ 16). Basically, vampires are created when an existing vampire drains a human of blood, and this person then rises with the same desire for blood.³⁶

I.B. Many vampiric powers make it easier for them to stalk their prey.³⁷ One of the most noted of the many abilities they possess is their incredible speed and

strength that outmatches even the strongest human, which, coupled with their significantly higher-level senses of sight, hearing, and smell, makes them formidable hunters (Whyte^{15 38}). "The power of mind control is possessed in some measure by all the Fallen, who systematically use their violet eyes to hypnotize their victims" (Brooks^{16 39} 11). Also, vampires can change shape to better stalk their prey. In these cases⁴⁰, they most commonly transform into bats and wolves⁴¹. Some may even change their form to become more attractive in an attempt to seduce their prey (Harris^{17 40}). Vampires are less prone to disease than ordinary humans, and they possess an extraordinary healing speed (Eldridge^{18 43}). Another ability vampires have is the creation of ghouls, the reanimated corpses of a vampire's prey⁴⁴. This being is solely created to serve ^{its} their master and does not have a will of its own (Brooks^{19 45} 9). The final skill they supposedly possess is their ability to cause natural disasters. In the days before science was advanced enough to explain natural phenomena, vampires were often considered to be the source of disasters such as disease and drought (Radford^{20 47}). In spite of the incredible powers they possess, other than these hunting adaptations, the bodily functions of vampires are nonexistent⁴⁸. Fallen Ones do not breathe, although some do mimic the rise and fall of their chest to lower suspicion, and they have no pulse⁴⁹. Any food or beverage they consume will make them "sick," as their bodies are meant to only process blood (Brooks^{21 50} 14). They do not have a shadow or reflection. Because of these two characteristics, some say they don't appear in pictures taken of them (Eldridge^{22 51}). To

summarize, there are many powers that vampires possess which make them superior to humans, especially while hunting.⁵³

I.C. Although vampires are very powerful creatures, they have many weaknesses and ways they can be destroyed.⁵⁴ Of course, the best way to control a nuisance such as this is to prevent it from happening, and there is no shortage of ways that vampires can be prevented.⁵⁵ Since vampires can be created when a corpse does not have a proper burial, adhering to the burial rites can stop the formation of a vampire.⁵⁶ So can destroying whatever killed them--especially in the case of a murder--closing the eyes of the corpse, and pouring incense on the body (Bunson 213).⁵⁷ Tying a dead person's limbs together can also hinder him from rising from the grave (Bunson 24),²⁴ as can putting a wooden stake through a corpse's torso and into the coffin (Radford).^{25, 58} The next best way to stop a problem is to identify it before it gets worse. "Potential revenants can be identified at birth, usually by some abnormality...as when a child is born with teeth.⁶⁰ Similarly suspicious are children born with...a lack of cartilage in the nose or a split lower lip....⁶¹ This was regarded...as presumptive evidence that it is destined to return from the dead" (Radford).^{28, 62}

Disturbed earth, footprints, and moaning near the grave are all ways to detect the presence of a vampire.⁶³ Other methods include witnessing a corpse with open eyes, excessive bloating, and above-average flexibility (Bunson 67).^{27, 64} If a seven-year-old boy puts white robes on and rides a white horse through a graveyard, the horse will stop near the grave that a vampire returns to when done feeding (Radford).^{29, 65} "Many of the Fallen retain some affection for the speech and dress of the age in which

they themselves were Chosen" (Brooks 14).^{29 66} Lastly, animals, especially dogs, cats, and horses, are terrified of vampires and will either run away or make noise to attract attention to the Fallen One (Brooks 14).^{30 67} After identifying a vampire, one must take measures to protect himself from a vampire attack.⁶⁸ Placing iron shavings under the bed, keeping objects made of iron nearby, and wearing an iron nail around the neck is said to repel vampires (Whyte).^{31 69} "An aversion to garlic is another telltale sign of vampirism. Many herbs are effective against supernatural enemies; deterrents include almond, aloe vera, bay, catnip, chive, iris, garlic, mustard, nutmeg, and star anise" (Brooks 14).^{32 70} While being pursued by a vampire, sprinkling grain on the yard can protect people from vampires, and oats and millets will work the best (Bunson 216).^{33 71} Throwing these small objects on the ground in large amounts may stop a vampire from pursuing, as he will be distracted and stop to count the items (Eldridge).^{34 72} Also, "Fallen Ones cannot harm any person in possession of a lock of vampire hair--be it their own or that of another vampire" (Brooks 17).^{35 73} Of course, when a problem exists, the best way to get rid of it is to destroy it, and there are many ways to destroy vampires.⁷⁴ Fire, direct sunlight, holy water and other Christian items, piercing the heart with a wooden stake, and decapitation are all ways to kill vampires (Harris).^{36 75} Sunlight is an especially potent way to kill a vampire, since keeping a vampire in the sun for at least ten seconds will severely burn them.⁷⁶ However, accomplishing these methods of destruction are difficult, as vampires are smart enough to stay away from dangerous situations.⁷⁷ Briefly,⁷⁸ "if you

think of monsters in terms of sports, vampires are those great offensive players who can always score, but are pretty crappy defenders" (Royal Mint Publishing).

II. A. Many cultures tell stories about vampire-like beasts in their folklore.

"Vampires have been featured in folklore and fiction of various cultures for hundreds of years" (Eldridge). The most familiar type of vampire is the revenant, a simple reanimated corpse (Radford). But the revenant was not the first vampire to be depicted in the legends of humanity. Seeing as gods and demons with characteristics similar to the vampire appear in myths of South Asian countries such as Nepal, India, and Tibet as far back as 3000 B.C., experts have traced the roots of the vampire to this area (Scavone 12). Over time, these stories of blood-drinking deities and demons were brought to the rest of the world by travelling gypsies, especially to the lands of the east European Slavs, whose stories contain more vampires than any other culture (Whyte). For example, the nosferatu is a Romanian vampire that enjoys tormenting the living (Bunson 191). Also from this area are the empusai. The empusai were monsters from Greek mythology who were capable of shapeshifting into the form of attractive women so they could get close to shepherds and feed on their blood (Harris). Another monster similar to the vampire Greek myths told of was the demoness Lamia. According to legend, this half-woman, half-snake was cursed by the goddess Hera, giving Lamia an appetite for her own children. Thirsty for revenge, she began eating human children (Harris). Moving on, ancient Mesopotamians told stories of Lamastu, a demon who would suck the blood out of men (Harris). Also from Asia was the

Chinese jiangshi, a monster similar to a vampire, who would suck the youth out of its victims (Radford^{46/43}). Alternately spelled chiangshi or kuang-shi, this monster is covered in green fur, claws, and fangs (Bunson^{47/04} 147). The Malaysian penanggalan was said to be a woman who could enter other women's bodies to eat their children (Scavone^{48/05} 15). Malaysia also serves as the home of the langsuir, the reanimated soul of a woman who died in childbirth (Bunson^{49/96} 150). Even some religions have tales of vampires. Jewish tradition says that Lilith was the wife of Adam, even before he was married to Eve⁹⁸. After getting the Biblical equivalent of a divorce, both began to have children with other spouses. Adam's children were humans, but Lilith's became the first vampires¹⁰⁰. Just as their founders were rivals, the two races became sworn enemies bent on destroying each other (Harris^{50/101}). As mentioned earlier, Medieval Europeans told stories about vampires causing the plagues that often hit during that time, using this as an explanation for their problems instead of scientific reasoning (Eldridge^{51/102}). In addition to these stories from the Old World, the New World had their share of vampire stories as well¹⁰³. The loogaroo, a vampire who receives magical powers from the devil in exchange for blood offerings, dwells in the West Indies (Bunson^{52/104} 162). "The chupacabra is a vampire-like creature that began a reign of terror in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Central America in the mid-1990s¹⁰⁵. Most accounts picture the creature as what might be described as a cross between a bat and a kangaroo" (Melton^{53/106} 122). In short, "Folklore from all over the world reveals that people in many cultures throughout history have believed in some type of vampire" (Scavone^{54/107} 8).

II. B. Vlad the Impaler was the prince of Romania in the 1400s, and because of his ruthlessness, many believed he was a vampire. Vlad Tepes III lived from 1431-1476, serving as the prince of the Transylvanian state of Wallachia (Pallardy). Vlad also went by the name of Dracula, which roughly translates to "son of Dracul," and comes from the Latin word 'draco,' "dragon" in English (Pallardy). Castle Dracula served as the prince's abode from 1456 until his death. Corresponding to his ruthlessness, he rebuilt parts of it with slave labor and materials taken from the ruins of a neighboring castle (Bunson 41-42). In combat, Vlad was notorious for driving a wooden stake into his enemies and pinning them to the ground, then leaving them to die. This earned him the nickname Vlad the Impaler (Pallardy). Finally, Vlad's enemies overcame him, sending him to death by decapitation in 1476. However, tales began circulating that his body wasn't actually laid to rest in the grave, that Vlad had returned from the dead like a vampire (Bunson 274). Hundreds of years later, Bram Stoker was looking for a name to give to the title character of his book about a vampire, and he came across Dracula. Before having the honor of getting Stoker's iconic vampire symbol named after him, Vlad had never been called a vampire, but this new novel manipulated history to make him appear more vampire-like (Bunson 274). "It has often been thought that Stoker based the title character of *Dracula* on Vlad. Though Stoker's notes for the novel do include mentions of "Dracula," the historical account from which the notes were taken mention only the appellation, not the deeds for which its bearer was known,"

61 120
 (Pallardy). Wrapping things up, Vlad may or may not have been a vampire in real life, but his deeds have made him one of the most popular symbols of vampires today. 121

II. C The Catholic Church became very involved in the hunting and slaying of vampires during the Middle Ages. 122 "The church officially recognized the existence of vampires in 1215, during the Fourth Lateran Council of Catholic Church Leaders in Rome. The church also established itself as the only authority strong enough to eliminate vampires" (Scavone 20). 62 124 The Vatican branded vampires as creatures sent by the devil. 125 This idea was reinforced by the *Malleus Maleficarum* of 1485, which stated that the creatures were corpses reanimated by the devil and sent to punish humans. 126 Basically, the church's statement meant that anyone who wasn't a member of the church was destined to bear the curse of a vampire (Bunson 147). 63 127 However, this doctrine wasn't necessarily adopted to protect the people, but primarily existed to protect the church itself. 128 "The church often encouraged these beliefs in order to entice people to obey and fear the church" (Scavone 29). 64 129 Catholicism's influence on the vampire huntings led to the ideas that vampires couldn't stand the church's power and holy objects could repel them (Scavone 23-24). 65 130 Over time, many tales arose about church officials coming in to perform a kind of exorcism to rid a town of vampires. 131 One such story comes from William of Newburgh's *History of England*. 132 According to the story, in 1196 Buckinghamshire, a man died, and then came back from the dead and tried to kill his wife three times over the course of three nights. 133 On the third night, he was scared off, but then proceeded to do the same things to his brothers. 134 This continued until the bishop dug up his grave and forgave

the man of all his sins (⁶⁶Scavone ¹³⁵20-23). In other words, when one of the most influential religions of all time believes something exists, most of the developed world will as well. ¹³⁶

^{III} Many medical conditions, especially diseases of the nervous system, have led some people to be labelled as vampires. ¹³⁷ One of the most common medical conditions that cause symptoms similar to the characteristics of a vampire is porphyria. ¹³⁸ Porphyria is an inherited disease caused by an excess of porphyrins, chemicals that help the circulatory system carry iron and oxygen to the body (⁶⁷Mayo Clinic ¹³⁹Staff). Two major types of porphyria exist: acute porphyria and cutaneous porphyria (⁶⁸Mayo Clinic ¹⁴⁰Staff). Acute porphyria attacks the nervous system, and sufferers typically have "attacks" that last a couple weeks. Symptoms include chest, back, and abdominal pain, vomiting, breathing pain, diarrhea, and confusion (⁶⁹Mayo Clinic ¹⁴¹Staff). An increased sensitivity to sunlight is one of the major symptoms of cutaneous porphyria, the type that affects the skin. ¹⁴² These cases mainly document symptoms of burning pain caused by the sun, itching, and blisters (⁷⁰Mayo Clinic ¹⁴³Staff). Specifically, paleness and sensitivity to sunlight are both symptoms of porphyria. They are all also signs of vampirism, which leads to sufferers of the disease being labelled as vampires (⁷¹Bunson ¹⁴⁴210). Besides porphyria, several other conditions may cause vampire-like characteristics. "Those suffering from iron-deficiency...could experience cravings for iron-rich foods--such as meat and blood" (⁷²Parker ¹⁴⁵). Similar to porphyria, pellagra, a condition in which the skin thins, causes paleness, associating the disease with vampires (⁷³Eldridge ¹⁴⁶). Catalepsy is a

condition where the pulse and breathing have slowed to an almost nonexistent rate, making the patient seem dead.¹⁵⁶ As this condition is only temporary, some medieval sufferers of this disease were buried alive, eventually waking and suffocating inside the grave while trying to escape their own coffin.¹⁵⁷ Occasionally, graves were dug up to check for vampire activity.¹⁵⁸ When a catalepsy victim was unearthed, the corpse appeared to have moved and was covered in blood, increasing belief in vampires (⁷⁴ Scavone ¹⁵³ 52-55). Besides all the previously listed ailments, anemia is also a commonly vampire-associated illness.¹⁵⁹ Anemia is a disease caused by a lower-than-normal level of red blood cells.¹⁵⁵ Common symptoms include shortness of breath, paleness, and dizziness, which often led relatives of Middle-Age cases to believe their loved one was becoming a vampire (⁷⁵ Bunson ¹⁵⁶ 7). Lastly, "It is well-known that the only way to truly kill the vampire is a wooden stake through the heart.¹⁵⁷ The truth? Anything piercing your heart has a good chance of killing you" (⁷⁶ Parker ¹⁵⁹). As many vampire myths are similar to real-life diseases, the credibility of these myths has lost its potency.¹⁶⁰

III. B Vampire bats feast on blood and may have been a source of inspiration for vampire legends.¹⁶¹ "Bats are the only mammals that can fly, but vampire bats have an even more interesting distinction--they are the only mammals that feed entirely on blood" (⁷⁷ National Geographic ¹⁶²). The creature earned its name after horrified European explorers realized what the animals' gruesome source of sustenance was (⁷⁸ Bunson ¹⁶³ 266). Three major species of vampire bat exist today: *Desmodus rotundus*, *Desmodus rufus*, and *Diphylla ecaudata*, all members of the family Desmodontidae

79 164
 (Bunson 266). Typically, vampire bats prey on cows and horses, but sometimes people fall prey, and in all victims, the open wound left from the feeding can become infected (National Geographic). 80 165
 Over time, vampire bats have adapted to feed easier and arouse less suspicion from their host while doing so. These adaptations include sensors in the nose of a vampire bat, which serve as heat detectors to lead it to a blood vessel near the victim's skin. 166
 In addition, razor sharp teeth help vampire bats pierce their victim's skin, and the saliva of a vampire bat contains chemicals which prevent the formation of blood clots, allowing them to feed on a victim multiple times out of one wound (National Geographic). 81 168
 Although not common in many parts of the world, the presence of vampire bats may explain vampire legends in areas where they dwell. 169

III. C
 Corpses go through many changes during decomposition that have convinced some that the bodies are actually undead. 170
 "The belief in vampires came from pre-industrial society trying to explain the process of death and decomposition. 87 171
 People expected a body in the ground to decompose as quickly as one exposed to the elements, so they suspected vampirism when a cadaver looked unexpectedly well-preserved" (Huber). 82 172
 The surprising preservation of the bodies can be linked to why they looked "alive," and the decay rate of the corpse was correspondingly slowed because of the conditions in the coffin (Melton 242). 83 173
 Even though not decomposing suggests the corpse is not actually dead, certain aspects of the decomposition process itself causes the body to appear still alive. 174
 For example, after death, the skin recedes away from the fingernails, making them appear to be

still growing (^{84/175} Parker). During decomposition, the gums of a corpse recede. This may cause the teeth to appear sharper, which would help the alleged "vampire" pierce the blood vessels (^{85/177} Eldridge). In medieval times, the time period in which bodies were dug up in search of vampire activity, some saw blood coming out of a corpse's mouth, making the body seem like a blood-drinking vampire, when in actuality, the gases produced during the decomposition process forced blood and other fluids out of the mouth and nose (^{86/178} Parker). Sometimes, when the body was unearthed, it was stabbed with a wooden stake to ensure death, and a "scream" was produced. This action actually pushed all the gases in the body out of the mouth, vibrating the vocal cords as they escaped (^{87/180} Huber). Generally speaking, the processes of decomposition that occur after a person's death makes the body less alive, so the possibility that these decaying remains can return to life as a vampire is a very controversial one. ¹⁸¹

¹⁸² **IV. A** ^{Itac.} Several books, including Stoker's Dracula and Stephanie Meyer's Twilight, ^{Itac.} have immortalized vampires through literature. One of the most influential pieces written about vampires is Dracula. ^{Itac. 183} Written in 1897 by Bram Stoker, the book was originally published in London (^{88/184} Bunson 73). ^{Itac.} Dracula chronicles the adventures of lawyer Jonathan Harker as he visits the castle of Transylvanian Count Dracula and discovers that his host is actually a conniving vampire, after which he and his friends then try to defeat the count and his allies (^{89/185} Sparknotes). This novel is considered to be one of the best-known novels and the most outstanding book about vampires ever written (^{90/186} Bunson 73). ^{Itac.} The publication of Dracula may have

kick-started the vampire frenzy, but a few stories existed beforehand, including le
 Fanu's Carmilla and Rymer's Varney the Vampyre (Whyte). Varney the Vampyre
 originally started off as a 109-installment newspaper story written by James
 Malcolm Ryder. In the 1840s, it was compiled into a single volume, becoming the
 first novel about vampires printed in English (Melton 747). Although *Dracula*
 utilizes aspects of several vampire novels preceding it, these stories are often
 overlooked, making *Dracula* the major influence for modern vampire publications
 (Bunson 74). Even more so than *Dracula*, *Twilight* has recently blown earlier vampire
 novels out of the water. "Twilight, Stephenie Meyer's debut novel, tells the story
 of Bella Swan, a normal seventeen-year-old girl who falls in love with a vampire,
 Edward Cullen" (Shmoop Editorial Team). Over the course of time, vampires have
 shaped the plot of various books, and these books in turn have shaped the world's
 view of the vampire.

IV.B *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *True Blood* are some examples of vampires
 appearing in movies and television. TV shows featuring vampires have become more
 and more popular as the years go by, and there are many different options to
 choose from. Originally, vampires appeared on television in the form of movies, but
 eventually they had individual shows created in their honor. *You Asked For It* and
 an adaptation of Stoker's *Dracula* were among the first TV shows to depict the
 vampire (Melton 665-666). In the ABC sitcom *The Addams Family*, Morticia
 Addams, the mother of the eccentric family, is a vampire (Melton 3-4). Generally
 speaking, one of the best-known examples of TV shows about vampires is *Buffy the*

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Vampire Slayer. The Warner Bros. Television series follows the life of Buffy Summers, a teenage girl who learns that she is the one destined to protect the world from vampires (^{97 200} Melton 73). In this hit series, the vampire king Lothos has returned to Earth and began "recruiting" more minions. Buffy begins hunting down and killing his new followers, eventually destroying Lothos himself (^{98 201} Melton 73-75). Modern culture has even gone as far as altering the fundamental aspects of the idea of the vampire: in today's society, vampires don't just survive by drinking normal human's blood. In the HBO series *True Blood*, synthetic Japanese blood allows vampires to live alongside humans (^{99 203} Schneider). As well-known as they may be, these shows represent just the tip of the iceberg of the overwhelming variety of ways to view the vampire on ²⁰⁴ Television and in movies.

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 IV.C Some cults exist in which the members behave like vampires. "Vampire cults have existed for several years, but the majority of these cults are filled with members who display vampire-like activity, such as drinking human blood and hiding from sunlight" (^{100 206} Royal Mint Publishing). Influenced by the nature of vampires, The Cult of the Vampire, based in England, is a secret magical society that guides members through seven levels of magical training and learning in order to overcome death (^{101 207} Melton 158). The Temple of the Vampire is a cult headquartered in Washington. They practice vampirism, a religion that has supposedly been around since ancient times, and members adopt the habits of a vampire and attempt to develop vampire-like powers to strengthen their magical Nightside (^{102 208} Melton 669).
^{103 209}
 The Egyptian god Set bears the regal honor of bearing the dedication of The

Order of the Vampyre. This Satanic church was founded in 1975 by members who wanted to appear less anti-Christian. They believe that vampirism is an extreme extension of human consciousness (Melton 503-504). A branch-off of the Victorian Age Masquerade Performance Society, the Vampire Cult was inspired by the game Vampire: The Masquerade. After some time, the members became obsessed with the game and thought they were real vampires, descendants of Vlad the Impaler himself. Subsequently, several chauvinistic members were charged with the murders of Richard and Ruth Wendorf in 1996 (Melton 714). In final analysis, these sometimes radical organizations have many different tactics to emulate the lifestyle of the vampire.

In conclusion, although many try to prevent vampire attacks, most don't believe that vampires are real beings, as science, medicine, and common sense all come together to disprove their existence (Scavone 11). While the media has made it one of the best-known paranormals in today's society, the existence of this nocturnal being with an undying thirst for blood is doubted by many. Indeed, the world may never know if this creature truly is real, but whether it is or not, it will always be popular in the culture of today's world.

Excellent!

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