

FOCUS ACTIVITY

How do you define personal responsibility? When something bad happens that involves you, how do you know whether or not you bear some responsibility for it?

Discuss

Evaluate these situations. In each case, discuss whether person *B* has a responsibility to person *A*.

- *A* falls off *B*'s roof while mending it.
- *B* walks by *A*, who is homeless and begging on the street.
- *B* lends *A* his car, which has faulty brakes, and *A* has an accident.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Victor Frankenstein deals with his sense of personal responsibility.

Frankenstein: The Letters

The basis of the novel as a cautionary tale.

Robert Walton states, "I was easily led by the sympathy which he evinced to use the language of my heart, to give utterance to the burning ardour of my soul, and to say, with all the fervour that warmed me, how gladly I would sacrifice my fortune, my existence, my every hope, to the furtherance of my enterprise. One man's life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought, for the dominion I should acquire and transmit over the elemental foes of our race. As I spoke, a dark gloom spread over my listener's countenance."

He then states, "Unhappy man! Do you share my madness? Have you drunk also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me; let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!"

Finally, he states, "You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been."

Who is this man?

What do you think he is warning Walton of?

How does personal responsibility play a role in what he says to Walton?
