English 11

Unit 2
Edgar Allan Poe’s Journey Through Life and Literature
ACT endorses the Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education and the Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement, guides to the conduct of those involved in educational testing. ACT is committed to ensuring that each of its testing programs upholds the guidelines in each Code. A copy of each Code may be obtained free of charge from ACT Customer Services (68), P.O. Box 1008, Iowa City, IA 52243-1008, 319/337-1429.

CONFIDENTIAL. This document is the confidential and proprietary property of ACT, Inc. No part of it may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the express written permission of ACT, Inc.

© 2009 by ACT, Inc. All rights reserved.
Note

QualityCore® instructional units illustrate how the rigorous, empirically researched course objectives can be incorporated into the classroom. For more information about how the instructional units fit into the QualityCore program, please see the Educator’s Guide included with the other QualityCore materials.

ACT recognizes that, as you determine how best to serve your students, you will take into consideration your teaching style as well as the academic needs of your students; the standards and policies set by your state, district, and school; and the curricular materials and resources that are available to you.
Unit 2  Edgar Allan Poe’s Journey Through Life and Literature

Purpose ........................................................................................................... vi
Overview........................................................................................................ vi
Time Frame ...................................................................................................... vi
Prerequisites ................................................................................................... 1
Selected Course Objectives .............................................................................. 1
Research-Based Strategies ................................................................................ 3
Essential Questions ........................................................................................... 4
Suggestions for Assessments ............................................................................ 4
    Preassessment ............................................................................................ 4
    Embedded Assessments .............................................................................. 4
    Unit Assessment ........................................................................................ 5
Unit Description ................................................................................................ 5
    Introduction ............................................................................................... 5
    Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures .............................................. 7
Enhancing Student Learning
    Selected Course Objectives ...................................................................... 39
    Unit Extension ......................................................................................... 39
    Reteaching .............................................................................................. 40
Bibliography .................................................................................................... 41

Appendix A: Record Keeping ............................................................... A-1
Appendix B: Days 1–2 ................................................................................. B-1
Appendix C: Day 3 ....................................................................................... C-1
Appendix D: Days 4–6 ................................................................................. D-1
Appendix E: Day 7 ....................................................................................... E-1
Appendix F: Days 8–9 ................................................................................ F-1
Appendix G: Days 10–15 ............................................................................ G-1
Appendix H: Days 16–18 ............................................................................ H-1
Appendix I: Days 19–20 ............................................................................. I-1
Appendix J: Enhancing Student Learning .................................................. J-1
Appendix K: Secondary Course Objectives ................................................ K-1
Appendix L: Course Objectives Measured by Assessments ...................... L-1
Purpose

The purpose of this unit is to examine how Edgar Allan Poe’s writing style, characterization, and word choice work together to create intriguing, memorable, and lasting literature. Students will also gain an understanding of Edgar Allan Poe’s life and learn how his work influenced other writers. Finally, they will explore how reading literature helps us understand who we are, how we view the world around us, and how we convey our ideas to others.

Overview

Through analyzing Edgar Allan Poe’s poems and short stories, viewing abstract art, and comparing a film to Poe’s works, students will learn about Poe, his work, and his influence as a writer. In order for students to have the background necessary for an analytical study of Poe’s works, they will begin by taking notes and participating in discussions about gothic style and Poe’s biography. They will also practice close reading, focusing on word choice, sentence structure, and symbolism. By comparing their interpretations of literature to their interpretations of art, students will explore interpretation itself, in the process developing varied ways of responding to literature.

To introduce students to the effect that Poe’s life had on his writing, students will read and discuss “Annabel Lee” and compare the poem’s protagonist, Annabel Lee, to Virginia Clemm, Poe’s wife. After this discussion, students will read and analyze “The Raven.” While reading “The Premature Burial,” “The Fall of the House of Usher,” and “The Cask of Amontillado,” students will explore the interrelatedness of structure, character, style, and language. They will learn vocabulary and discuss Poe’s word choices. Meanwhile, in the process of developing a deeper understanding of interpretation, students will view examples of abstract art and discuss why people interpret the same piece of art differently. This discussion should help students understand why they may interpret the same piece of literature differently, too. Students will return to Poe’s texts to discover allegories of a man’s journey through a psychological fall.

Students will then watch a film and compare it to Poe’s writing. As students view the film, they will take notes as a means of comparing plot development, themes, and characterization to one of Poe’s written works. Students will also be asked to find examples in the film of a motif, such as the psychological journey and dual personality of the protagonist, the effect of setting on the plot, the elements that create horror in the film, or the use of an abstract or symbolic portrayal of ideas.

Students will conclude the unit with a persuasive essay about one aspect of Poe’s work.

Time Frame

This unit requires approximately twenty 45–50 minute class periods.
If Poe’s timing was off a century earlier, perhaps the times themselves were to blame. Yet perhaps he also did not sense the full value of his stories; otherwise he might have seen that their brevity, their sensational events, and their common theme, man’s search for identity or self-knowledge, all matched to perfection the story of his life.
—William L. Howarth (1971, p. 2)

Poe’s restless intellect jumped easily from the realm of ratiocination to that of unreason. Here, with his pioneering focus on the disturbed mind and the disintegrating personality, Poe has had his most pervasive influence on contemporary literature.

UNIT 2
EDGAR ALLAN POE’S JOURNEY
THROUGH LIFE AND LITERATURE

Prerequisites

- Completed Unit 1, Introduction to English 11: Persuading with Style

Selected Course Objectives

The primary objectives, which represent the central focus of this unit, are listed below and highlight skills useful not only in English 11, but in other disciplines as well. Secondary objectives are listed in Appendix K.

A.1. Reading Across the Curriculum

b. Read independently for a variety of purposes (e.g. for enjoyment, to gain information, to perform a task)
c. Read increasingly challenging whole texts in a variety of literary (e.g. poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction) and nonliterary (e.g., textbooks, news articles, memoranda) forms

A.2. Reading Strategies

a. Apply strategies before, during, and after reading to increase fluency and comprehension (e.g., adjusting purpose, previewing, scanning, making predictions, comparing, inferring, summarizing, using graphic organizers) with increasingly challenging texts
b. Use metacognitive skills (i.e., monitor, regulate, and orchestrate one’s understanding) when reading increasingly challenging texts, using the most appropriate “fix-up” strategies (e.g., rereading, reading on, changing rate of reading, subvocalizing)
c. Demonstrate comprehension of increasingly challenging texts (both print and nonprint sources) by asking and answering literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions
d. Use close-reading strategies (e.g., visualizing, annotating, questioning) in order to interpret increasingly challenging texts

e. Compare texts to previously read texts, past and present events, and/or content learned in other coursework

A.3. Knowledge of Literary and Nonliterary Forms

a. Identify, analyze, and evaluate the defining characteristics of specific literary and nonliterary forms (e.g., satire, allegory, parody, editorial, essay, memorandum) and describe how form affects the meaning and function of the texts

d. Identify and interpret works in various poetic forms (e.g., ballad, ode, sonnet) and explain how meaning is conveyed through features of poetry, including sound (e.g., rhythm, repetition, alliteration), structure (e.g., meter, rhyme scheme), graphic elements (e.g., punctuation, line length, word position), and poetic devices (e.g., metaphor, imagery, personification, tone, symbolism)

A.4. Influences on Texts

c. Explain the effects of the author’s life upon his or her work (e.g., Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s experience in the gulag as reflected in his novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*)

A.5. Author’s Voice and Method

c. Identify, analyze, and evaluate plot, character development, setting, theme, mood, and point of view as they are used together to create meaning in increasingly challenging texts

e. Identify, analyze, and evaluate the ways in which the devices the author chooses (e.g., irony, imagery, tone, sound techniques, foreshadowing, symbolism) achieve specific effects and shape meaning in increasingly challenging texts

A.6. Persuasive Language and Logic

c. Locate important details and facts that support ideas, arguments, or inferences in increasingly challenging texts and substantiate analyses with textual examples that may be in widely separated sections of the text or in other sources

A.7. Literary Criticism

c. Read literary criticism to learn different ways of interpreting increasingly challenging literary texts

A.8. Words and Their History

c. Use general and specialized dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries (print and electronic) to determine the definition, pronunciation, derivation, spelling, and usage of words

d. Use context clues (e.g., author’s restatement, example) to understand unfamiliar words in increasingly challenging texts
B.1. Writing Process
   a. Use prewriting strategies (e.g., brainstorming, webbing, note taking, interviewing, background reading) to generate, focus, and organize ideas as well as to gather information

B.2. Modes of Writing for Different Purposes and Audiences
   c. Craft first and final drafts of persuasive papers that articulate a clear position; support assertions using rhetorical devices, including personal anecdotes and appeals to emotion or logic; and develop arguments using a variety of methods
   d. Craft first and final drafts of responses to literature that organize an insightful interpretation around several clear ideas, premises, or images and support judgments with specific references to the original text and to other texts or authors

B.3. Knowledge of Literary and Nonliterary Forms
   d. Rearrange words, sentences, and/or paragraphs and add transitional words and phrases to clarify meaning and maintain consistent style, tone, and voice

B.4. Influences on Texts
   d. Use resources and reference materials (e.g., dictionaries and thesauruses) to select effective and precise vocabulary that maintains consistent style, tone, and voice

D.2. Application
   c. Give impromptu and planned presentations (e.g., debates, formal meetings) that stay on topic and/or adhere to prepared notes
   g. Actively participate in small-group and large-group discussions, assuming various roles

E. Study Skills and Test Taking
   a. Apply active reading, listening, and viewing techniques by taking notes on classroom discussions, lectures, oral and/or video presentations, or assigned at-home reading, and by underlining key passages and writing comments in journals or in margins of texts, where permitted

Research-Based Strategies
- Gallery Walk (p. 7)
- Essential Questions (pp. 9–10, 12, 18, 21, 37)
- Think-Pair-Share (pp. 9, 13, 14)
- Reflective Questioning (p. 14)
- Jigsaw II Strategy (pp. 18–19)
- Group Work (pp. 18, 25–26, 27–32, 36, 40)
- Muddiest Point (p. 20)
- Fishbowl (pp. 35–36)
Essential Questions

1. How do experiences in an author’s life affect his or her writing?
2. How does knowledge about a writer’s life (or lack thereof) affect readers’ understanding of the author’s writing?
3. How do structure, style, characterization, and word choice work together to create an impression on a reader?
4. What makes a text relevant through time and place?

Suggestions for Assessment

Except where otherwise noted, assessments can be given a point value, or they can simply be marked as completed.

Preassessment

Questionnaire—Use the Edgar Allan Poe Questionnaire (pp. B-2–B-3) to gain an overall view of how the class thinks. At the end of the unit, administer the questionnaire again to initiate student reflection about what they have learned. (Days 1, 20)

Embedded Assessments

Journal Writing—Frequent journal writing increases writing fluency. Journals should be scored based on completion and the depth of thought put into entries. (Days 2, 3, 6, 7, 16, 17)

Reading—“The Raven” (pp. D-3–D-6) is designed to check students’ understanding of rhyme scheme and to further illustrate that the unity about which Poe theorizes is found in both the content and the form of the poem. (Days 4–6)

Muddiest Point—This technique helps students decide which parts of the day’s lesson they least understood. Use it for determining when reteaching is necessary. (Day 7)

Quizzes—Use Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz (pp. E-2–E-5) and Poe’s Short Stories Quiz (pp. I-2–I-5) to assess students’ knowledge of content, characterization, vocabulary, structure, and style of the texts they have studied. (Days 7, 19–20)

Worksheet—The Words to Know worksheet (p. F-14) provides additional exposure to and practice with words that students need to know as they continue their education. (Days 8–9)

Writing—The paraphrasing assignment for “The Fall of the House of Usher” is a tool for determining students’ facility with vocabulary. It can be used to determine the need for reteaching particular vocabulary words. (Days 8–9)

Worksheet—“The Fall of the House of Usher” Character Questions worksheet (pp. G-2–G-6) are an option for students who need more guidance. They encourage students to read “The Fall of the House of Usher” closely. (Days 10–15)

Homework—Highlighting parts of the text of “The Fall of the House of Usher” encourages students to read closely. (Days 10–15)

Poster and Presentation—For the abstract art poster and presentation, students make posters they share with their peers to show their understanding of symbolism. (Day 15)

Fishbowl—A modified Fishbowl activity to discuss “The Cask of Amontillado” encourages all students to participate (see “The Cask of Amontillado” Fishbowl directions, p. H-2). (Day 18)

Movie Notes—Students use a Venn diagram to take notes as they watch the film. The graphic organizer should help students compare the movie to the story. (Days 19–20)

Unit Assessment

Essay—Challenge students’ abilities to analyze a difficult text or film, formulate and support claims with evidence, and organize their thoughts by assigning the Edgar Allan Poe Essay (p. H-6). Assess the essay with its accompanying rubric (p. H-7). (Days 18–20)

Unit Description

Introduction

In the introduction to The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Writings (2003), David Galloway writes about Edgar Allan Poe:

There can be little doubt that he was a disturbed, tormented man, like so many of his own characters, often driven to the perilous brink of madness. If his fiction were merely the product of disinterested fancy, his tales of horror could hardly produce their brooding, sinister intensity; and yet Poe’s own mental state—while it may account for the tone and the themes to which he repeatedly returned—does not explain the work itself. . . . The fiction demands that we look at the life that produced it, but the critic must approach such analysis with more than the usual caution; the temptation is to see Poe’s work simply as the outpouring of a profoundly disturbed mind, denying, therefore, the conscious artistry in its composition. (p. xxxii)

Galloway’s comments can—and probably should—be read as a caution for teachers. While teaching Poe’s works, it is easy to fall into the alluring trap of focusing on his characters’ fears, obsessions, and paranoia; the Gothic settings; and Poe’s own unstable personality, without giving equal time to his quest for beauty, his attempts to heighten and intensify the consciousness of his readers, and his enduring influence and popularity.

This unit introduces students to Poe and helps them see how he influenced the development of the short story.

Use the following checklist to identify pedagogical routines and other practices that can help your class run smoothly:

- Have I posted the essential questions in a prominent place in the room?
- Have I created a tool, such as the Unit Assignments and Assessments record keeping log, for students to keep track of their assignments and assessments?
- Do I greet my students at the door as often as I can?
- Do I teach from bell to bell and ensure that students remain on task?
- Do I have a warm-up for students to complete while I take attendance?
- Do I post important information in the same spot on the board every day?
- Do I use routine and efficient ways of grouping students?
- Do I always dignify students’ answers?
- Do I reteach important skills throughout the unit?
- Do I assess students’ progress frequently?
- Do I meet the needs of my students by adjusting the time frame presented in this unit?
- Do I modify the pacing and materials described in the units to compensate for class size and/or access to technology?
Students should be introduced to the fact that Poe’s writing influenced a range of authors, including Robert Frost, Rudyard Kipling, and William Faulkner. His character C. Auguste Dupin was an important inspiration for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s character Sherlock Holmes. The French poet Charles Baudelaire translated Poe’s prose, grew obsessed with the American author, and came to see him as his alter ego. The influence of Poe’s short stories is apparent in the works of gothic writers such as H. P. Lovecraft and Ambrose Bierce. There are also numerous allusions to Poe and his works in popular culture, and learning about Poe should enable students to see the significance of those allusions.

In addition to introducing students to Poe, this unit continues the study of the formal aspects of literature begun in Unit 1, *Introduction to English 11: Persuading with Style*. This study of Poe’s work explores the importance of rhyme scheme and rhythm to some kinds of poetry. Finally, this study begins to develop students’ skills as close readers and interpreters of dense texts.

Figure 1  Portrait of Edgar Allan Poe. Photograph of a daguerreotype by W. S. Hartshorn, 1848, by C. T. Tatman, 1904. Available from the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division.
Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures

Days 1–2

On the first day of class, students learn about Gothic style and answer a preassessment questionnaire. Then, after a lecture about Edgar Allan Poe and the era in which he lived, students identify some influences of Poe’s life on his writing.

Materials & Resources

- Images of Gothic and Gothic Revival architecture*
- Audio player*
- Recording of “The Fall of the House of Usher”*
- Sticky notes*
- Computer with Internet access*
- Audiovisual equipment*
- Edgar Allan Poe Questionnaire (pp. B-2–B-3)
- Edgar Allan Poe Lecture Notes (pp. B-4–B-7)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

To activate students’ prior knowledge and to captivate their interest, create a mysterious atmosphere in the classroom. Darken the room, and strategically place images of Gothic, and especially Gothic Revival, architecture around the room. Include more modern paintings in the Gothic style, such as the work of Edward Gorey. Put up illustrations of Poe’s work, perhaps from The Annotated Tales of Edgar Allan Poe (Peithman, 1986). Finally, play Basil Rathbone’s recording of “The Fall of the House of Usher” or another of Poe’s stories as students enter the room. These objects are more than just atmosphere; they are the makings of a Gallery Walk.

In a Gallery Walk, students walk around the room, look at the images on the walls, and have quiet conversations about what they discover. This particular Gallery Walk is intended to create an environment that introduces students to some of the questions central to the exploration of Poe’s work and to encourage students to wonder about what they will be learning.

Give students ten minutes to walk around the room, studying the pictures and listening to the reading. As students examine the materials, they should put sticky notes with questions on the artwork; these sticky notes may also simply contain words about the mood created in the classroom, or how what they see and hear makes them feel. Meanwhile, walk around the room with students, listening in on their conversations and questions. When time is up, ask students to return to their seats. Encourage them to comment on aspects of the mood created by the pictures and to ask any questions the Gallery Walk inspired.

Next, show students the trailer for the Alfred Hitchcock horror movie Psycho, which is available online (Hitchcock, 1960b). It may be necessary to introduce Alfred Hitchcock beforehand. Explain that he wrote and directed several classic horror and suspense movies such as Rear Window (the
inspiration for the 2007 thriller *Disturbia* and *The Birds*. *Psycho*, which was released in 1960, is one of Hitchcock’s most famous films. It tells the story of a murder investigation at a motel run by a man, Norman Bates, who seems to do everything his mysterious mother tells him. In the trailer, Hitchcock shows his viewers the house in which much of the action of the film takes place. Students should enjoy the deeply ironic tone Hitchcock takes about his work.

As they watch the trailer, students should identify in their notes three elements or objects that they would consider Gothic. Take a few minutes to talk about their understanding of the word *gothic*. Students should immediately be able to describe what “Goth” means as a style of dress, but they may need to learn about the Gothic, which is also an important link to the past, especially in the features that define horror as a genre. In other words, the horror stories of Edgar Allan Poe and the more modern kinds of horror they can find in films are related. Viewing and discussing the *Psycho* trailer is one part of the unit-long investigation into aspects of gothic style. Watching the trailer takes less than ten minutes; you may want to have students watch it twice and write down comments on the video in general (as well as noting three Gothic elements in the trailer), then spend some time talking about the video before moving on to the next task.

When students have finished viewing and writing about the *Psycho* trailer, distribute the Edgar Allan Poe Questionnaire (pp. B-2–B-3). Allow approximately ten minutes for students to complete it; then collect the questionnaires. Explain that, when the unit is finished, they will complete the questionnaire again as a post-test.

Return to the Gallery Walk and to students’ lists of descriptive words. Ask students to compare those words to their notes on the *Psycho* trailer. The goal of this comparison is to help students discover the characteristics of the Gothic horror genre. When they are finished, call on individual students to share their ideas and explanations. Instruct other students to write their peers’ responses on the board. This list can be revisited throughout the unit. Encourage students to support their ideas with evidence, pointing out specific features of the images they are describing. This activity should take five to ten minutes.

Inform students that, because Edgar Allan Poe is best known for his poems and short stories, they will be the focus for this unit. However, before students study Poe’s work, they must have a foundation of background knowledge on which to build their new learning. Then, based on the Edgar Allan Poe Lecture Notes (pp. B-4–B-7), begin a lecture—a teaching approach students will surely experience in college or in job training. The lecture includes biographical notes about Poe as well as notes about his aesthetic theories. Ask students to take notes that they can refer to during future discussions and when they study for quizzes. At this point in their education, students have probably found a note-taking method they find effective; however, if you think students would benefit from direct instruction on how to take notes, take a few minutes to explain the Cornell Note-Taking System.

As Pauk (2001) explains, to take notes using the Cornell Note-Taking System, students should divide a sheet of paper into two columns. The left column should take up one-third of the page, and the right column the remaining
two-thirds. In the left column, students should write key words from the reading as a means of organizing headings and main ideas. The last things students should write in the left column are questions about the reading. In the right column, they should take notes, recording major subheadings, main ideas, and details from the reading. Like an outline, each level of note in the right column should be indented. Students may find it helpful to turn the words or phrases into questions. Then, if they use the notes for a quiz, students can fold the paper so they only see the questions—the notes become an impromptu review quiz.

Lecture through the first part of the section on Poe’s early life and then stop to allow students time to reflect upon and make sense of the lecture so far. Use the Think-Pair-Share strategy (Lyman, 1981), which was introduced in Unit 1, throughout the lecture. First, ask students to contemplate the following questions:

- Do you think artistic ability is genetic, or is it based on the way a family or society nurtures the ability? Explain your answer.
- In families you have known, including your own, have children chosen career paths similar to or different from their parents?

Second, instruct students to pair up to discuss their responses. Finally, invite the class to share their discussions. This should help students begin to explore Essential Questions 1 and 2: respectively, “How do experiences in an author’s life affect his or her writing?” and “How does knowledge about a writer’s life affect readers’ understanding of the author’s writing?”

Continue lecturing over the second section of the early life notes and then stop again. Ask students to decide, given what they know about Poe so far, whether they would consider him more creative or more structured. Do not define these terms; let students clarify for themselves how to explain their ideas. Wait until after students think, quickly write their thoughts about the question, and then pair up to share their thoughts, before suggesting that the categories creative and structured are not necessarily in opposition to each other. Students who wish to read their thoughts about the question, or about the categories creative and structured, should be encouraged to do so.

Continue with the lecture over Poe’s experiences at The University of Virginia and West Point. Invite students to imagine what campus life was like during Poe’s time. Help create a mental picture by reminding them that the University of Virginia is Thomas Jefferson’s university: Southern and very rural. Moreover, Poe was there long before the Civil War broke out. Continue to encourage students to imagine Poe’s life by asking what they think about Poe’s father, Mr. Allan. What opinions do they have about him as a father?

Continue the lecture, describing the complexity of Poe’s relationships with the many women in his life. Then, ask student pairs to discuss the generalizations they might make about Poe’s life and relationships. Significantly, three women in Poe’s life died before he turned forty years old: his biological mother, his adoptive mother, and his wife. Students may be interested to know that Peithman describes Poe’s marriage to Clemm as “an odd one by any standard” because “there is no proof that the marriage was ever consummated” (pp. x–xi). Some of Poe’s many biographers speculate that he married a young girl rather than someone his own age because he wanted to fill the female vacancy his biological and adoptive mothers’ deaths had left; others argue that Poe may have been a tuberculosis carrier and consequently felt a sense of guilt for the deaths of these women whom he loved. Assure students that though there are continuing questions about Poe’s
biography, this discussion should help them develop their responses to Essential Questions 1 and 2.

Describe the time period in which Poe lived. Be sure to describe what medicine was like during Poe’s day. Understanding how often people died of small ailments, how visible death was in everyday life, and how new the medical profession was may help provide a context for some elements of Poe’s work. You may want to ask students to imagine what their lives would be like if there were no antibiotics, and if no one fully understood that there were such things as germs. You may want to read and discuss Walt Whitman’s Civil War-era poem “The Wound-Dresser” to help students more fully imagine the time. Describe aspects of Poe’s career, such as the fact that he was one of the first American writers to try to make a living by writing. After covering Poe’s death describe some of the ways in which his influence is still seen in literary and popular culture. Finally, allow students a few minutes to catch up on notes and ask questions.

Proceed to the next part of the lecture by listing and summarizing Poe’s theories of composition and poetry. Introduce the two essays in which Poe elaborated his theories on these subjects. First, provide background about Poe’s “Philosophy of Composition,” which first appeared in the April 1846 issue of *Graham’s Magazine*, not long after “The Raven,” was published in both the *American Review* and the *New York Evening Mirror* in 1845 to great popular success. “The Philosophy of Composition” explains Poe’s aesthetic theories and, trading on the success of “The Raven,” describes the way he composed it. It is unclear if the essay is an authentic portrayal of Poe’s own method of composition. “The Poetic Principle” was published as an essay in 1850, the year after Poe died. It is based on lectures he had given throughout his life and is a discussion of Poe’s aesthetic and literary theories.

As when describing Poe’s biography, when you lecture about “The Poetic Principle” and “The Philosophy of Composition,” allow for discussion of points that students find interesting and/or confusing. Be sure to add or omit information to meet your objectives. If student questions indicate that further discussion of short story plot structure would be helpful, there are many sources of information available, such as the website Read Write Think at http://www.readwritethink.org (International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English, 2009) and Buehl’s *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning* (2001).

Concepts from “The Poetic Principle” (Poe, 1975) are as follows:

- The purpose of a poem is to elevate the soul.
- Beauty, which humans naturally desire and strive for, should be the aim of a poem.
- A poem should be short enough to draw the soul to the beautiful and yet long enough to be profound.
- There is no such thing, really, as a long poem. A long poem is just a collection of short poems.
- A poem should have unity.
- Imagination should be controlled by thought. Thought is the activity in which people are most like God.
- The purpose of a poem is not to pursue truth; the demands of truth are too severe for poetry.
- A poem which is just a poem, and not trying to teach anything, is the most dignified kind.
- The most intense sense of pleasure comes from contemplation of beauty.

Poe elaborated his ideas about writing in “The Philosophy of Composition” (1904) with the following points:
- Americans are too busy to read long novels.
- It should be possible to read any literary text (except a novel) in one sitting.
- Everything in a literary composition should be contemplated step-by-step with the precision of a mathematics problem. (This is antithesis to the idea that poets write purely out of intuition or inspiration, which was a common Romantic conceit.)
- A writer should predetermine the final outcome of the composition and ensure that everything in the composition moves toward that ending.
- There should be no word in a composition that is not meaningful to its purpose.
- The brevity of a work should have a direct relationship to the intensity of the intended effect, although a certain amount of length is necessary.
- The tone of the highest manifestation of beauty is sadness. Melancholy is the most legitimate of poetical tones.
- The most melancholy topic is death. Because death becomes poetical when it is aligned with beauty, the most poetical topic is the death of a beautiful woman.

Poe then explains how he wrote “The Raven” using these principles. He writes that he decided that the poem:
- should be about 100 lines, in order for it to be both a popular and a critical success
- should provide the reader with one effect of beauty, and the tone of the poem should be one of melancholy or sadness

According to Peithman, Poe’s main idea about the short story was that “an author should work towards a preconceived effect, structuring the tale and everything within it to produce that one effect” (p. xiii). This idea was an important contribution to the development of the short story.

Some literary critics and historians have suggested that “The Philosophy of Composition” might have been intended as satire; others have said that they doubt it is an accurate description of the method Poe used to write his own work. As poet T. S. Eliot said, “It is difficult for us to read that essay without reflecting that if Poe plotted out his poem with such calculation, he might have taken a little more pains over it: the result hardly does credit to the method” (as cited in Hoffman, 1972, p. 76).

Wrap up the lecture and prepare for the unit readings by asking students to write a paragraph of four to six sentences in their journals in response to the following prompt:

Based on your understanding of gothic style, Poe’s life, and Poe’s theories about literature, predict topics and/or themes you expect to find in Poe’s writing.
If there is time, ask students to read their predictions to the class. They will revisit these predictions on Days 19–20.

For homework, have students write in their journals responses to the following prompts:

- Is it important to know about an author’s life to understand his or her work? Argue yes or no, and support your arguments with your personal reading experiences.
- How do structure, style, characterization, and word choice work together to create an impression on a reader? Support your ideas with examples from your personal reading experience.

This assignment encourages students to continue exploring the unit’s first essential question and to begin thinking about Essential Question 3: “How do structure, style, characterization, and word choice work together to create an impression on a reader?” Students will continue to address the question throughout the unit.
Day 3

Students read and discuss “Annabel Lee” with respect to Edgar Allan Poe’s time period and biography.

Materials & Resources

- “Annabel Lee” by Edgar Allan Poe (p. C-2)
- Dictionaries*
- “Annabel Lee” Discussion Guide (pp. C-3–C-4)
- Glossary of Literary Terms (p. C-5)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

As a warm-up activity, ask students to share what they wrote for the Day 2 homework assignment. Tie their responses to points made during the previous day’s lecture. Remind students that Poe was a poet, short story writer, and essayist, and inform them that, during this unit, they will read several of his poems before moving on to his short stories. In addition, review Poe’s thoughts about poetry and the death of a beautiful woman. You might also suggest a connection between his sense of lost love with other psychological or allusive forms of absence, such as the loss of desire or the loss of Eden (perfect happiness). Encourage students to keep these ideas in mind as they read “Annabel Lee.” This discussion should activate students’ prior knowledge and contextualize the poem they will read today.

Distribute “Annabel Lee” (p. C-2). Remind students that it is usually necessary to read a poem several times to understand its meaning (Burke, 2002). It is also often helpful to read the poem aloud to hear its rhythm and rhyme and to determine how the line breaks and punctuation affects the flow of the language and the meaning of the poem. Remind students that, according to Poe, all aspects of the poem should work together, including its rhythm and rhyme, to create a unified emotional effect and to fulfill a purpose.

There are sound reasons both for reading the poem aloud yourself or for asking a student to read it. By reading the poem aloud, you model how to read a poem using punctuation to guide the rate of speech and to determine where stops and pauses should be made. Reading the poem aloud also gives you opportunities to correctly pronounce unfamiliar words, to emphasize italicized words, and to distinguish gender, mood, and/or verb tense with different vocal inflections. On the other hand, having students read the poem aloud gives them practice in oral reading, including changing the rate, tone, and inflection of their voices to convey meaning. Bear in mind, if you ask for volunteers and do not get any, reading the poem yourself conditions students not to volunteer next time—they will continue to let you do the work. In such a case, there is nothing wrong with calling on students and expecting them to read, especially if you laid down ground rules for class participation at the beginning of the course and are sensitive to unique situations that may affect a student’s willingness or ability to volunteer.

After the reading, invite students to ask questions about the poem. Students may be more comfortable asking questions as part of a Think-Pair-Share: first, thinking about and writing questions on their own, then discussing them in pairs, and finally posing their questions and answers to the class. Encourage students to answer each other’s questions: remind them that,
though you have studied Poe longer than they have, you do not have all the answers.

Throughout the Think-Pair-Share session and the ensuing class discussion, be sure to encourage students to take notes. For example, students may want to note the discussion of the poem’s symbols or to list possible meanings for the wind. If you introduced the Cornell Note-Taking System on Day 1, it may be a good idea to continue modeling how to take Cornell Notes. Even better, invite students to share their notes, explaining their reasons for the specific notes they took.

After students’ questions have been answered, begin the analysis and discussion. Use a modified Reflective Questioning strategy to encourage students to think carefully about the poem. Since this is the first poem analyzed in the course, the discussion may need to be teacher-directed. Guiding questions and possible interpretations for each stanza are provided in the “Annabel Lee” Discussion Guide (pp. C-3–C-4). Be sure to omit questions that you feel are unnecessary or add questions that you think are relevant to the discussion.

Remind students that they should not assume that the narrator of this poem or any literary work is the author of the work. The tendency to conflate the narrator of a literary work with its author is sometimes called the biographical fallacy. It is easy to fall into this trap when reading Poe’s work because so many of his stories and poems are written in the first person. Encourage students to think of musicians, actors, or TV personalities who are too closely associated with a persona they have created in a movie, TV show, or song. For example, they may remember the rap artist Eminem, who was reviled for singing violent, anti-female, and anti-homosexual songs. Eminem might argue it is the narrator of his songs, Slim Shady, who speaks hatred, not Eminem himself. Perhaps this separation of narrator from writer occurs in the poem “Annabel Lee” as well: perhaps the mourning narrator is a character only imagined by Poe and in no way reflective of the writer’s experiences. On the other hand, it is often true that aspects of a writer’s work—subject matter, style, and outlook—are influenced by the life he or she has led and the times in which he or she lived.

Wrap up the initial discussion by asking students to turn to their notes on Poe’s theories of poetry from “The Poetic Principle” and answer the question: “Does this poem follow Poe’s principles?” If students need guidance, ask more pointed questions:

- What is beautiful about this poem?
- How do you know the poem has unity?
- Does the length of the poem fit its purpose?

To answer the first question, students might say the narrator’s love or they might suggest that Poe’s philosophy suggests he would think there is beauty in the death of Annabel Lee. Regarding unity, students may see the poem’s narrative structure—that is, its beginning, middle, and end—as evidence. Rhythm and repetition also provide unity to the poem. Students may have differing opinions about the third question, but you might suggest that the
poem achieves the unified emotional effect of inspiring pity for the poem’s speaker.

Continue to explore how the poem meets Poe’s principles. Distribute the Glossary of Literary Terms handout (p. C-5), which students should refer to as they continue their analysis of Poe’s work. Ask students to read quickly through the list and identify terms they do not know. Then, as you read the terms aloud, invite them to raise their hands when you come to terms that need further explanation. Clarify each term by providing additional examples. Encourage students to amend the definitions on the handout to be more personally meaningful, appending examples from Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) books or other personal reading.

For “Annabel Lee,” focus on four of the literary terms: end rhyme, rhyme scheme, internal rhyme and symbol. Share with students that all of these devices can create formal unity in a poem. For students to determine the poem’s rhyme scheme, it is important that they first understand end rhyme. Therefore, ask them to identify the lines that have concluding words that rhyme. If students need prompting, provide the following example:

In the first stanza, ago and know and sea, Lee, and Me are end rhymes.

As soon as students recognize that each rhyming word represents an end rhyme, invite them to identify the end rhymes in other stanzas.

Next, explain the convention for determining the rhyme scheme of a poem. In the convention, each line is labeled with a letter determined by the end rhymes. The first end rhyme is always labeled a; the second is labeled b, and so forth. Since determining a poem’s rhyme scheme may be a skill that students have not yet experienced or have forgotten, you may want to demonstrate on the board or overhead projector the rhyme scheme of the first two stanzas (see Table 1).

Given their understanding of end rhyme, ask students to define the term internal rhyme and to cite specific examples of it from “Annabel Lee.” If students need prompting, invite them to identify the words that rhyme in line 34:

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza 1</th>
<th>Stanza 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Rhyme scheme of the first two stanzas of “Annabel Lee”
Students should recognize that *beams* and *dreams* rhyme. After they have identified the words, point out that both words are in the same line, thereby creating internal rhyme. Conclude the discussion of rhyme by asking students how these rhymes affect them.

Finally, talk about the meaning of the term *symbol*. By this point in their high school careers, students should be able to define the word and provide common examples. To deepen students’ current understanding, explain that there is usually not a clear one-to-one significance between a symbol and the object it represents. For example, in “Annabel Lee” *wind* does not absolutely symbolize tuberculosis, although knowing that Virginia Clemm died of the disease might point a reader in that direction. To deepen students’ understanding of how symbols work in literature and in life, consider paraphrasing theologian Paul Tillich on the importance and meanings of symbols. In *The Dynamics of Faith* (1957), Tillich argues that a symbol

- refers to something beyond itself;
- opens up levels of reality which are otherwise closed to the reader;
- takes the reader beyond the parts of the world he or she can penetrate with logic;
- is not created as a symbol intentionally by the writer, but rather grows out of the work and its meaning;
- lies at the heart of existence and perception.

Invite students to identify other potential symbols in the poem. Assure them that this discussion of symbolism will continue as you and they dig deeper into Poe’s work.

For homework, students should complete the rhyme scheme for the remaining stanzas of “Annabel Lee.” Then, they should study the rhyme scheme and, in a paragraph, hypothesize why Poe changed the scheme in the last stanza. In addition, students should write in their journals a response to one of the following prompts:

- Why might the narrator refer to himself and to Annabel Lee as children?
- What does the narrator mean when he says the angels envy “her and me”?

Wrap up Day 3 by asking students to write a sentence in their notebooks for each of the following topics:

- A theme of “Annabel Lee”
- Reaction to the poem
- Something learned today
Days 4–6

Students read and analyze “The Raven” for its unity, beauty, rhyme scheme, and the relationship between the poem’s purpose and length.

Materials & Resources

- Perched Upon a Bust of Pallas transparency (p. D-2)
- “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe (pp. D-3–D-6)
- “The Raven” Rhyme Scheme Key (p. D-7)
- Dictionaries (one per group)*
- Reference books*
- “The Raven” Discussion Guide (pp. D-8–D-14)
- Audio recording of “The Raven”*
- “Like This the Raven” by Clifford Edwards (pp. D-15–D-16)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Warm up by discussing the homework. Ask for volunteers to share their ideas about why Poe changed the rhyme scheme in the last stanza of “Annabel Lee.” Share your interpretation as well, modeling how to support claims with evidence from the text: the change in rhyme scheme is a case of form paralleling function. The final two couplets express the ghostly togetherness of the lovers. Remind students that every aspect of a poem should fit together. Both the content of the poem and its structure have unity—one of Poe’s poetic principles.

Use an Anticipation Guide (Herber, 1978) to help students activate their background knowledge before reading “The Raven.” Ask students to respond to the following claims:

1. Bad things usually happen at night.
2. It is not what you can see, but what you cannot that is the most frightening.
3. Both the time of day and the time of year can affect your mood.
4. Fear is a learned emotion.

Ask students to take a stand on each claim and to briefly support their stances. Asking students, before they read the poem, to agree or disagree with major ideas that they will find in the poem prepares them for the reading, activates their background knowledge on subjects addressed in the poem, motivates them to determine whether the poem will confirm or disprove their opinions, and brings out into the open any student misconceptions. As you read each claim aloud, ask students to raise their hands if they agree. For each statement, call on students who agree to explain their stances. Then, call on volunteers from those who have not raised their hands and ask them to justify their arguments. Allow a few minutes for the class to discuss each idea.

Display the Perched Upon a Bust of Pallas transparency (p. D-2), which is an image of an 1884 engraving by Gustave Doré. Select a few students to share their interpretations of this illustration. Then, inform students that they will read and analyze “The Raven,” focusing on what is happening and how aspects of Poe’s life might be reflected in the poem. They will also investigate whether the poem exemplifies Poe’s principles of unity, beauty, and the relationship between a poem’s purpose and its length. This investigation into how Poe’s work exemplifies his aesthetic philosophy will help students further
address Essential Question 3: “How do structure, style, characterization, and word choice work together to create an impression on a reader?”

Distribute “The Raven” (pp. D-3–D-6), which also provides blanks to identify the poem’s rhyme scheme for the first four stanzas. Select a student to read “The Raven” aloud to the class as other students read silently. Instruct the student who reads aloud to use the punctuation of the poem as a guide to his or her reading. If you prefer to include more students in the read-aloud, ask a different student to read each stanza.

After this reading, allow students two or three minutes to fill in the rhyme scheme blanks based on the technique they learned while reading “Annabel Lee.” Then, ask for a volunteer to read the rhyme scheme to the class. As on Day 3, ensure students take responsibility for their own and others’ learning by looking to students to answer each other’s questions and address each other’s misconceptions.

Invite students to analyze “The Raven” through the Jigsaw II Strategy. Jigsaw II is a collaborative-discourse instructional strategy that requires students to exercise listening, speaking, cooperation, reflection, and problem-solving skills (Center for Advanced Learning, n.d.). Follow these steps to conduct a Jigsaw II:

1. **Define the project:** Emphasize that, over the next two days, students will analyze “The Raven” to arrive at a deeper understanding of the poem’s meaning and the poet’s style.
2. **Create groups:** Divide the class into random groups of four or five, depending on the size of the class. Assign each student in a group a number.
3. **Assign areas of expertise:** By number, assign each student a topic on which he or she will become an expert. (For topic suggestions, see Figure 2.)
4. **Reorganize student groups by areas of expertise:** Have students assemble in groups based on their assigned topics. Expert groups should reread the poem with their topics in mind. They should use dictionaries to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary and other reference books to help them define allusions. Then they should discuss the poem in light of their research. Each student should take notes on their expert group’s analysis because he or she will be asked to share the information with their original groups and with the entire class.
5. **Reassemble the original groups:** When the expert groups have had adequate time for discussion, they should reassemble in their original groups. Each expert should then present what he or she learned. The other group members should also take notes to use as they write essays and study for quizzes.

After students have finished the discussions in their original groups, ask a student from each group to tell the entire class one discovery his or her group made. Using the Jigsaw II Strategy provides students practice in synthesizing important information from what they read as they assume the role of teacher with their peers, allows students to learn from their fellow students rather than primarily from the teacher, and encourages them to encounter more perspectives on the poem that they would if they each read independently.

---

**Tips for Teachers**

Unit 3 of QualityCore English 10, *Warriors Don’t Cry: Explorations of Culture, Identity, and History*, features in-depth explorations of photography and analyses of influential photographs from the era of the civil rights movement. Inviting students who took that course to recall what they learned will contextualize students’ analyses of Doré’s engraving.
Allow time for students to comment on what they see as the benefits and drawbacks of using the Jigsaw II Strategy. Allow time for any unanswered questions about “The Raven” as well.

Wrap up Day 6 by playing a recording of “The Raven.” After analyzing the poem, this is a good way to put it together again. Two recordings that students might enjoy are by Garrison Keillor (1999) and Christopher Walken (Poe, 1997). Both are available online; see the Bibliography for websites.

For homework, distribute “Like This the Raven,” an excerpt from Clifford Edwards’s critical analysis of the “The Raven” (pp. D-15–D-16). This essay should help students see how the ideas presented in “Philosophy of Composition” are exemplified in “The Raven.” Reading the essay may also give students their first experience reading literary criticism. Students should read the essay and prepare to discuss it for Day 7. Specifically, students should identify, in writing, one sentence they need clarified and another that helped them either better understand “The Raven” or see the poem in a new light.

Students should also study for a quiz over the lecture on Poe’s life and the poems, “Annabel Lee,” and “The Raven.”

Instead of beginning “The Raven” with a read-aloud and the Jigsaw II Strategy, consider reading the first stanza aloud and, by using a think-aloud, modeling comprehension strategies readers can use. Students will most probably know this technique from past years, but it is worth reminding them of it, especially as Poe’s fiction and poetry is dense. Since “The Raven” contains unusual vocabulary, you might focus on vocabulary skills in your think-aloud. When reading the first stanza aloud, pause upon reading the phrase midnight dreary, and show how you would think through the possible meanings of the word: “I guess that dreary is not a good thing, since the man is weak and weary, and it is usually pretty dark at midnight. Maybe it means boring or sad or tired? The stanza appears to be describing the setting and introducing the poem’s primary character.” Upon reading about the “volume of forgotten lore,” you might make some guesses, based on the context clue of volumes about what lore might be. Modeling thinking aloud encourages students to ask themselves questions as they read to clarify their understanding. It also underscores the fact that both students and teachers need to be actively engaged when reading by asking questions and clarifying their understanding of the text. By reading aloud, you can also demonstrate how the sonorous os of “The Raven” create a mood.
Day 7

Students take a quiz to assess their understanding of Poe’s biography and his poems “Annabel Lee” and “The Raven.” They also view samples of abstract art and discuss the similarities between art and writing as forms of communication.

Materials & Resources

- Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz (pp. E-2–E-5)
- Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz Key (p. E-6)
- An object to be sketched*
- Blank sheets of white 8½-by-11-inch paper*
- Images of abstract art*
- Overhead projector*
- The Scream by Edvard Munch transparency (p. E-7)
- Class notebooks*
- “The Premature Burial” by Edgar Allan Poe (pp. E-8–E-16)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

At the beginning of class, use the Muddiest Point strategy by having students jot down a quick response to the following question: “What was the muddiest point in your reading of ‘The Raven’?” Collect students’ responses to quickly assess which points to address later. Collect students’ homework as well.

Next, distribute Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz (pp. E-2–E-5), which should take students ten minutes to complete. While students are working, check both students’ Muddiest Point responses and their homework, making note of areas of strength and weakness. In addition, write the following statement on the board:

Poe believes “meaning belongs: not on the surface of the poem or tale, but below the surface as a dark undercurrent,” and “if the meaning is brought to the surface and made the upper current of the poem or tale, then the work becomes bald and prosaic and ceases to be art” (Bloom, 1985, p. 52).

When students have finished the quiz, they should write the displayed statement in their journals along with a one-sentence interpretation of what it means. (You may need to define prosaic as not having any interesting features.) Then, ask students to read their interpretations. Ask each reader to explain the thinking that went into the interpretation (that is, to think about his or her own thinking). As students listen, they should notice that each interpretation is different. The class should then have a few minutes to discuss the differences in interpretations. This discussion should help set the groundwork for a discussion of the literal and interpretive levels of understanding a piece of literature.

Clifford’s essay may raise questions about students’ initial understandings of “The Raven.” Ask students to identify the sentences in the essay they find confusing. Students should pair up and talk to each other about these sentences; together they may be able to answer each other’s questions. After students have talked together for ten minutes, ask for volunteers to raise any of
their as-yet-unanswered questions to the entire class. During this larger discussion, be sure to ask students whether they agree with Clifford that the narrator’s “mental and spiritual collapse” is truly “self inflicted”; invite students to find evidence to support this claim. In addition, discuss the rhythm of “The Raven” by pointing out how its relentlessness adds to the nightmarish effect.

For the remainder of the unit, students will spend a significant amount of class time closely reading Poe’s works, not only because close reading is an analytical skill that takes time to master, but also because Poe claimed that the meaning of a poem or story lies beneath its surface. Developing students’ skill as readers should also help students develop their thinking about Essential Question 4: “What makes a text relevant through time and place?”

To extend students’ learning, discuss how a reader’s perspective is affected by age, gender, socioeconomic status, and experience. You might illustrate the point by defining how some of your own reactions to “Annabel Lee” or “The Raven” are influenced by feminism or by the way the poems were taught when you were in high school. Talk to students about the complexity of representation. Some philosophers say that all art, whether literary, aural, or visual, is always a presentation of the world from a particular perspective, that is, a representation. All art is an expression of a personal response and a personal point of view. Returning to “The Raven,” ask:

- Is the poem only about a bird flying into a man’s home?
- What might the bird’s flying into the room represent?

When asking questions, remember to use wait-time, the practice of waiting a given amount of time before rephrasing the question. As you call on students to respond, have a student summarize the main ideas on the board. It may be helpful to remind students of the definition of symbol (introduced on Day 3) before suggesting that Poe could be using concrete objects, such as the raven and the bust of Pallas, to represent abstract ideas. Then, if students do not include unrelenting sorrow (or something like it) in the list, add it. Build upon the discussion by asking students to identify concrete objects that represent abstract ideas. The connections between a symbol and what it represents are not necessarily simple or easy to define.

At this time, have students arrange their desks in a large circle so they all have a clear view of the middle of the room. Then, explain that they are going to create visual representations of an object. Remind students about the point made earlier, that representation is complex because each person sees or interprets the same experience differently. The purpose of this move from reading and talking to representation through art is, in part, to provide an experiential way of thinking about how symbols—one form of representation—work. This focus on art will also help visual learners remember the points being made. Because the art activities take time, they may extend into Day 8. If you want to extend this learning further, you might have students listen to Susan Stamberg’s interview.

Clifford’s essay is an example of a well put together argument. Using the ideas of Stephen Toulmin, a philosopher who described a kind of argument structure common in popular discourse, students could analyze the essay. Toulmin outlined several parts to arguments in his model, but there are two that students might be interested in at this point and when they write their persuasive papers at the end of the unit: assertion and support. Making an assertion, or claim, and providing support or evidence for that assertion, is central to making any argument. Students will come back to these ideas with more sophistication throughout the eleventh and twelfth grades.

If students have trouble identifying symbolism in “The Raven,” suggest that they keep a Double-Entry Journal. Double-Entry Journals are typically used to help students better understand course readings (Brewster & Klump, 2004). On one side of a page, students copy or summarize important passages from the text. On the opposite side, they explain the significance of the passage, draw connections to other readings or experiences, or discuss how the idea might be applied in real life. Because Poe’s work is filled with symbolism, students could focus their journal entries on passages they think contain symbols. If you make this suggestion, be sure to check for understanding periodically, either by reading the entries or by talking to students about their writing.
(2008) with schoolchildren about Picasso, which is available online from *Hearing Voices*.

Students need to understand that interpretations of art and literature vary and that the extent to which their claims will be understood and accepted by others depends on how well they support their thinking with specific evidence. The ultimate goal for a critical reader should not be to judge a text “good” or “bad,” but to explain his or her responses to and interpretations of it.

Place an object, such as a stapler, book bag or briefcase, stack of books, chair, vase of flowers, statue, or a piece of audiovisual equipment, on a stand or table in the middle of the room. Distribute a blank sheet of 8½-by-11-inch paper to each student. Give students five to eight minutes to sketch what they see. (It may be worth assuring students that you do not expect them to be gifted visual artists.)

This drawing activity should engage students’ spatial intelligence and invite students whose intelligence works in nonlinguistic ways to shine. A secondary purpose is to provide an opportunity for students to take risks—to move out of their comfort zones. When time is up, collect the sketches and display them one at a time, instructing students to look closely without commenting on the quality of the work. After all sketches have been shown, invite students to explain why no two drawings are alike. Explanations will probably include, but not be limited to, the following reasons:

- Amount of direct instruction in drawing
- Eyesight
- Eye–hand coordination
- Attention to detail
- Personal life experiences
- Physical placement of the item in relationship to the sketcher (perspective)
- Knowledge of the subject
- Innate artistic ability

Underline the purpose of this exercise by asking students how they think it connects to their interpretation of the symbols in “The Raven.” Ask students what they make of the fact that none of their drawings were alike, and ask which of the drawings were attempts at realistic depictions of the objects and which were not. Ask the artists to explain the thinking behind their sketches. Does this say anything to them about interpretation?

Continue with the discussion of art and interpretation by showing students five or six examples of abstract art. (Because it will be used in the wrap-up activity, be sure to include *The Scream* by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch.) The purpose of using abstract rather than representational art is to encourage multiple reactions to, and interpretations of, what students see—the ultimate point of the activity. The art should also help inspire students’ spatial intelligence.

The presentation can best be done with an overhead projector or slideshow presentation; however, if the class is small, art books will work. Ask students to share with the class what they see in each image. As students voice different views, remind students that people have different experiences. Experience affects not only the ways in which ideas are communicated, but also the very ideas they choose to communicate. How an artist sees the world and creates art and how a viewer interprets art are two different
steps in a communication cycle, just as how a writer perceives a subject and writes about it differs from how a reader interprets what is written. The ability to interpret the sender’s message depends on the sender and on the receiver’s ability to construct meaning. In other words, each individual views the paintings and interprets the poems differently.

Wrap up the day’s lesson by displaying *The Scream* transparency (p. E-7). Ask students to complete a Quick-Write, writing nonstop for three minutes in response to the image. Encourage students to react emotionally, describing the mood the image elicits in them and identifying memories it reminds them of. After some discussion, ask students to write again describing similarities between *The Scream* and “The Raven.” Students should provide evidence for their comparisons. If there is time, ask for volunteers to read what they have written.

For homework, distribute “The Premature Burial” (pp. E-8–E-16). Students should read the story over the next two days. Although the class will not formally address the story, it will provide interesting background information and insight into the fear of being buried alive, a common fear in the nineteenth century. As the class discusses other of Poe’s works, students will be able to refer to the story whenever the recurring topic of premature burial arises.

**Tips for Teachers**

The following websites explain German Expressionism, the school in which Edvard Munch was a part. The sites also provide paintings that you may want to use as examples of abstract art.

- ArtLex (Delahunt, 2009)
- WebMuseum, Paris (Pioch, 2006)
- Tate Online (Tate Museum, 2009)
Days 8–9

In preparation for reading “The Fall of the House of Usher,” students paraphrase short segments of the story to make the vocabulary more understandable. Then, they read the paraphrased story aloud.

Materials & Resources

- “The Fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe (pp. F-2–F-13)
- Dictionaries*
- Computer with Internet access*
- Words to Know (p. F-14)
- Words with Contextual Clues (p. F-15)
- Graded quizzes*

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

The vocabulary in “The Fall of the House of Usher” is difficult for many students, not only because the story was written for an adult audience, but also because many of the words are no longer used in daily American life. It is difficult to predict which words may cause students difficulty, but their comprehension of the story will be enhanced if they have had prior exposure to the vocabulary. Readers cannot delve into the richness of a story and enjoy and appreciate its abstract meanings if they do not understand the literal story. Understanding the vocabulary is essential to understanding the literal story. Therefore, the story’s vocabulary should be discussed as a prereading activity.

Having students paraphrase “The Fall of the House of Usher” is one way to develop students’ skill at close reading and their understanding of its vocabulary. It is also a way to ensure all students understand the story at the literal level before they begin contemplating multiple possible interpretations. Because of the number of difficult words in the story, this paraphrasing activity is not intended to be an individual activity. Therefore, before class begins, decide how you will partner or group students and how the text should be divided and assigned. Divide the forty-eight paragraphs into an appropriate number for the class. Since some paragraphs are more difficult than others, you may want to assign difficult passages to stronger students. In addition, prepare to model the assignment by reading and paraphrasing the first paragraph aloud for students.

Partner or group students and distribute “The Fall of the House of Usher” (pp. F-2–F-13) and the Words to Know worksheet (p. F-14). Instruct students to define unknown words in their assigned part of the story, paraphrase the assigned paragraph(s), and prepare a clean, final version of the paraphrased text to read aloud and hand in on Day 9. Provide students with dictionaries or Internet dictionary access. Allow them to use the rest of Day 8 to work on the assignment.

Some of the most uncommon words in “The Fall of the House of Usher” have been defined for students in the footnotes. The terms on the Words to Know list are words they will encounter again, whether in their reading in high school, college, or in their work after high school. In addition to rephrasing these words in their paraphrases of the story, students should define each word, use it in a well-constructed sentence, and associate it with a personal connection that will help them remember the word and its definition. Students
should be able to guess other unknown words based on context. (See Words with Contextual Clues, p. F-15.)

To model what you expect students to do in their groups, read the first paragraph of “The Fall of the House of Usher” aloud. Ask students to determine the meanings of oppressively (a Word to Know), insufferable (a word students should be able to determine from context clues), and sedges (defined in footnote 1). Show them where to look for the definition of sedges. Have students practice determining the meaning of insoluble from its context, then have them describe the strategies they used to determine its meaning. Point out that some of the words they will define on the Words to Know worksheet are roots, such as oppress, from which oppressively comes. Work with students to rewrite each sentence of the first paragraph using their own words.

As you do this work, remind students that Poe chose every word for a purpose. Here is the first sentence of Poe’s story:

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher.

Perhaps you will paraphrase the first sentence like this:

All through that boring, gloomy, and quiet day in the fall, when the clouds were low, I had been riding my horse through an unusually bleak area, and finally found myself, as the sky was getting darker, in sight of the sad House of Usher.

Discuss the ways in which the paraphrase of Poe’s sentence is different from the original, in tone, meaning, rhythm and, perhaps, connotation. Encourage students to wonder why Poe chose to write in the elevated way he did, and let them know that this wondering is part of the reason for them to complete this assignment. Point out how, just in the first paragraph alone, Poe uses dull, dark, soundless, oppressively, alone, melancholy, insufferable and gloom, whose sound, sense, and suggestiveness create a distinctive mood. In paraphrasing, students should try to use precise words that retain the mood and setting Poe creates. Students will quickly see how difficult this is and will probably not be able to paraphrase the story and maintain its tone throughout all of their work. Helping them see this difficulty is part of the point of the assignment. Groups should continue the same process with the paragraphs they have been assigned, writing the meaning of every sentence in their own words.

As you walk around the room to monitor student progress and answer questions, determine whether more class time will be needed to finish the writing. Students may need twenty to thirty minutes to complete the assignment on Day 9. Remind students to finish their reading of “The Premature Burial.” Assign the first six

**Students’ questions about Poe’s language may lead them to ask why anyone would write in the way he does. Some students may try to discuss his writing as simply a product of his time. Challenge students to think critically. Invite them to consider why Poe, who was one of the first fully professional writers in the United States making a living solely by his writing and editing, might have needed to use the words he used. As a magazine editor, Poe sometimes had to fill an entire magazine issue with his work. Recent biographies of Poe, such as Quinn’s *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (1998), have investigated the writer’s professional life at length.**
pages of “The Fall of the House of Usher” for students to read on their own, as well.

On Day 9, inform students that as they arrive they should find their partner or group and finish the paraphrasing assignment. Students who have already finished should spend the first few minutes of class rereading and editing their work.

When all students are ready, ask a student from the pair or group who paraphrased the first paragraph of “The Fall of the House of Usher” to read the paraphrased story from the beginning. (If you modeled a complete paraphrase of the first paragraph, read it again to begin the reading.) Moving from group to group, instruct students to read the paraphrased paragraphs aloud until they have read the entire story aloud from beginning to end. As with previous readings, keep in mind that some students may be uncomfortable reading aloud without practice. You may want to give students a few minutes to practice in their small groups before reading to the class. Students may ask questions after each paragraph is read aloud or after the entire story has been read.

Allow time for the discussion of words that still concern students. Some questions may lead into deeper readings of the story. Write—or have a student write—the questions on the board. Next, collect the Words to Know worksheet to use as an embedded assessment. Collect students’ paraphrases as well so that you can make and distribute a copy of the complete paraphrased story to the class. When you return the corrected Words to Know worksheets, students should place them in their notebooks.

About ten minutes before the end of class, return the quizzes from Day 7. Students should review them as you read the answers aloud. This will allow students to hear the acceptable answers and to ask questions. (Make sure that students who were not present for the quiz leave the room.) Some teachers like to implement policies that allow students to query their scores by inviting students to circle answers they would like their teacher to reconsider. Collect the quizzes so that they cannot be passed on to students who have not yet taken the quiz. Require that students read the last six pages of “The Fall of the House of Usher” on their own for homework.
Day 10–15

Students continue to analyze “The Fall of the House of Usher” to better understand characterization. In addition, they explore how characters can represent aspects of the human psyche. Finally, they apply their understanding of symbolism by creating an abstract piece of art and explaining it to the class.

Materials & Resources

- “The Fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe
- Paper silhouettes or outlines of Roderick, Madeline, the narrator, the house, and the eye*
- Highlighters*
- Poster board* (one per group)
- Markers* (one set per group)
- Images of abstract art*
- “The Fall of the House of Usher” Character Questions (pp. G-2–G-6) (optional)
- “The Fall of the House of Usher” Character Questions Key (pp. G-7–G-11) (optional)
- “The Haunted Palace” Questions (p. G-12)
- “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe (pp. G-13–G-17)
- “The Cask of Amontillado” Study Guide Key (pp. G-20–G-22)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Before class, create silhouettes or outline representations of the important characters or objects in “The Fall of the House of Usher”: two different male silhouettes representing the narrator and Roderick Usher, a female silhouette representing Madeline Usher, the house, and the eye. (Children’s coloring books or computer clipart are good resources for all of the images.) Each silhouette must be large enough to write notes on. You will need multiple copies of each—enough to create groups of three to four students each if each student receives one silhouette.

Distribute the silhouettes randomly as students come to class, or use the silhouettes to create groups of students with specific reading abilities. For example, you may want better readers to focus on the characters that appear most often in the story (the narrator and Usher) since there will be more work involved to analyze them, or you may want more capable readers to focus on the house and eye since these symbols can be difficult to interpret. Alternatively, you may want to group stronger students with less able readers. Another possibility is to see how conversations differ if students are grouped by gender—having girls focus on Madeline Usher and the eye and boys focus on the narrator, Roderick Usher, and the house. Part of your later discussion with these groups could be to discuss whether they interpreted aspects of their character or the story differently because of their gender and/or gendered experiences.

Preview the day’s work: to reread “The Fall of the House of Usher” and highlight sentences or words associated with the character or object that their group has been given. This means that each group will be reading “The Fall of the House of Usher” with a focus on a different character or object in the story.
After explaining the assignment, as a warm-up ask students to describe the major points of the plot: a man visits a sick friend, the friend’s twin sister is buried alive, and the friend’s house falls down. Ask students to evaluate the story:

- Did they enjoy it? If they did not enjoy it, why not?
- Is one character especially interesting? Why?
- Did it remind them of any other reading or viewing they have done in their lives, and if so, what, and why? (Answers to these questions might lead to the discussion suggested below, about Gothic horror.)

Such questions are useful for surveying students’ preferences. It is entirely reasonable for students to dislike a text but to develop a critical appreciation for it at the same time.

Revisit the list of characteristics of Gothic horror the class made on Day 1. Prompt students to identify examples of movies, video games, or writers they like who use aspects of the gothic in their work. Two aspects of the gothic which Poe was interested in are the arabesque and the grotesque. Talking through these concepts with students may be helpful as they read Poe’s stories.

An arabesque is similar to the grotesque. In architecture, an arabesque is an intricate pattern, or a natural form made intricate. The grotesque can be understood as an aesthetic category involving disruption and distortion of hierarchical or canonical assumptions. The notion combines ugliness and ornament, the bizarre and the ridiculous, the excessive and the unreal. Students may understand the concept of grotesques in architecture if they recall any fantastical men, beasts, flowers, or plants they have seen on Gothic-style buildings or in images of such buildings. In Poe’s work the grotesque is associated with ideas of disorder and unpredictability, a certain decadence and excess. Students should be able to find examples of the grotesque in Poe’s work.

Moving on from these concepts, ask students to recall what they know already about characterization. Earlier in their educations, they may have learned that characterization from a reader’s viewpoint involves

- discovering as much as possible from the text about a character’s appearance or experiences;
- identifying what a character thinks, says, and does;
- evaluating what others say to and/or about a character;
- interpreting the types and roles of characters, such as a round character, a protagonist, and a foil.

If they are not able to list these criteria, prompt them by asking: “If you were asked to describe a real person, what aspects of that person would you focus on?” Students may contribute descriptions such as “nice,” “friendly,” “arrogant,” or “mean.” Then, ask students to give concrete examples to clarify the meanings of the words they use and to find more nuanced or precise words that convey similar meaning. At the same time, continue to turn the conversation back to a definition of the process of characterization in literature.

Though students learned the skill of annotation in tenth grade and used that skill in Unit 1, in this unit they will highlight rather than annotate the thoughts, feelings, physical descriptions, and actions of their characters. Read aloud the first few paragraphs of the story, indicating which sentences relate to the narrator’s thoughts, which to his feelings, and which to an object like the house. Encourage students to add their own observations.
Some aspects of this assignment are simple. The purpose is to help students become close readers, focusing on Poe’s words. For example, students whose assignment is the eye should highlight the word “eye” every time they see it, including passages where the windows of the house are described in ways an eye might be described and passages in which other characters’ eyes are described. Each student might highlight a different aspect of language about his or her character. Students should individually highlight their copies of the story for homework.

Check students’ highlighted stories for completion when they come to class on Day 11. The highlighted stories will make the work on Day 11 much easier.

When students arrive on Day 11, instruct them to return to their Day 10 groups as you review their highlighted stories.

Groups will discuss which sentences and words they highlighted and explain their reasoning. These discussions may continue through Days 12 and 13. After they have come to some agreement about any patterns they see in their highlighting or the most important portions of the story they have highlighted, they should describe those patterns in writing on the silhouette to create a portrait of the character. It may be a good idea to assign group roles to ensure each group member is participating and is responsible, in some way, for the group’s success. Each group should define the following roles:

- **Chairperson:** Ensures that each group member is given the opportunity to participate in all discussions and that the group stays on task.
- **Connector:** Verbalizes interpretations based on group members’ highlighting and makes connections between texts.
- **Questioner:** Asks questions about highlighting by other members of the group.
- **Recorder:** Records the group’s analysis on the silhouette by placing descriptions of the character’s feelings near the silhouette’s heart, the character’s thoughts on the silhouette’s head (if it has a head), and other descriptions such as physical appearance and character dialogue, where appropriate. Notes about the character’s actions should be placed toward the bottom of the silhouette.

If groups include more than four students, the other students in the group should listen carefully and contribute their ideas during the group discussion. Establishing roles for group work should help to create a businesslike climate in the classroom.

As students work, circulate around the room, guiding those who are struggling by directing them to specific passages or by asking questions that will further their understanding.

Students’ group discussions of “The Fall of the House of Usher” will necessarily involve some choice about which highlighted marks are most important to reproduce on the silhouette. This conversation about where different parts of the highlighting should go is one step in the process of interpretation.

After the silhouettes are finished, have the recorder of each group reveal to the class what the group has written. The sharing students do at this point gives them an opportunity to discuss relationships among the characters. Discuss the findings with the class. Use the discussion to listen to and assess students’ interpretations of the characters and encourage students to share...
The discussion may also help move the interpretation along by informing each group of the ideas other groups are developing about their characters. Encouraging students to see the discussion as a means of thinking aloud and constructing knowledge rather than as a competition to state the “correct” answer will help groups work together.

Each group should then come to a preliminary consensus about its character’s qualities. Group members should agree upon a generalization or a series of generalizations they can make, based on specific sentences in the text, about their character. Each group should also try to make a claim about the character’s place in “The Fall of the House of Usher.” In particular, they should consider whether the characters and objects might be symbols as well as characters and objects. Reminding students of their interpretations of the abstract art they studied on Day 7, tell them that members of their groups will probably interpret the story differently. Nevertheless, they should share their thinking and try to reach a consensus. Remind students to review their notes in chronological order and to discuss each note in relation to the story. For instance, the eye initially appears when the narrator first sees the house of Usher and notices “eye-like windows.” In their groups, students should ask themselves why Poe compares the windows to eyes. How they answer the question will probably determine their readiness to accept the characters and objects as symbols.

Some critics see “The Fall of the House of Usher” as an allegory in which, as in a dream, each character represents some aspect of the narrator’s psyche. Critics who see the story as an allegory concentrate on the poem “The Haunted Palace.” To draw students to explore this idea, ask them to reread “The Haunted Palace.” Encourage students to generate questions, clarify phrases, and identify lines that help them understand the ballad. In addition, use “The Haunted Palace” Questions (p. G-12) to guide students’ analysis of the poem. Invite students to consider why hearing the ballad might represent a turning point in the narrator’s thinking. (It may help to read the poem aloud, one verse at a time.) Finally, ask students to summarize the important discussion points. Students should now see how the poem can be interpreted as a song about a person losing his or her sanity and the significance of the narrator’s realization: “I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne.”

Invite groups to revisit the possible symbolism of their characters and objects. Remind students of the discussion on Day 7 about Clifford’s essay “Like This The Raven.” As Clifford shows, any interpretation is an argument for a certain way of reading. To be persuasive, that argument must support a claim with evidence. Therefore, when students present their interpretations of the story, they should support their claims with evidence. One interpretation suggested in this unit is that each character is one aspect of the narrator’s unconscious and that the narrator is falling into madness.

For homework on Day 14, students should outline or plan what their group’s poster might include. In this way, they will come to class on Day 15 with possibilities ready.

On Day 15, distribute a large piece of poster board and a set of markers to each group. As a warm-up activity, ask groups to review their notes about their characters.
Students may want to have a brief class discussion about their interpretations of the characters in “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Use the discussion to build a consensus interpretation of the story. Drawing upon their understanding of the symbolism of their characters, students should next create an abstract poster to represent that symbolism. After the group reaches consensus on what their poster should look like and creates the poster, one student from each group should present the poster to the class. Each presentation should take about four minutes.

To prepare students for this task and remind them of what they have learned about abstract art, display the professional artwork from Day 7. You may also want to add Fuseli’s *Nightmare* (see Figure 3) to the presentation and remind students of the reference the narrator makes to Roderick Usher’s paintings. Students may struggle to represent the characters at first, but remind them of their discussions and how they formed their interpretations. Ask them to recall objects, actions, colors, lines, textures, and shapes that might imply an idea larger than the picture.

Allow at least thirty minutes for groups to formulate their ideas and create their poster. (You may want to extend the unit by a day to allow students to spend more time on the poster.) Emphasize teamwork: although at least one group member—perhaps the most artistic person—should take responsibility for sketching the poster’s basic form, the rest of the group should assist with ideas, encouragement, and any inking or coloring necessary to complete the project. You should neither expect a masterpiece nor be concerned with students’ relative artistic abilities.

At the end of the activity, the recorder—someone other than the artist—should present the group’s poster to the class. First, the recorder should stand before the class with the poster and support his or her group’s interpretation of the character with evidence from the text. Second, the spokesperson should

---

**Figure 3** John Henry Fuseli, *Nightmare*, 1781. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
identify how the poster represents that interpretation. No presentation should take more than four minutes.

After each group presents, add your own questions to the group’s discussion. The goal here is to show how interpretation can be done and to demonstrate how a critical thinker can question and think through his or her response. In addition, ask students for substantiation of their claims, if they have not provided enough support from the text. You might also present your own interpretations of the story and invite students to compare their views to yours. An example of what you might say follows:

The narrator is having a mental breakdown. The house represents the narrator’s mind. Roderick Usher symbolizes the conscious part of the mind that houses things a person remembers or can recall. The conscious part of the mind realizes that something is wrong, so it tells the reader that it needs help. Madeline Usher represents the suppressed sorrows or evils that are causing the narrator’s mind to collapse, and the vault in which she is buried represents the unconscious part of the mind, which houses things the narrator cannot or does not want to recall. The eye stands for the mind’s eye that helps a person reason. In the story, the eye is sickly and vacant; in other words, the narrator’s ability to think and reason is confused or nonfunctioning.

Another way to approach this interpretation of the story is to observe that Roderick Usher buries Madeline without a medical examination, then to ask the following questions:

- What happens if a person buries or suppresses a problem without dealing with it properly?
- Can students give examples of problems they have had that they did not deal with initially? How did that affect their lives?

Students should realize that, if a person does not get help, the person could experience a psychological fall, just like the fall of the house of Usher. Madeline, who represents the sorrow that haunts Roderick, comes back, and the house of Usher falls.

To develop students’ understanding of this interpretation of “The Fall of the House of Usher,” develop an analogy by asking this question: “What tells people that they are more worried about something than they had realized?” After students respond, continue by saying that the unconscious sends us messages, like the manuscript or letter that the narrator receives from Roderick Usher. Just as the narrator has a glimpse of Madeline before the door closes upon her, sometimes we get a glimpse of a problem, such as in a dream. There are times when the conscious part of our mind tells us that we do not want to deal with, or are not physically or mentally able to deal with, the problem.

Students should understand that this is only one interpretation of “The Fall of the House of Usher” based on a variety of literary reviews. Remind students that, for interpretations to be viable, they must be justified. Add to the discussion any further information necessary and invite students to compare “The Premature Burial” to “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Students may be interested in exploring the following topics:
The role of catalepsy in the stories
The Victorian fear of premature burial
The use of the first-person narrator
The use of personification

As a wrap-up activity, have students draw a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the decay of the house in the story with a person losing his or her sanity.

For homework, distribute “The Cask of Amontillado” (pp. G-13–G-17) and “The Cask of Amontillado” Study Guide (pp. G-18–G-19). Students should read the story carefully and then answer the study questions. They should underline aspects of the story that seem familiar, given their reading of Poe’s work thus far, such as preoccupations, metaphors, or even words they now associate with Poe.
Days 16–18

Students discuss “The Cask of Amontillado” and complete a study guide on the story, focusing on the relationship between what a question is asking and the process needed to answer it. Finally, they receive an essay assignment that is the unit assessment.

Materials & Resources

- “The Cask of Amontillado” Fishbowl (p. H-2)
- Evaluating and Defining an Argument (pp. H-3–H-5)
- Edgar Allan Poe Essay (p. H-6)
- Edgar Allan Poe Essay Rubric (p. H-7)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Warm up by asking students to write in their notebooks two sentences that explain the Latin sentence found on the Montresor coat of arms: “Nemo me impune lacessit.” Although a footnote in the text includes a translation (No one challenges me with impunity.), students should still respond to the following questions: “What does the phrase mean? How does it relate to the story?” Five minutes should be sufficient for this warm-up.

Call on students to share what they have written. As students respond, point out similarities and differences in their interpretations. This brief discussion should end with students understanding that the sentence means “no one harms me without punishment.”

Ask students to pull out the study guides distributed on Day 15 and pair up. If necessary, three students can also work together. Students should compare their answers on the study guides, helping each other improve their answers and thus, better understand the story. On Day 17, each student should hand in a completed study guide for credit.

Before students begin the study guides, however, they should first identify the type of question being asked by labeling each question right-there, putting-it-together, author-and-me, or on-my-own (Raphael, 1982). First, labeling builds upon work begun in English 10, when students identified three similar types of questions: literal, interpretive, and evaluative. But more importantly, having students identify the relationship between the question and answer is one way to emphasize the different types of thinking required to interpret a text. It also empowers students to take control of their own learning.

To move beyond the literal level of comprehension, students must learn how to think when they analyze literature (or anything else). One strategy that compels students to answer questions and develop questions of their own about a text is called Question-Answer Relationships (QAR). The strategy is a way of redirecting the information in Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956) from an audience of “teachers, administrators, professional specialists, and research workers” (p. 1) to a student audience. It provides students with the ability to recognize how to organize their thinking to answer questions that lead to more profound understandings of any text. As students identify the question types on the worksheet, they are beginning the first step in the process: identifying which questions have answers that can be found in the text and which have answers that rely upon their own experiences. When they are able to identify which type of question is being asked, they are then...
ready to distinguish types of questions more precisely. Questions with answers in the text are either found conveniently in one sentence (right-there) or in several different sentences that must be pulled together and a conclusion drawn from them (putting-it-together). Questions with answers that come from experience can be separated into questions the reader has the answers for in his or her own experiences or thoughts (on-my-own) and those the reader determines by combining his or her ideas with the author’s (author-and-me). If students practice identifying the types of questions they are being asked, they possess a control over the material that can be advantageous in many classroom and testing situations. If they can transfer this knowledge to the ability to write their own questions, they are developing a skill that allows them to gather information efficiently and apply that information in the creation of study guides and personal review questions. Learning how to determine where an answer might be found and how to ask the right question for a specific purpose are critical skills for all students.

Raphael’s different question types can also be related to Bloom’s Taxonomy, which was also introduced in English 10. Right-there questions only correspond to Bloom’s knowledge level of abstraction, putting-it-together questions to comprehension and application; author-and-me questions to analysis level of abstraction; and on-my-own questions require students to weigh several points of view and therefore correspond to the evaluation and synthesis levels of abstraction.

Wrap up Day 16 by asking students to identify what caused them problems in labeling the question–answer relationships. Students often find it difficult to distinguish between right-there and putting-it-together questions because they do not understand that right-there answers are found in one sentence. Another source of confusion lies in not realizing there are often no direct answers in a text and it is up to them as readers to use their life experiences and common sense to formulate their own answers.

On Day 17, distribute Evaluating and Defining an Argument (pp. H-3–H-5). Completing this constructed-response item should help students think about the persuasive essay they will write for their final assessment. Show students what the task requires. They should read the short passage (apropos to the stories of Edgar Allan Poe since it concerns melancholy) and plan out how they would write an essay arguing either for or against the idea presented in the passage. Ask students to do this work individually, treating it like a test. Allow about twenty minutes for students to complete this assignment; collect papers when they are finished. Conclude with a brief discussion during which students tell you how they felt about their work.

Ask students to return to their pairs and work with each other to think of three questions they each still have about “The Cask of Amontillado.” Require students to label their questions using Raphael’s categories. Explain that they will be using these questions, as well as the study guides, when they have a Fishbowl discussion on Day 18. At this time, it may be useful to briefly describe the Fishbowl, which is one form of student-centered discussion. In a Fishbowl, students will sit in two concentric circles. The students in the inner circle are active like fish, asking and answering questions; the students in the outer circle act as observers and note takers. Reassure students that though you will be in the room, you will not ask any questions.
Finally, to help students synthesize their understanding of Poe’s work, wrap up by asking students to look back at the words, metaphors, and preoccupations they underlined as familiar when they read “The Cask of Amontillado.” Ask students to use those notes to compare the story to Poe’s other works that they have read. Students will surely point out that live burials occur in this story as well as in “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “The Premature Burial.” They may also describe the drama, theatricality, and passion in all of Poe’s work.

On Day 18, students should find the room set up for a Fishbowl discussion, with desks arranged in two concentric circles. As you greet students at the door, assign each a seat in either the inner or outer circles. Ask them to gather their completed study guides, the three questions they wrote with their partners, and their copies of “The Cask of Amontillado.” Students should reread their notes and their questions as others are settling in.

Since this may be the first time students have engaged in a Fishbowl, suggest they think of it as an experiment. Tell them that the traditional Fishbowl uses questions entirely generated by students. Because student-centered discussion strategies like the Fishbowl take time to master, gradually shifting responsibility for writing questions and leading discussions to students over the course of the semester or year creates an opportunity for students to learn the technique and become comfortable participating in class. In this Fishbowl, students will ask and answer questions from the study guide as a way of practicing the technique. When they have no more questions to ask, students may ask the questions they wrote.

Lay out the way a Fishbowl works in detail: Explain that students in the inner circle ask and answer questions first, and when each member of the inner circle has asked one question and the conversation has come to a logical conclusion, the outer circle of students should discuss their observations. Then, students should switch seats and roles. Plan for approximately ten to fifteen minutes for each round.

Since students completed the “The Cask of Amontillado” Study Guide worksheet in pairs, use their collaborative groups to assign seats in the Fishbowl. Choose one student from each pair to sit in the inner circle first to discuss the worksheet’s first nine questions. Then switch roles to discuss the last seven questions. Students should reference their worksheets and any other relevant notes during the discussion. Select one student in the inner circle to begin the discussion by reading aloud a Study Guide question and calling on someone else in the group to answer the question.

Throughout the Fishbowl, sit outside the circles, taking notes on the discussions. Listen carefully to questions posed by other students, but try not to intervene.

Distribute the final essay writing prompt, Edgar Allan Poe Essay (p. H-6) and the Edgar Allan Poe Essay Rubric (p. H-7). Briefly read through the requirements and essay prompts. Students should have a week to complete the essay (making the essay due after the conclusion of the unit).

For homework, students should study for a quiz over “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “The Cask of Amontillado.” They should also reread the essay prompt and rubric to generate questions you can address on Day 19.
Days 19–20

Students watch a film related to Edgar Allan Poe’s work.

Materials & Resources

- Poe’s Short Stories Quiz (pp. I-2–I-5)
- Poe’s Short Stories Quiz Key (p. I-6–I-7)
- A film influenced by the work of Edgar Allan Poe*
- Venn diagrams*
- Edgar Allan Poe Questionnaire

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Distribute the Poe’s Short Stories Quiz (pp. I-2–I-5). Give students fifteen minutes to complete it. Collect the quizzes as students finish. Since students will be watching a film the next two or three days, there is some flexibility for returning and discussing the quiz.

Students will watch and discuss a film either influenced by Poe or thematically related to his work: either Psycho (Hitchcock, 1960a) or Vertigo (Hitchcock, 1958) is recommended. Both films show clearly the influence of the work of Poe. Both films are considered classics; both have made the American Film Institute’s List of the 100 best American movies. In his essay “Imps of the Perverse: Discovering the Poe/Hitchcock Connection,” film critic Dennis R. Perry (1996) suggests Vertigo is in some ways a retelling of “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Students could research ways in which Vertigo or Psycho have influenced other films, in the same way that “The Fall of the House of Usher” has influenced other short stories.

Students should take notes over the film with particular concern for developing a response to Essential Question 4: “What makes a text relevant through time and place?” In this case the question points to reasons that Poe’s work might continue to be influential. Students who intend to write about the eighth prompt on the Edgar Allan Poe Essay should also be encouraged to use the film as a source for their essay.

To warm up for watching the movie, remind students that Edgar Allan Poe is considered by many to be the father of modern horror stories. Although modern film technology has taken movie horror to a new level, Poe’s influence can still be seen in film today. Ask students to list words that they associate with modern horror movies. They will probably suggest words such as supernatural, violent, bloody, dismemberment, and unexpected. Students should revisit the predictions they made about Poe’s themes on Day 2.

When students have all had a chance to contribute, tell students that Hitchcock claimed to have a special debt to Poe. He wrote that he liked reading Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” particularly because he felt fear, which “is an emotion people like to feel when they know they are safe” (Perry, 1996). He tried to recreate this feeling in his films.

Distribute blank Venn diagrams. Students should take notes over the film in one of the circles of the diagram; later they should skim “The Fall of the House of Usher” to compare the story with the film. If students watch Vertigo,
suggest that they take notes on anything in the movie they find similar to “The Fall of the House of Usher”: themes, names, colors, relationships, structures, Christian symbolism, ideas about women, or ideas about the mind. If students watch *Psycho*, they should do the same, looking for similarities and differences in plot, characterization, setting, theme, and elements of Gothic horror, and in how suspense and horror are created in each medium. Students should use their completed Venn diagrams to aid them during the ensuing discussion and as they are writing their Edgar Allan Poe Essays. Encourage discussion about either of these films by having the class create a joint Mind Map (Barron, 1969). Write a student’s comments about the film on the board and connect them, using circles, lines, and position, to other comments students make that belong to the same category. For example, if one student mentions that female characters in *Vertigo* and “The Fall of the House of Usher” have strange illnesses, and another comments that they both have the same name, categorize these insights together—they reveal significant points of comparison between the story and the film.

Wrap up the unit by returning the Edgar Allan Poe Questionnaire and having students answer the questions again. The purpose of this exercise is to help both you and your students see how their understanding of Poe’s work has developed since the unit began. Collect the questionnaires as students finish them.
Selected Course Objectives

A.2. Reading Strategies

a. Apply strategies before, during, and after reading to increase fluency and comprehension (e.g., adjusting purpose, previewing, scanning, making predictions, comparing, inferring, summarizing, using graphic organizers) with increasingly challenging texts

b. Use metacognitive skills (i.e., monitor, regulate, and orchestrate one’s understanding) when reading increasingly challenging texts, using the most appropriate “fix-up” strategies (e.g., rereading, reading on, changing rate of reading, subvocalizing)

c. Use close-reading strategies (e.g., visualizing, annotating, questioning) in order to interpret increasingly challenging texts

d. Compare texts to previously read texts, past and present events, and/or content learned in other coursework

A.3. Knowledge of Literary and Nonliterary Forms

a. Identify, analyze, and evaluate the defining characteristics of specific literary and nonliterary forms (e.g., satire, allegory, parody, editorial, essay, memorandum) and describe how form affects the meaning and function of the texts

B.2. Modes of Writing for Different Purposes and Audiences

a. Craft first and final drafts of expressive, reflective, or creative texts (e.g., poetry, scripts) that use a range of literary devices (e.g., figurative language, sound devices, stage direction) to convey a specific effect

Unit Extension

Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures

Materials & Resources

- “An Enigma” by Edgar Allan Poe (p. J-2)
- “A Valentine” by Edgar Allan Poe (p. J-3)
- “Sonnet—to Science” by Edgar Allan Poe (p. J-4)

Edgar Allan Poe hid the names of different girlfriends in the poems “An Enigma” (p. J-2) and “A Valentine” (p. J-3). Invite students to discover the hidden names. (Both poems are variations of acrostics. The first letter of the woman’s first name is the first letter of the first line; the second letter is the second letter of the second line, and so forth.) If students need a hint, give them the women’s names: Sarah Anna Lewis (“An Enigma”) and Frances Sargent Osgood (“A Valentine”).

Poe also wrote “Sonnet—to Science” (p. J-4), in which a romantic speaks of the ways he believes science has destroyed mythology, nature, and perhaps mystery as well. Students might argue for or against this obsessive speaker’s perspective on science, or they might watch one of the short videos made to
illustrate the poem (see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkMYzaT0Uro). In
groups, students might then make videos expressing their interpretations of the
poem. Students could watch each others videos at the conclusion of the unit.

Reteaching

Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures

Materials & Resources

☐ “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne*

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

To reinforce students’ abilities to discover the allegorical meaning of a
literary work, assign the reading and analysis of Hawthorne’s “Young
Goodman Brown.” It may help to identify ahead of time some symbols, such as
the names of the characters (Goodman and Faith), Faith’s pink ribbon, and the
forest. As students read, ask them to create a reading journal in which they cite
from the text and then explain their understanding of the meaning of each
symbol. At the end of the journal, have students write an essay analyzing the
allegorical meaning of the short story, using the citations from the text and
explanations they recorded in their journals.

If it becomes apparent that some students are having difficulty
comprehending the unit’s vocabulary, give them opportunities to practice
incorporating the words into their writing. This could be done by assigning
sentences, paragraphs, or short stories that use the words in context-rich
sentences. Some students benefit by making their own flashcards with the word
on one side of an index card and the definition, the part of speech, a sentence
using the word correctly, and a personal connection to the word on the other
side.

Reflecting on Classroom Practice

☐ What evidence indicates that students demonstrate tolerance for
differences of opinion?

☐ What do students’ performances on assessments and class
discussions indicate about their ability to analyze a difficult text?

☐ Which strategies were effective in helping students to reflect,
build upon, and refine their knowledge and skills?
Bibliography

Readings


References


Contents

Unit Assignments and Assessments ................................................................................................................ A-2
  Example

Unit Assignments and Assessments ................................................................................................................ A-3
  Record Keeping
# Unit Assignments and Assessments

**Name:** _________________________________  **Period:** ____  **Unit 2:** *Edgar Allan Poe’s Journey*

**Directions:** Prior to starting the unit, complete the log on the next page according to the example below and distribute it to students as an organizational tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day(s) Assigned</th>
<th>Assignment/Assessment</th>
<th>In Class</th>
<th>Homework</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Feedback (Completed/Points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 20</td>
<td>Edgar Allan Poe Questionnaire</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Journal writing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Journal writing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paragraph about rhyme scheme in “Annabel Lee”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Read “The Raven”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Read “Like This the Raven” and write sentences</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muddiest Point</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journal writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read “The Premature Burial”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–9</td>
<td>Words to Know worksheet</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraphrasing of sections of “The Fall of the House of Usher”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–15</td>
<td>Highlighting of “The Fall of the House of Usher”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Character silhouette</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poster</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reread “The Haunted Palace”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read “The Cask of Amontillado”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16, 17</td>
<td>Journal writing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>“The Cask of Amontillado” Study Guide</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fishbowl</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–20</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poe’s Short Stories Quiz</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venn diagram</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Unit Assignments and Assessments

Name: ___________________________  Period: ____  Unit 2: *Edgar Allan Poe's Journey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day(s) Assigned</th>
<th>Assignment/Assessment</th>
<th>In Class</th>
<th>Homework</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Feedback (Completed/Points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents

Edgar Allan Poe Questionnaire..........................................................................................................................B-2
   Worksheet

Edgar Allan Poe Lecture Notes.........................................................................................................................B-4
   Background Information
Edgar Allan Poe Questionnaire

Name: __________________________________________ Period: ____ Date: __________

**Directions:** Answer each question as completely as you can. Focus on main ideas or impressions. Write on the back of this page or another sheet of paper, if necessary.

When you return to this questionnaire at the end of the unit, reread your initial answers and take a few minutes to think about what you have learned. Answer each question again by focusing on new ideas and impressions you have gained. Support your claims with evidence.

1. Suppose you could interview Edgar Allan Poe. What questions would you ask, and why?
   
   **Beginning of unit:**

   **End of unit:**

2. What comes to mind when you hear the word *gothic*?
   
   **Beginning of unit:**

   **End of unit:**

3. What traits or characteristics does a story or movie need to have to be classified as horror?
   
   **Beginning of unit:**

   **End of unit:**
   Beginning of unit:

   End of unit:

5. What is the value of reading on many different levels?
   Beginning of unit:

   End of unit:

6. What do you know about the terms right-there, putting-it-together, author-and-me, on-my-own, and Bloom’s Taxonomy?
   Beginning of unit:

   End of unit:

7. What makes a text relevant over time and place? How might symbolism and archetypal themes make a text more or less relevant? What might cause a text to go in and out of favor over time?
   Beginning of unit:

   End of unit:
Edgar Allan Poe Lecture Notes

The details of Edgar Allan Poe’s biography are well known. Much of what is included in this lecture can be found in Stephen Peithman’s introduction to The Annotated Tales of Edgar Allan Poe (©1986 by Stephen Peithman); J. Gerald Kennedy, A Historical Guide to Edgar Allan Poe (©2001 by J. Gerald Kennedy); and the website of the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, http://eapoe.org (©2009 by the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore).

I. Early Life

- Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 19, 1809, the second son of traveling actors David Poe Jr. and Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins Poe.
- In 1811, Elizabeth Poe died, likely of tuberculosis, thus orphaining Poe and his siblings. (Poe’s father had abandoned the family prior to Elizabeth’s death.)
- Poe was taken into the home of John Allan, a wealthy merchant in Richmond, Virginia.
- Although John and his wife Frances never adopted Poe, they did raise him as their own son, coddling and spoiling him as a child. The Allans baptized Poe with the middle name of Allan, thus Edgar Allan Poe.
- In 1815, Poe moved with his foster parents to London, where John Allan established a branch office of his tobacco trade firm. There Poe attended two boarding schools, where he earned high grades in Latin and became acquainted with William Shakespeare and other British authors.
- In 1820, Allan resettled his family in Richmond.
- Poe often showcased his athletic skills by challenging classmates to running races, boxing matches, and jumping contests. Possibly on a bet, Poe once swam six miles, against the tide, down the James River.

II. The University of Virginia and West Point

- In 1826, at the age of 17, Poe entered the University of Virginia. The university’s student body was rowdy and poorly behaved, and drinking, fighting, and gambling were common. In one particularly bad fight, Poe suffered several deep bites on his arm.
- Poe pursued language studies exclusively, excelling in Latin and French. Allan wanted Poe to study mathematics as well.
- Classmates remembered Poe taking long walks in the afternoons and entertaining friends in the evenings with poetry readings that included his own works. They also remember Poe experimenting with alcohol, although it was said that finishing one drink “used him up.”
- Classmates described Poe as “a very good looking fellow.” Poe was about 5’8”, and his frame was small. “His eyes were large and full, gray and piercing.” He had a fair complexion, and “his hair was dark as a raven’s wing.” Although Poe’s clothes were clearly worn, he was always neat. Poe spoke with a soft southern accent.
- Although he had high academic expectations for Poe, Allan failed to provide adequate funding for Poe’s education. Poe turned to gambling to try to raise needed funds.
- By 1827, Poe had accumulated $2,000, or the equivalent of two years’ salary, in gambling debts. Poe asked Allan for the money, but Allan refused him. This caused a division between Poe and his foster father.
- Poe left the university and enlisted in the United States Army under the name Edgar A. Perry (to evade creditors). Poe remained in the army for three years.
- When Poe was 21, Allan helped him secure an appointment at West Point. Again, Poe received very little financial support from Allan.
Financial hardship, along with the realization that writing was his true vocation, led Poe to try to resign from West Point. When Allan, acting as Poe’s guardian, refused to allow Poe to resign, Poe pursued the only other option available to him: dismissal. Poe was released after he purposely ignored roll calls and missed mandatory drills.

III. Poe’s Relationships

- Poe’s foster father was not a consistent disciplinarian, and he and Poe were constantly at odds.
- Frances Allan died in 1829, and for awhile John Allan and Poe were reconciled due to their shared grief.
- From 1821 to 1825, Poe was engaged to Elmira Royster, despite objections from both families. The engagement was broken off after his return from the University of Virginia.
- Poe was twenty-seven years old when he married his thirteen-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm; they lived in Richmond, Virginia.
- Poe and Clemm did not have children. For the first two years of their married life they pretended to be brother and sister.
- Poe and Clemm were married eleven years; for six years before she died, she suffered from tuberculosis (a disease of the lungs that is transmitted through the air by coughing or sneezing).

IV. Poe’s Time Period

- The field of medicine as we know it now was in its infancy. Medical students paid young men to dig up corpses to study. This was illegal and had to be done under the cover of darkness. During the time period it was sometimes uncertain whether a body in a coffin was dead; in some cases a bell was placed inside a coffin so it could be rung by the “deceased.”
- The U.S. government’s policies toward African Americans and Native Americans made these times particularly turbulent. In 1820, Congress passed the Missouri Compromise, which admitted Missouri to the union as a slave state and Maine as a nonslave state but also outlawed slavery in areas north of the latitude that comprises Missouri’s southern border. In 1830, Congress ratified and implemented the Indian Removal Act, which created the forced migration of eastern Indian tribes to western lands. One of the worst of these migrations was the 1838 Trail of Tears, on which 4,000 of 15,000 Cherokee Indians lost their lives due to hunger, disease, exposure, and exhaustion.
- Spiritual uncertainty was deepening. In the 1830s, geologists began to question scriptural accounts of the creation of the world. By the middle of the century, higher criticism, a kind of literary criticism that investigates the origins of a text, began to throw into question the inerrancy of the Bible.
- Pseudosciences, including phrenology, cryptography, and mesmerism were popular. Phrenology claimed that studying the shape of a person’s skull could reveal that person’s personality, morality, and intelligence level. Cryptography was the science of solving secret codes or ciphers. Mesmerism is the act of inducing hypnosis.
- Society was undergoing massive industrial transformation due to the rise of science and technology.
- Poe’s writing can be grouped with other Romantics, who drew inspiration from and expressed a faith in Nature, and who envisioned a Golden Age in which humanity and Nature coexisted harmoniously.
- Richmond, Virginia, was at the center of debates over slavery. With the founding of William Lloyd Garrison’s abolitionist newspaper The Liberator in 1831 and the publication of pamphlets by the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1835, Southerners who had been divided among themselves over the issue of slavery perceived an increasing public scrutiny of their internal debates. As Poe came to understand, there was a heightened pressure to maintain a united, proslavery front in the South. Poe also wanted to maintain his Northern readership, however, and so he aimed to articulate a tepid view of slavery that would offend as few white subscribers as possible. Poe
himself favored a gradualist approach to ending slavery, opposing both immediate abolition and the indefinite continuation of the institution.

V. Poe’s Career

- Poe was one of the first American writers to try to make a living solely by writing. Poe often wrote anonymous pieces to prompt others to read his work.
- Poe’s career was hurt by the absence of an international copyright law: instead of paying American writers, publishers often simply reproduced British works for their magazines.
- Poe worked for some time as an editor for The Southern Literary Messenger in Richmond, Virginia. He left the magazine in 1839, then worked for a series of newspapers, magazines, and journals, publishing short stories at the same time.
- Although Poe began his career during a boom in publishing, most periodicals did not last long, and publishers often refused to pay their writers. The “Panic of 1837,” a financial crisis that ushered in a five-year economic depression, also had a particularly bad impact on the industry.
- In his time, Poe was known as a poet and a literary critic who also wrote stories. With the emergence of modern poetry and its emphasis on free verse, Poe’s poetry fell out of public favor. Although he wanted to be a poet, Poe soon turned to prose in order to support himself.
- Poe’s best known fictional works are Gothic, a genre that played to the public tastes of the time. He also wrote satires, fantasies, comedies, science fiction, a play, and a textbook on the study of shells.
- The comic side of Poe’s work is often overlooked. He saw both the tragedy and the absurdity of life, and sometimes put them in the same story.
- Poe is considered the father of the detective story. He also earned the nickname “The Man with the Tomahawk” for his biting literary criticism.
- Some critics consider Poe a writer of Southern sensibilities, influenced by the South as it existed before the Civil War. He published during an era when writers from New England were predominant in the publishing world.

VI. Poe’s Death

- On October 3, 1849, Poe, semiconscious, was identified at a local tavern. His clothes were dingy and ill-fitting, which led many to believe that his original clothing had been stolen.
- Poe was taken to Washington College Hospital, where he drifted in and out of consciousness for days, but never recovered enough to explain how he had arrived at his condition.
- On October 7, Poe calmly prayed “Lord, help my poor soul” and died. His cause of death was ascribed to “congestion of the brain,” although no autopsy was performed.
- Poe was 40 years old.
- Theories of the cause of Poe’s death include the following: beating, epilepsy, dipsomania (a uncontrolled thirst for alcohol), heart, toxic disorder, hypoglycemia, diabetes, alcohol dehydrogenase, porphyria, delirium tremens, rabies, murder, and carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Every year since 1949, on the anniversary of Poe’s birth, an unknown visitor known as the “Poe Toaster” leaves a partial bottle of cognac and three roses on Poe’s grave. While the significance of the cognac is unknown, the three roses are assumed to signify the three people buried under the monument: Poe, his mother-in-law Maria Clemm, and his wife Virginia.
VII. Poe’s Influence

- Poe’s writing influenced a range of authors, including Robert Frost, Rudyard Kipling, and William Faulkner. The detective story “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” featuring the character C. Auguste Dupin, inspired Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s famous Sherlock Holmes mysteries. The French poet Charles Baudelaire translated Poe’s prose, grew obsessed with the American author, and came to see him as his alter ego. The influence of Poe’s short stories is also apparent in the works of gothic authors such as H. P. Lovecraft and Ambrose Bierce.

- References to Poe and his literary works are still widespread in popular culture. For example, The Simpsons has parodied “The Raven,” with Lisa reading the poem to Bart and Maggie. The Lemony Snicket series A Series of Unfortunate Events portrays Poe as the guardian of the Baudelaire children. The NFL’s Baltimore Ravens are named after Poe’s famous poem. The film Poe: The Last Days of the Raven won the 2008 grand prize for best feature film at the Cinema City International Film Festival in Los Angeles. Poe’s life is also the subject of an upcoming movie entitled Poe, written and directed by Sylvester Stallone and scheduled for release in 2009. At one point, it was even rumored that Michael Jackson was reviewing scripts with a view to playing the writer.
Contents

Annabel Lee .................................................................................................................................................... C-2
  Reading by Edgar Allan Poe
“Annabel Lee” Discussion Guide ............................................................................................................. C-3
  Discussion Guide
Glossary of Literary Terms ......................................................................................................................... C-5
  Handout
Annabel Lee
Edgar Allan Poe

This poem by Edgar Allan Poe was published posthumously in 1849.

It was many and many a year ago,
   In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
   By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
   Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
   In this kingdom by the sea:
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
   I and my Annabel Lee—
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
   Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
   In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
   My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her high-born kinsmen came
   And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
   In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
   Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
   In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
   Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
   Of those who were older than we—
   Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
   Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
   Of the beautiful Annabel Lee,

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
   Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
   Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
   Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea,
   In her tomb by the sounding sea.
“Annabel Lee” Discussion Guide

Stanza 1

- Why might Poe have placed the kingdom by the sea? (Evaluative)
  It rhymes nicely with the name Annabel Lee, and he and his wife, to whom the poem may be referring, lived near the Atlantic Ocean, in both Virginia and Massachusetts.

- What does “the kingdom” represent? (Interpretive)
  The city in which they lived, or their life together.

- Quote the lines that tell you how much the narrator loved Annabel Lee. (Literal)
  There are a number of possible answers, but “For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams / Of the beautiful Annabel Lee” is one possibility.

- What conjectures might you make about the women in Poe’s life after considering the relationship between the narrator and Annabel Lee? (Evaluative)
  Students might answer that Poe was very passionate or romantic about the women he loved, and/or that he had sad experiences with them, as so many of them died.

Stanza 2

- Explain what Poe might have meant in the line, “I was a child and she was a child.” (Interpretive)
  Either they were both young or inexperienced.

- Are there ages associated with being a child? What are they? (Evaluative)
  Answers will vary.

- When and why might an adult refer to him- or herself as a child? (Evaluative)
  When they are playful or behaving in other ways like a child

- Define the words seraph and covet. (Interpretive)
  Seraph: an angel. Covet: to want or desire.

- Quote the lines that indicate the strength of the love between the narrator and Annabel Lee. (Literal)
  Students should respond that their love was so strong that the angels in heaven envied them. “But we loved with a love that was more than love— / I and my Annabel Lee— / With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven / Coveted her and me.”

Stanza 3

- What does Poe mean by “chilling / My beautiful Annabel Lee” (lines 15–16)? (Interpretive)
  The answer is killing.

- What killed Annabel Lee? (Literal)
  Direct the students to line 15: “A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling.”
What is a sepulchre (line 19)? (Interpretive)
A tomb.

To what does the narrator compare Annabel Lee? (Interpretive)
If necessary, read line 17 again and ask students who they think the “high-born kinsmen” might be.

**Stanza 4**

Why did the wind chill and kill the beautiful Annabel Lee? (Evaluative)
If students are struggling for an answer, remind them that the angels envied the love between the narrator and Annabel Lee. This is the reason a wind killed her. You may have to help students reason that the angels wanted her dead, which is the same as taking her away from the narrator. Therefore, he is saying that Annabel Lee is worthy of being an angel or with the angels.

Explain that this stanza is a summary of what has happened in the poem so far.

**Stanza 5**

To whom do the phrases “those who were older than we” (line 28) and “far wiser than we” (line 29) refer? (Interpretive)
This line refers to people who are older and therefore do not have the same kind of extreme passion.

In lines 30–34, what do you learn about the love between the narrator and Annabel Lee? (Literal)
The love was so strong that the two souls could not be separated by angels or demons.

What is the function of the word dissever (line 32)? (Interpretive)
The word means to cut or separate. It provides internal rhyme in the line.

**Stanza 6**

In the line “my darling—my life and my bride” (line 39) the narrator appears to be talking about his wife. How else might the narrator’s sorrow for his wife be interpreted? (Interpretive)
Based on what we know about Poe’s life, he could be combining his own sorrow for the loss of his mother, foster mother, and wife into the reaction the narrator has to the loss of his wife.
Glossary of Literary Terms

**Allegory.** A story in which people, things, and actions represent an idea or a generalization about life; allegories often have a strong moral, or lesson. Aesop’s *Fables* and Dante’s *Inferno* are examples of allegories.

**Alliteration.** The repetition of initial consonant sounds in words such as “rough and ready.” For example:

> “Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,” (Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven”)

**Assonance.** Repetition of vowel sounds without repetition of consonants. For example:

> “For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—” (Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven”)

**End rhyme.** The rhyming of words that appear at the ends of two or more lines of poetry. For example:

> It was many and many a year ago,
> In a kingdom by the sea,
> That a maiden there lived whom you may know (Edgar Allan Poe, “Annabel Lee”)

**Gothic.** A type of fiction that is often characterized by gloomy castles, ghosts, and supernatural or sensational happenings—creating a mysterious and sometimes frightening story. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* are examples of gothic novels.

**Internal rhyme.** Rhyming words occurring within the same line of poetry. For example:

> “Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December” (Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven”)

**Personification.** A literary device in which the author speaks of or describes an animal, object, or idea as if it were a person. For example:

> “At night, the house nestled the boy in her arms.” (Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”)

**Repetition.** The repeating of a word, a phrase, or an idea for emphasis or for rhythmic effect. For example, the last eleven stanzas of Poe’s “The Raven,” repeat the word *nevermore*.

**Rhyme.** The similarity or likeness of sound existing between two words, such as in *weary* and *dreary*.

**Rhyme scheme.** The basic pattern of the end rhymes in a poem, denoted with lowercase letters. For example:

> It was many and many a year ago, a
> In a kingdom by the sea, b
> That a maiden there lived whom you may know a
> By the name of Annabel Lee; b
> And this maiden she lived with no other thought c
> Than to love and be loved by me. b
> (Edgar Allan Poe, “Annabel Lee”)

**Symbol.** A person, place, thing, or event that represents something else. Often, a symbol represents an abstract concept such as goodness, love, or evil. For example, the dove is a symbol of peace.

## Contents

- Perched Upon a Bust of Pallas .............................................................. D-2
  - Transparency
- The Raven ............................................................................................... D-3
  - Reading by Edgar Allan Poe
- “The Raven” Rhyme Scheme Key .......................................................... D-7
  - Key
- “The Raven” Discussion Guide .............................................................. D-8
  - Discussion Guide
- Like This the Raven ............................................................................... D-15
  - Reading by Clifford Edwards
Perched Upon a Bust of Pallas

"The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe first appeared anonymously in the New York Evening Mirror on January 29, 1845.

The Raven
Edgar Allan Poe

Directions: Read each stanza of the poem. In the blanks by the first four stanzas, write in letters that represent the rhyme scheme of the stanza you have just read. Use the completed first stanza as a guide.

The Raven
Edgar Allan Poe

Directions: Read each stanza of the poem. In the blanks by the first four stanzas, write in letters that represent the rhyme scheme of the stanza you have just read. Use the completed first stanza as a guide.

Rhyme Scheme

(1)
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this, and nothing more."

(2)
Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

(3)
And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
This it is and nothing more."

(4)
Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there and nothing more.
Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore!”
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!”—
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore;—
’Tis the wind and nothing more!”

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he,
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little made—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast above the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered;— not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered: “Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before.”
Then the bird said, “Nevermore.”
(11)
Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of ‘Never—nevermore.’”

(12)
But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

(13)
This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o’er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

(14)
Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he has sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

(15)
“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

(16)
“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels named Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels named Lenore.”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”
“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting—
“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
    Shall be lifted—nevermore!
“The Raven” Rhyme Scheme Key

Rhyme Scheme

(1)
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary, a
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore, b
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, c
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door. b
“'Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door— b
Only this, and nothing more.” b

(2)
Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December, a
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor. b
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow c
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore— b
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore— b
Nameless here for evermore. b

(3)
And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain a
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before; b
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating c
“'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door— b
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;— b
This it is and nothing more.” b

(4)
Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer, a
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore; b
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping, c
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door, b
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide the door;— b
Darkness there and nothing more. b
“The Raven” Discussion Guide

Include these questions in your discussion of “The Raven.” Add or omit questions based on your purpose and students. An alternative to asking questions yourself is to ask groups of students to write their own and have other groups answer them. Dictionaries should be available to students during the discussion.

Stanza 1

The purpose for the discussion of this stanza is to begin developing a sense of character, setting, and mood.

- What is the narrator doing in this opening stanza?
  He is reading, pondering, and nearly asleep.

- What does he hear?
  “some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door”

- What mood is conveyed in the stanza and what words lead you to that conclusion?
  Dreary, quiet enough to hear someone knocking on his door; “a midnight dreary” and “gently rapping.”

- What time of day or night is it?
  Midnight

Stanza 2

This stanza develops further characterization, setting, and mood, but also provides an insight into the character’s internal conflict.

- What time of year is the setting for the event the narrator is going to relate?
  December

- What reason does the narrator give for reading?
  “vainly I had sought to borrow / From my books surcease of sorrow”: These lines indicate he is trying to escape from the sorrow he is feeling for Lenore.

- Why might the narrator wish for the night to be over?
  A typical answer might be that, when people are alone at night, they have more time to dwell on their thoughts. If they are negative thoughts, most people would want to put them out of mind. The distractions of daytime might do that.

- What words or phrases in this stanza further develop the dreary mood?
  Answers might include bleak, dying ember, wrought its ghost, and sorrow.

- What does the narrator likely think about Lenore?
  At the least, he admired her. He refers to her as “the rare and radiant maiden” who is with angels.

- Why might the narrator say that Lenore would be “Nameless here for evermore”?
  Answers will vary. One possibility is that saying her name is too painful. He does not intend to refer to her by name again. Another interpretation might be that because he has already named her, there is no need to do so again.

- What conflict is the narrator struggling with in this stanza?
  Students might say that he cares for Lenore, but cannot deal with the sorrow that her absence/death is causing and, therefore, is trying to escape his memories of her.
Stanza 3

This stanza further creates suspense by focusing on the narrator’s feeling of terror.

- If you have ever been home alone late at night and are suddenly startled, what thoughts have gone through your mind? What physical reactions have you experienced?
  
  Answers will vary. Most students will probably indicate that they were afraid; some may indicate that they focused on every little sound; others may talk about racing hearts.

- What effect does Poe create with these lines: “And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain / thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before”?
  
  Answers will vary. Students may indicate that the effect is one of confusion because of the juxtaposed ideas of being thrilled and filled with terror at the same time, much like the feelings one might have during a roller coaster ride. Others may say that the alliteration of the “s” sound in *silken, sad, uncertain,* and *rustling* creates a whispery, quiet, scary effect, as though something is sneaking up on the narrator. After all, the sound of silk rustling would be very soft and maybe surreptitious and mysterious. Others may focus on the fact that he seems to be talking himself into the idea that whoever is rapping at his door is merely a visitor, “This and nothing more.”

Stanza 4

In this stanza the narrator takes action and confronts his fear.

- What words indicate that the narrator is overcoming his fear?
  
  “Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer”

- Through the closed door, what excuse does he offer the visitor for not responding more quickly?
  
  He was napping and the rapping was faint.

- When the narrator answers the door and no one is there, what might he think? How might he feel? How would you feel?
  
  Answers will vary. Students will probably answer that he might think the knocking had come from some other place or that whoever was there had left. The narrator might feel even more afraid or annoyed at going to the door for nothing; some might be relieved and assume that they had just been dreaming.

Stanza 5

This stanza continues to develop a mood of mystery and terror by reintroducing Lenore.

- Why might the narrator think that Lenore had rapped at his door?
  
  Answers will vary. Students may say that, since he had been thinking about her earlier and missed her so much (as evidenced by his sorrow), he is hoping that she had returned, even though he knows she is dead. Perhaps he fears her being there as much as he desires it.

- How does the alliteration of the “d” sound in the words *deep, darkness, doubting, dreaming, dreams, dared,* and *dream* reinforce the narrator’s actions so far?
  
  Students may have trouble with this. It may help to read the stanza aloud. Astute readers may suggest that the hard “d” sound mimics the pounding of the narrator’s heart and/or the rapping at the door.

- So far each stanza has ended with the words *more* or *evermore.* What effect does this repetition have?
  
  Answers will vary. Repetition makes an idea seem important. Repetition helps us remember, even if we want to forget. Because these words rhyme with *Lenore,* we may be more likely to remember her as we are reading.

- Why might the narrator whisper Lenore’s name instead of calling out to her?
  
  He is unsure or tentative because he knows she is dead, and also, people tend to whisper at night so that others do not hear.
Stanza 6

The mystery of the rapping continues and the suspense builds in this stanza.

- What do the phrases “all my soul within me burning” and “Let my heart be still a moment” indicate about the narrator’s state of mind?
  - He is still upset, as evidenced by his pounding heart.
- Instead of a visitor rapping at his door as he thought before, to what does the narrator now attribute the tapping?
  - The wind.

Stanza 7

The visitor to the chamber is finally identified as a raven.

- Ask students to briefly explain what is happening. Do they think what is at the door is as frightening as the narrator expected?
  - A raven flies in the open window and perches on a bust of Pallas Athena above the chamber door. He sits and says nothing. It is almost anticlimactic after the narrator’s terrible imaginings.
- What words indicate the Raven’s demeanor?
  - “Stately,” “of the saintly days,” “not the least obeisance,” “mien of a lord or lady” and “perched above” all indicate an air of confidence, superiority, and control.
- Ask students what they know about ravens.
  - Students probably will know that they are black birds similar to crows. From previous English classes they may identify them as symbols of death or bad omens, not only because of their color, but also because they feed on carrion.
- Ask students to discuss what they know about Pallas.
  - Students may need help with this, depending on their background knowledge of mythology. Pallas Athena was considered to be the Greek goddess of wisdom and reason.
- What might Poe have meant by having the raven sit on the bust of Pallas?
  - A typical response would be that something bad is going to happen to the narrator’s mind. It also blocks his escape through the door.

Stanza 8

Because of the vocabulary and allusions in this stanza, students may need careful guidance through each line to understand what exactly is happening.

This stanza begins the dramatic monologue that continues throughout the remainder of the poem, as the narrator attempts to interpret the raven’s (omen’s) presence or meaning.

- How does the narrator’s mood change in this stanza?
  - He says in the first line that the bird’s charming presence is making him smile.
- What is the meaning of the second line?
  - Help students with the vocabulary, if needed, and point out that it is necessary to consider the surrounding text as they paraphrase. The bird causes him to smile because of the dignity of its appearance.
- What conclusions does the narrator voice to the raven in lines 3 and 4?
  - He says that although the plume on the raven’s head is short or shaved close to its head, the narrator thinks the raven is no coward, probably because of the way in which he entered the room. The narrator further says that the raven is no horrible, old bird from the Underworld (*Plutonian* refers to Pluto, the Roman god of the Underworld).
Why do you think Poe has the raven repeat *Nevermore*?

Answers will vary. Some might say it rhymes with Lenore and fits the rhyme scheme; others might say that the word implies something will be on his mind forever; and still others might combine the two ideas and say that the loss of Lenore will affect him forever.

**Stanza 9**

In this stanza the narrator is again mystified by the strangeness of the raven’s presence and ponders its meaning.

- What does the narrator marvel at in this stanza?
  - Both that the bird can talk and that it is sitting on a bust over his door.

- What does the raven represent? What does Pallas represent?
  - The raven can represent a bad omen. Pallas represents wisdom or reason. Birds sometimes represent the flight of the soul from the body after death.

- Why does Poe repeat the image of the raven perched on the “sculptured bust” of Pallas?
  - It emphasizes the importance of the idea that something bad may be happening to the narrator’s mind. It also creates suspense for the reader who wants to learn more about the bird’s presence. The repetition of “chamber door” also strengthens the rhythmic structure by repeating the same words.

**Stanza 10**

The narrator continues pondering the bird’s presence and begins to contemplate its departure.

- When a person “pours out his soul,” what is he doing?
  - Students may need help if they have not heard this expression. Answers will vary, but students need to understand that this phrase implies a sincere, heartfelt sharing of emotion.

- What do the first two lines mean?
  - If, according to the narrator, the raven is pouring out its soul in just one word, “Nevermore,” the word must have significant, emotional meaning to the raven.

- In the last three lines, the narrator mutters that his other friends have flown before. What could this mean?
  - The narrator suggests that the bird will not stay; he will leave just as his other friends and hopes have left. The question for the reader continues to be, “What are the different implications of *Nevermore*? Students may say that the sad, lonely feeling the narrator is experiencing will never leave, that the memory of Lenore will never leave, or that the narrator does not think he will ever have love or friendship again.

**Stanza 11**

The narrator rationalizes the repetition of the bird’s single word, “Nevermore.”

- Why might the narrator have personified Hope and Disaster?
  - They are competing forces in a person’s life. The narrator thinks that perhaps the hope of the bird’s previous master had been overcome by disaster. Consequently, the bird can only say *Nevermore* because it captures his grief. This might suggest that the narrator has both feelings of hope and disaster within himself and wonders which competing force will win in the end.

- What is a *dirge*? How might the word *dirge* reflect what is happening in the narrator’s mind?
  - A dirge is a solemn song of grief that is intended to accompany a funeral. Whether it is conscious or not, the narrator may be experiencing a feeling of impending doom with the raven’s presence.
Why is it so important to the narrator to decipher the meaning of the raven’s utterance?

Answers will vary. One important idea for students to consider is that people are always trying to understand their lives and look for causes and reasons behind their thoughts, feelings, and actions. If the narrator understands the implications of the bad omen (raven) landing on reason (the bust of Pallas) he may realize that something bad could be happening to him.

Stanza 12

The narrator continues contemplating the meaning of the bird’s presence and utterance.

What is the narrator’s mood at this point? How is it different from his initial mood when encountering the bird?

The narrator refers to the raven as beguiling which can be interpreted in various ways: deceiving, diverting, or engaging. Whichever description the narrator has in mind, it makes him smile. He no longer seems fearful or sad.

What are the alliterative words in this stanza? Why might the poet have chosen those words?

Grim, ungainly, ghastly, and gaunt; sad, soul, and smiling. The hard “g” is a sound that might be heard in “croaking,” is a possible answer. The sibilants’ might suggest a quiet, soft sound.

Juxtaposed to the harsh croaking sound of the raven’s voice are the soft, tactile descriptions associated with the narrator’s surroundings. What creates this image?

Cushioned seat, and upon the velvet sinking.

Stanza 13

Sitting on a cushioned seat, the narrator engages his mind in “divining” the meaning of the raven’s word.

While the narrator is pondering or divining, what is the raven doing?

According to the narrator, staring with fiery eyes into the narrator’s core, or heart, or soul.

What suggests the narrator is becoming more relaxed?

His head is “at ease” as he reclines on the cushion.

The word gloating has several meanings. What might Poe have meant by choosing this word?

Students should find the following definitions: looking at something admiringly or amorously; observing something with malicious gratification or delight; refracting light from.

Answers will vary. Students may suggest that the word gloat simply refers to the idea of the cushion reflecting the lamplight. The word also suggests the irony that the lamplight has the power to look lovingly upon the cushion that had been Lenore’s, but that Lenore would never have the power to do that again.

Who is the she referred to in the last line?

The narrator’s wife, girlfriend, or Lenore are all possible answers.

What might the narrator be thinking as he reclines, watching the raven?

He is probably thinking that the woman that he misses so much will never again touch the cushion.

Does this realization make him happy or sad?

Answers will vary based on students’ personal experiences with being around objects that belonged to someone who is no longer in their lives.

Stanza 14

The narrator, now apparently overcome with loneliness and sorrow, cries for a potion that will alleviate his misery and allow him to forget Lenore. Before discussing this stanza, either provide students with or have them look for the meaning of these words: tufted, wretch, respite, nepenthe, quaff, seraphim and censer.
Tufted means rug-covered; a wretch is a miserable or despicable person; respite means relief; nepenthe was thought to be a drug that helped people forget their sorrow; quaff is a drink; seraphim is an angel; and censer is a container used for burning incense. These words have strong religious connotations.

- What is the narrator’s mood? How is it different from the mood in the last few stanzas?
  The narrator is overcome with emotion or grief as evidenced by the phrases “Wretch,” “I cried,” and “Respite—respite and nepenthe from the memories of Lenore!” For the last few stanzas he has been calm, inquisitive, and in control of himself.

- What caused this change of mood?
  The nearness of an object he associated with Lenore.

- Whom is the narrator calling a “wretch”?
  It could refer to the raven, but also to himself, because a wretch is someone who is miserably unhappy and this is the way he feels.

- Why did the raven respond to this outburst with “Nevermore”?
  Answers will vary. One possibility is that the raven knows the narrator will never get over his loss of Lenore. The raven may know that nothing from the outside (nepenthe, for example), can help the narrator overcome grief; it needs to come from within himself and that may never happen. Finally, the raven may only know the one word “Nevermore,” which it thoughtlessly repeats when asked a question.

**Stanza 15**

The attitude of the narrator changes from one of inquisitiveness and wonder about the raven to one of impatience and disdain. Students should define desolate and undaunted before discussing the stanza at length.

- Why would the narrator call the raven a prophet?
  A prophet forecasts the future. He may think the raven is predicting a sad, lonely future for him.

- What other names does the narrator give the bird?
  “Thing of evil” and “devil.”

- Why might Poe have personified the abstract ideas of horror and tempter?
  Answers will vary. By personifying these words, Poe has identified them as possible enemies the narrator is encountering in his mind.

- What is the relationship between “nepenthe” and “balm in Gilead”?
  They are both substances that could help the narrator forget his loss. Nepenthe is a drug; balm is a soothing ointment. Both are biblical references.

**Stanza 16**

The narrator continues his interrogation of the raven, demanding to know if he will ever hold Lenore in heaven.

- How is this stanza similar to the previous?
  They both begin and end with the same lines; the narrator is still demanding answers from the raven.

- What does the narrator want to know from the raven? How might he feel after hearing the raven’s answer?
  The narrator wants to know if he will ever get to hold Lenore in heaven (Aidenn): “Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn, / It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels named Lenore.” The raven, of course, answers “Nevermore.” This would probably have a devastating effect on the narrator, who may have been thinking that, even if he could not see Lenore on earth again, he might be able to see her in the afterlife.
Stanza 17

Anger is the overriding emotion in this stanza. The narrator demands that the bird leave his chamber.

- Contrast this stanza to stanza 10, where the narrator laments that the bird will leave him, just like his friends and hopes. Now, he seems concerned that the bird will not leave. The first line indicates that the narrator wants to part from the bird; in the second line he wants the bird to return to “Night’s Plutonian shore” which was Hades or hell; in the third line he tells the bird to leave no feather (“black plume”) as a reminder it has been there; in the fourth, the narrator tells the bird to leave his “loneliness unbroken” and to get off of (“quit”) the bust of Pallas; finally, he tells the bird to take its beak from his heart and to leave.

- If the bird represents a bad omen and the bust of Pallas represents reason, what conclusion can be drawn about what the narrator is asking?
  Students will probably respond that the narrator is telling the pain or sorrow, which is affecting his reasoning ability or mind, to leave.

Stanza 18

The poem ends with a sense of eternal hopelessness for the narrator. He is destined to live in the shadow of the dark feelings the raven represents.

- What does the effect of the repetition of “still is sitting” have?
  It supports the idea that something is everlasting and never to be gotten rid of.

- Explain the meaning of the last two lines.
  Students should respond that the narrator will never see relief from his feelings of sorrow, guilt, and fear. His mind will always bear the burden of the loss of Lenore, and his reason will be affected.

- One of Poe’s poetic principles was unity. Does this poem reflect the importance he placed on unity? Explain. Answers will vary, but most students will identify the rhyme scheme, repetition of words and refrains, the inclusion of a beginning, middle, and end to the poem; consistent images such as the descriptions of the raven with evil, devil-like qualities; consistent references to blackness; the recurring references to sorrow and loneliness; and the association of soft, velvety images with Lenore juxtaposed to the harsh, unyielding demeanor of the bird.
Like This the Raven
Clifford Edwards

This excerpt from “Like This the Raven” by Clifford Edwards is a model critical analysis of “The Raven” (©2002 by Salem Press, Inc.).

Forms and Devices

“The Raven” is Edgar Allan Poe’s most famous poem, not only because of its immediate and continued popularity but also because Poe wrote “The Philosophy of Composition,” an essay reconstructing the step-by-step process of how he composed the poem as if it were a precise mathematical problem. Discounting the role of serendipity, romantic inspiration, or intuition, Poe accounted for every detail as the result of calculated effect. Although the essay may be a tour de force, informed readers of the poem—from the nineteenth century French poets Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Paul Valéry to such twentieth century poets as Allen Tate and T. S. Eliot—have recognized the value of Poe’s essay in understanding the poem’s forms and poetic devices.

Poe’s analysis of the structure and texture of “The Raven” is too detailed to consider at length (and some of it must be taken with several grains of salt, allowing for considerable exaggeration on Poe’s part); however, his essay sheds light on three important aspects implicit in the poem’s form: its conception as a theatrical performance; the narrator’s anguished involvement in making meaning by obsessively asking increasingly self-lacerating questions; and the function of the maddening, incantatory rhythm and rhymes that help cast a mind-paralyzing spell over both the declaiming narrator and the reader.

Although the principles of brevity and unity of impression or effect that inform the poem rest on Poe’s aesthetic theories, derived from the facultative psychology of his time (the world of mind separated into faculties of intellect, taste, and the moral sense with crucial implications for the form and substance of poetry and romance), it is more helpful to see the contribution of this severe economy of means to the histrionic qualities of the poem. The persona narrates the poem as a kind of dramatic monologue, carefully arranging the scene of his chamber and the stage properties for maximum theatrical effect: the play of light and shadow from the hearth, the esoteric volumes, the silken, purple curtains, the door and window opening onto a tempestuous night offstage. There is also the dramatic juxtaposition of the black talking bird perched on the white bust of Pallas over the chamber door, the velvet cushion on which the narrator sits facing the raven, and the lamplight throwing shadows over the narrator’s soul “floating on the floor,” at the frenzied climax of the poem. Even the pivotal refrain that keynotes the poem’s structure contributes to the artistic effect “in the theatrical sense.”

The most original device of the poem is the way the narrator unconsciously arranges his questions. He begins nonchalantly with a commonplace question; under the hypnotic influence of the raven’s cacophonous, melancholic repetition of “Nevermore,” and driven by both the human thirst for self-torture and a superstitious mind, the bereaved lover luxuriates in sorrow by asking more distressful questions until the inexorable answer becomes intolerable, and he melodramatically sinks into maddened despair.
The nightmarish effect of the poem is reinforced by the relentless trochaic rhythm and the arrangement of the ballad stanzas into five lines of octameter followed by a refrain in tetrameter. This combination, along with emphatic alliteration, allows for strong internal and end rhymes, resulting in a mesmerizing syncopation of redundancies as inescapable as the sonorous refrain. This incantatory repetition creates an aural quality that helps force a collaboration between the poem and the reader, a maddening regularity aptly conveying the speaker’s disintegrating reason, while contributing to the theatrical effect of the poem as histrionic performance.

**Themes and Meanings**

“The Raven” objectifies Poe’s belief that the artistic experiencing of a poem is an end in itself. As both poet and critic, Poe attacked two trends that he found equally disastrous: what he called “epic mania” (using the length of a poem as an index to its power and significance) and the “didactic heresy” (taking the explicit moral or philosophical meaning of a poem as its chief value).

Although Poe’s aesthetic theories, set forth in such essays as “The Poetic Principle” and “The Philosophy of Composition,” rely on a romantic theory of the imagination (as filtered through the writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the temperament of Poe), the gist of his art is targeted toward the poem as experience. According to Poe, the intellect craves truth (the sphere of philosophical, rational discourse), and the moral sense craves duty (the domain of didactic writing), whereas taste thirsts for beauty (quenched only by poetry with its musicality and, therefore, its indefinite pleasure, and by romance with its more definite pleasure). Hence, a poem, in providing an indefinite, pleasurable aesthetic experience, requires a sense of complexity (all means including rhythm and sound adapted to a predetermined end) and a suggestive undercurrent of meaning.
Contents

Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz ..................................................................................................................... E-2
Quiz

Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz Key .......................................................................................................... E-6
Key

The Scream ........................................................................................................................................ E-7
Transparency

The Premature Burial ...................................................................................................................... E-8
Reading by Edgar Allan Poe
Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz

Part I

Directions: Choose the alternative that best answers the question. Write the corresponding letter in the blank.

1. With which genre of fiction is Edgar Allan Poe’s work most closely associated?
   A. Adventure
   B. Gothic
   C. Historical
   D. Romance

2. With which part of the United States is Poe most closely associated?
   F. The North
   G. The South
   H. The West
   J. The Midwest

3. Who in Poe’s life died from tuberculosis?
   A. his mother, his wife, and his father
   B. his wife, his mother, and foster mother
   C. his foster mother, his sister, and his brother
   D. his father, his foster father, and his brother

4. How does Annabel Lee die?
   F. She dies of a fall while riding with Poe.
   G. She dies of a French disease contracted from Poe.
   H. A wind kills her.
   J. A wave kills her.

5. Which of the following ideas is NOT found in “The Poetic Principle”?
   A. A poem should have literary devices such as metaphor, simile, and personification.
   B. Beauty should be the aim of the poem.
   C. Undue brevity as well as undue length should be avoided.
   D. A poem should have unity.

6. In “The Raven,” the narrator asks the bird what its name is. With what does the bird respond?
   F. Forevermore
   G. Nevermore
   H. Raven
   J. Lenore
7. Where is Annabel Lee buried?
   A. In a tomb beside the sea
   B. In a vault within the house
   C. Under a board in the floor
   D. Under a bust of Pallas

8. What literary device does Poe use in the following line?
   And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
   F. Metaphor
   G. Simile
   H. Assonance
   J. Alliteration

9. What literary device does Poe primarily use in the following line?
   Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
   Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
   A. Metaphor
   B. Simile
   C. Synecdoche
   D. Alliteration

10. What literary device does Poe use in the first line?
    Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
    Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
    F. Internal rhyme
    G. End rhyme
    H. Simile
    J. Synecdoche

11. What literary device does Poe use in the following lines?
    "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
    Ghastly, grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore"
    A. Internal rhyme
    B. End rhyme
    C. Allusion
    D. Metonymy

12. Why type of rhyme does Poe use in the following lines?
    It was many and many a year ago,
    In a kingdom by the sea,
    That a maiden there lived whom you may know
    By the name of Annabel Lee;—
    And this maiden she lived with no other thought
    Than to love and be loved by me.
    F. Internal rhyme
    G. End rhyme
    H. Off rhyme
    J. Half rhyme
Part II

**Directions:** In 1–2 sentences, answer the following questions. Be clear and concise. Reference “Annabel Lee” and “The Raven” in your answers. Support your claims with evidence.

13. In “The Raven,” what does the narrator say he is escaping from by reading?

14. In “The Raven,” why is nevermore capitalized in some stanzas but printed in lowercase letters in others?

15. Why are the time of day and year in which “The Raven” is set important?

16. In “The Philosophy of Composition” Poe claimed, “there should be no word in a composition that is not meaningful to the theme or purpose of the story.” In your own words, restate this premise and explain why you agree or disagree with it.

17. What connections can be made between Poe’s life and the events in the poem “Annabel Lee”? 
18. What are three similarities between “Annabel Lee” and “The Raven”?

19. In “The Raven,” what might the raven and Pallas represent? What conclusion can be drawn from the raven being perched on the bust of Pallas?

20. Interpret the last four lines of “Annabel Lee,” which follow:
   
   And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
   Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
   In the sepulchre there by the sea—
   In her tomb by the sounding sea.
Poe’s Life and Poems Quiz Key

1. B
2. G
3. B
4. H
5. A
6. G
7. A
8. J
9. D
10. F
11. A
12. G

13. He is escaping from the loss of Lenore: “vainly I had sought to borrow / From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore.”

14. The word is capitalized to personify the raven and give it a name. It is printed in lowercase letters when it simply means something will never happen again.

15. “The Raven” is a melancholy poem that deals with death. Midnight (and night in general) is often when people are alone and have time to dwell on their thoughts. It can also be a scary time of the day, when shapes are blurred, noises are sharper, and the imagination can run wild. December is also associated with death and dying. Depending on one’s location, it is often cold, brown, or gray.

16. Answers will vary. One possibility is that the enduring love that is evidenced by the narrator for Lenore is beautiful. Another possibility is that the tone of the poem is beautiful. Poe said that “Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.”

17. Poe fell in love and married a young woman, as did the narrator (“I was a child and she was a child” and “my life and my bride”).

Poe’s wife died from tuberculosis; Annabel Lee died of a “wind,” which can be interpreted as tuberculosis. Poe lived by the sea, as did Annabel Lee (and, presumably, the narrator).

18. Both poems have narrators who are mourning the loss of a woman they have loved.

The narrators believe both women are in heaven with the angels.
Both narrators allude to opposing forces of good and evil.
Both narrators think about the women that have died at night.

19. Answers will vary. Students will probably say that the raven symbolizes or represents a negative force such as pain or sorrow and Pallas represents reason, sanity, or wisdom. One conclusion might be that the narrator’s ability to reason may be negatively influenced by his pain or sorrow.

20. Students might interpret the last lines to mean that the narrator sleeps by the tomb of his beloved Annabel Lee. A more realistic interpretation is that Annabel Lee is always on the narrator’s mind; therefore, he is figuratively lying with her.
The Premature Burial
Edgar Allan Poe


There are certain themes of which the interest is all-absorbing, but which are too entirely horrible for the purposes of legitimate fiction. These the mere romanticist must eschew\(^1\), if he do not wish to offend, or to disgust. They are with propriety handled only when the severity and majesty of truth sanctify and sustain them. We thrill, for example, with the most intense of "pleasurable pain" over the accounts of the Passage of the Beresina, of the Earthquake at Lisbon, of the Plague at London, of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, or of the stifling of the hundred and twenty-three prisoners in the Black Hole at Calcutta. But, in these accounts, it is the fact—it is the reality—it is the history which excites. As inventions, we should regard them with simple abhorrence.

I have mentioned some few of the more prominent and august calamities on record; but in these it is the extent, not less than the character of the calamity, which so vividly impresses the fancy. I need not remind the reader that, from the long and weird catalogue of human miseries, I might have selected many individual instances more replete with essential suffering than any of these vast generalities of disaster. The true wretchedness, indeed—the ultimate woe—is particular, not diffuse. That the ghastly extremes of agony are endured by man the unit, and never by man the mass—for this let us thank a merciful God!

To be buried while alive is, beyond question, the most terrific of these extremes which has ever fallen to the lot of mere mortality. That it has frequently, very frequently, so fallen will scarcely be denied by those who think. The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins? We know that there are diseases in which occur total cessations of all the apparent functions of vitality, and yet in which these cessations are merely suspensions, properly so called. They are only temporary pauses in the incomprehensible mechanism. A certain period elapses, and some unseen mysterious principle again sets in motion the magic pinions and the wizard wheels. The silver cord was not for ever loosed, nor the golden bowl irreparably broken. But where, meantime, was the soul?

Apart, however, from the inevitable conclusion, \(a\ priori\)^2 that such causes must produce such effects,—that the well-known occurrence of such cases of suspended animation must naturally give rise, now and then, to premature interments,—apart from this consideration, we have the direct testimony of medical and ordinary experience to prove that a vast number of such interments have actually taken place. I might refer at once, if necessary, to a hundred well-authenticated instances. One of very remarkable character, and of which the circumstances may be fresh in the memory of some of my readers, occurred, not very long ago, in the neighboring city of Baltimore, where it occasioned a painful, intense, and widely-extended excitement. The wife of one of the most respectable citizens—a lawyer of eminence and a member of Congress—was seized with a sudden and unaccountable illness, which completely baffled the skill of her physicians. After much suffering she died, or was supposed to die. No one suspected,

\(^1\) avoid, especially on moral or practical grounds

\(^2\) a proposition that is derived by deduction or by reasoning from self-evident propositions
indeed, or had reason to suspect, that she was not actually dead. She presented all the ordinary appearances of death. The face assumed the usual pinched and sunken outline. The lips were of the usual marble pallor. The eyes were lustreless. There was no warmth. Pulsation had ceased. For three days the body was preserved unburied, during which it had acquired a stony rigidity. The funeral, in short, was hastened, on account of the rapid advance of what was supposed to be decomposition.

The lady was deposited in her family vault, which, for three subsequent years, was undisturbed. At the expiration of this term it was opened for the reception of a sarcophagus;—but, alas! how fearful a shock awaited the husband, who, personally, threw open the door! As its portals swung outwardly back, some white—apparelled object fell rattling within his arms. It was the skeleton of his wife in her yet unmoulded shroud.

A careful investigation rendered it evident that she had revived within two days after her entombment; that her struggles within the coffin had caused it to fall from a ledge, or shelf, to the floor, where it was so broken as to permit her escape. A lamp which had been accidentally left, full of oil, within the tomb, was found empty; it might have been exhausted, however, by evaporation. On the uppermost of the steps which led down into the dread chamber was a large fragment of the coffin, with which, it seemed that she had endeavored to arrest attention by striking the iron door. While thus occupied, she probably swooned, or possibly died, through sheer terror; and, in falling, her shroud became entangled in some iron-work which projected interiorly. Thus she remained, and thus she rotted, erect.

In the year 1810, a case of living inhumation happened in France, attended with circumstances which go far to warrant the assertion that truth is, indeed, stranger than fiction. The heroine of the story was a young girl of illustrious family, of wealth, and of great personal beauty. Among her numerous suitors was Julien Bossuet, a poor litterateur, or journalist, of Paris. His talents and general amiability had recommended him to the notice of the heiress, by whom he seems to have been truly beloved; but her pride of birth decided her, finally, to reject him, and to wed a Monsieur Renelle, a banker and a diplomatist of some eminence. After marriage, however, this gentleman neglected, and, perhaps, even more positively ill-treated her. Having passed with him some wretched years, she died—at least her condition so closely resembled death as to deceive every one who saw her. She was buried—not in a vault, but in an ordinary grave in the village of her nativity. Filled with despair, and still inflamed by the memory of a profound attachment, the lover journeys from the capital to the remote province in which the village lies, with the romantic purpose of disinterring the corpse, and possessing himself of its luxuriant tresses. He reaches the grave. At midnight he unearths the coffin, opens it, and is in the act of detaching the hair, when he is arrested by the unclosing of the beloved eyes. In fact, the lady had been buried alive. Vitality had not altogether departed, and she was aroused by the unclosing of the beloved eyes. In fact, the lady had been buried alive. Vitality had not altogether departed, and she was aroused by the caresses of her lover from the lethargy which had been mistaken for death. He bore her frantically to his lodgings in the village. He employed certain powerful restoratives suggested by no little medical learning. In fine, she revived. She recognized her preserver. She remained with him until, by slow degrees, she fully recovered her original health. Her woman’s heart was not adamant, and this last lesson of love sufficed to soften it. She bestowed it upon Bossuet. She returned no more to her husband, but, concealing from him her resurrection, fled with her lover to America. Twenty years afterward, the two returned to France, in the persuasion that time had so greatly altered the lady’s appearance that her friends would be unable to recognize.
her. They were mistaken, however; for, at the first meeting, Monsieur Renelle did actually recognize and make claim to his wife. This claim she resisted, and a judicial tribunal sustained her in her resistance, deciding that the peculiar circumstances, with the long lapse of years, had extinguished, not only equitably, but legally, the authority of the husband.

The *Chirurgical Journal* of Leipsic, a periodical of high authority and merit, which some American bookseller would do well to translate and republish, records in a late number a very distressing event of the character in question.

An officer of artillery, a man of gigantic stature and of robust health, being thrown from an unmanageable horse, received a very severe contusion upon the head, which rendered him insensible at once; the skull was slightly fractured, but no immediate danger was apprehended. **Trepanning** was accomplished successfully. He was bled, and many other of the ordinary means of relief were adopted. Gradually, however, he fell into a more and more hopeless state of stupor, and, finally, it was thought that he died.

The weather was warm, and he was buried with indecent haste in one of the public cemeteries. His funeral took place on Thursday. On the Sunday following, the grounds of the cemetery were, as usual, much thronged with visitors, and about noon an intense excitement was created by the declaration of a peasant that, while sitting upon the grave of the officer, he had distinctly felt a commotion of the earth, as if occasioned by some one struggling beneath. At first little attention was paid to the man's asseveration; but his evident terror, and the dogged obstinacy with which he persisted in his story, had at length their natural effect upon the crowd. Spades were hurriedly procured, and the grave, which was shamefully shallow, was in a few minutes so far thrown open that the head of its occupant appeared. He was then seemingly dead; but he sat nearly erect within his coffin, the lid of which, in his furious struggles, he had partially uplifted.

He was forthwith conveyed to the nearest hospital, and there pronounced to be still living, although in an asphyctic condition. After some hours he revived, recognized individuals of his acquaintance, and, in broken sentences spoke of his agonies in the grave.

From what he related, it was clear that he must have been conscious of life for more than an hour, while inhumed, before lapsing into insensibility. The grave was carelessly and loosely filled with an exceedingly porous soil; and thus some air was necessarily admitted. He heard the footsteps of the crowd overhead, and endeavored to make himself heard in turn. It was the tumult within the grounds of the cemetery, he said, which appeared to awaken him from a deep sleep, but no sooner was he awake than he became fully aware of the awful horrors of his position.

This patient, it is recorded, was doing well and seemed to be in a fair way of ultimate recovery, but fell a victim to the quackeries of medical experiment. The galvanic battery was applied, and he suddenly expired in one of those ecstatic paroxysms which, occasionally, it superinduces.

The mention of the galvanic battery, nevertheless, recalls to my memory a well known and very extraordinary case in point, where its action proved the means of restoring to animation a young attorney of

---

3 **Trepanning**: form of surgery in which a hole is drilled or scraped into the skull while leaving the membrane around the brain intact. It was performed to reduce abnormal intracranial pressure. Trepanation is generally no longer practiced and is now illegal in most parts of the world.

4 **Galvanic**: relating to, or producing a direct current of electricity

5 **Paroxysms**: convulsions or fits; sudden violent emotions or actions

6 **Superinduces**: to introduce as an addition over or above something already existing
London, who had been interred for two days. This occurred in 1831, and created, at the time, a very profound sensation wherever it was made the subject of converse.

The patient, Mr. Edward Stapleton, had died, apparently, of typhus fever, accompanied with some anomalous symptoms which had excited the curiosity of his medical attendants. Upon his seeming decease, his friends were requested to sanction a post-mortem examination, but declined to permit it. As often happens, when such refusals are made, the practitioners resolved to disinter the body and dissect it at leisure, in private. Arrangements were easily effected with some of the numerous corps of body-snatchers with which London abounds; and, upon the third night after the funeral, the supposed corpse was unearthed from a grave eight feet deep, and deposited in the opening chamber of one of the private hospitals.

An incision of some extent had been actually made in the abdomen, when the fresh and undecayed appearance of the subject suggested an application of the battery. One experiment succeeded another, and the customary effects supervened, with nothing to characterize them in any respect, except, upon one or two occasions, a more than ordinary degree of life-likeness in the convulsive action.

It grew late. The day was about to dawn; and it was thought expedient, at length, to proceed at once to the dissection. A student, however, was especially desirous of testing a theory of his own, and insisted upon applying the battery to one of the pectoral muscles. A rough gash was made, and a wire hastily brought in contact; when the patient, with a hurried but quite unconvulsive movement, arose from the table, stepped into the middle of the floor, gazed about him uneasily for a few seconds, and then—spoke. What he said was unintelligible; but words were uttered; the syllabification was distinct. Having spoken, he fell heavily to the floor.

For some moments all were paralyzed with awe—but the urgency of the case soon restored them their presence of mind. It was seen that Mr. Stapleton was alive, although in a swoon. Upon exhibition of ether he revived and was rapidly restored to health, and to the society of his friends—from whom, however, all knowledge of his resuscitation was withheld, until a relapse was no longer to be apprehended. Their wonder—their rapturous astonishment—may be conceived.

The most thrilling peculiarity of this incident, nevertheless, is involved in what Mr. S. himself asserts. He declares that at no period was he altogether insensible—that, dully and confusedly, he was aware of everything which happened to him, from the moment in which he was pronounced dead by his physicians, to that in which he fell swooning to the floor of the hospital. “I am alive,” were the uncomprehended words which, upon recognizing the locality of the dissecting-room, he had endeavored, in his extremity, to utter.

It were an easy matter to multiply such histories as these—but I forbear—for, indeed, we have no need of such to establish the fact that premature interments occur. When we reflect how very rarely, from the nature of the case, we have it in our power to detect them, we must admit that they may frequently occur without our cognizance. Scarcely, in truth, is a graveyard ever encroached upon, for any purpose, to any great extent, that skeletons are not found in postures which suggest the most fearful of suspicions.

Fearful indeed the suspicion—but more fearful the doom! It may be asserted, without hesitation, that no event is so terribly well adapted to inspire the
supremeness of bodily and of mental distress, as is burial before death. The unendurable oppression of the lungs—the stifling fumes from the damp earth—the clinging to the death garments—the rigid embrace of the narrow house—the blackness of the absolute Night—the silence like a sea that overwhelms—the unseen but palpable presence of the Conqueror Worm—these things, with the thoughts of the air and grass above, with memory of dear friends who would fly to save us if but informed of our fate, and with consciousness that of this fate they can never be informed—that our hopeless portion is that of the really dead—these considerations, I say, carry into the heart, which still palpitates, a degree of appalling and intolerable horror from which the most daring imagination must recoil. We know of nothing so agonizing upon Earth—we can dream of nothing half so hideous in the realms of the nethermost Hell. And thus all narratives upon this topic have an interest profound; an interest, nevertheless, which, through the sacred awe of the topic itself, very properly and very peculiarly depends upon our conviction of the truth of the matter narrated. What I have now to tell is of my own actual knowledge—of my own positive and personal experience.

For several years I had been subject to attacks of the singular disorder which physicians have agreed to term catalepsy, in default of a more definite title. Although both the immediate and the predisposing causes, and even the actual diagnosis, of this disease are still mysterious, its obvious and apparent character is sufficiently well understood. Its variations seem to be chiefly of degree. Sometimes the patient lies, for a day only, or even for a shorter period, in a species of exaggerated lethargy. He is senseless and externally motionless; but the pulsation of the heart is still faintly perceptible; some traces of warmth remain; a slight color lingers within the centre of the cheek; and, upon application of a mirror to the lips, we can detect a torpid, unequal, and vacillating action of the lungs. Then again the duration of the trance is for weeks—even for months; while the closest scrutiny, and the most rigorous medical tests, fail to establish any material distinction between the state of the sufferer and what we conceive of absolute death. Very usually he is saved from premature interment solely by the knowledge of his friends that he has been previously subject to catalepsy, by the consequent suspicion excited, and, above all, by the non-appearance of decay. The advances of the malady are, luckily, gradual. The first manifestations, although marked, are unequivocal. The fits grow successively more and more distinctive, and endure each for a longer term than the preceding. In this lies the principal security from inhumation. The unfortunate whose first attack should be of the extreme character which is occasionally seen, would almost inevitably be consigned alive to the tomb.

My own case differed in no important particular from those mentioned in medical books. Sometimes, without any apparent cause, I sank, little by little, into a condition of semi-syncope, or half swoon; and, in this condition, without pain, without ability to stir, or, strictly speaking, to think, but with a dull lethargic consciousness of life and of the presence of those who surrounded my bed, I remained, until the crisis of the disease restored me, suddenly, to perfect sensation. At other times I was quickly and impetuously smitten. I grew sick, and numb, and chilly, and dizzy, and so fell prostrate at once. Then, for weeks, all was void, and black, and silent, and Nothing became the universe. Total annihilation

8 hesitating; going back and forth between two opinions or courses of action
9 unquestionable; leaving no doubt
could be no more. From these latter attacks I awoke, however, with a gradation slow in proportion to the suddenness of the seizure. Just as the day dawns to the friendless and houseless beggar who roams the streets throughout the long desolate winter night—just so tardily—just so wearily—just so cheerily came back the light of the Soul to me.

Apart from the tendency to trance, however, my general health appeared to be good; nor could I perceive that it was at all affected by the one prevalent malady—unless, indeed, an idiosyncrasy in my ordinary sleep may be looked upon as superinduced. Upon awaking from slumber, I could never gain, at once, thorough possession of my senses, and always remained, for many minutes, in much bewilderment and perplexity—the mental faculties in general, but the memory in especial, being in a condition of absolute abeyance.

In all that I endured there was no physical suffering, but of moral distress an infinitude. My fancy grew charnel. I talked “of worms, of tombs, and epitaphs.” I was lost in reveries of death, and the idea of premature burial held continual possession of my brain. The ghastly Danger to which I was subjected haunted me day and night. In the former, the torture of meditation was excessive—in the latter, supreme. When the grim Darkness overspread the Earth, then, with every horror of thought, I shook—shook as the quivering plumes upon the hearse. When Nature could endure wakefulness no longer, it was with a struggle that I consented to sleep—for I shuddered to reflect that, upon awaking, I might find myself the tenant of a grave. And when, finally, I sank into slumber, it was only to rush at once into a world of phantasms, above which, with vast, sable, overshadowing wings, hovered, predominant, the one sepulchral Idea.

From the innumerable images of gloom which thus oppressed me in dreams, I select for record but a solitary vision. Methought I was immersed in a cataleptic trance of more than usual duration and profundity. Suddenly there came an icy hand upon my forehead, and an impatient, gibbering voice whispered the word “Arise!” within my ear.

I sat erect. The darkness was total. I could not see the figure of him who had aroused me. I could call to mind neither the period at which I had fallen into the trance, nor the locality in which I then lay. While I remained motionless, and busied in endeavors to collect my thoughts, the cold hand grasped me fiercely by the wrist, shaking it petulantly, while the gibbering voice said again:

“Arise! did I not bid thee arise?”

“And who,” I demanded, “art thou?”

“I have no name in the regions which I inhabit,” replied the voice, mournfully; “I was mortal, but am fiend. I was merciless, but am pitiful. Thou dost feel that I shudder. My teeth chatter as I speak, yet it is not with the chilliness of the night—of the night without end. But this hideousness is insufferable. How canst thou tranquilly sleep? I cannot rest for the cry of these great agonies. These sights are more than I can bear. Get thee up! Come with me into the outer Night, and let me unfold to thee the graves. Is not this a spectacle of woe?—Behold!”

I looked; and the unseen figure, which still grasped me by the wrist, had caused to be thrown open the graves of all mankind; and from each issued the faint phosphoric radiance of decay; so that I could see into the innermost recesses, and there view the shrouded bodies in their sad and solemn

---

10 rudely or insolently; characterized by temporary or capricious ill humor
slumbers with the worm. But alas! the real sleepers were fewer, by many millions, than those who slumbered not at all; and there was a feeble struggling; and there was a general and sad unrest; and from out the depths of the countless pits there came a melancholy rustling from the garments of the buried. And of those who seemed tranquilly to repose, I saw that a vast number had changed, in a greater or less degree, the rigid and uneasy position in which they had originally been entombed. And the voice again said to me as I gazed:

"Is it not—oh! is it not a pitiful sight?"

But, before I could find words to reply, the figure had ceased to grasp my wrist, the phosphoric lights expired, and the graves were closed with a sudden violence, while from out them arose a tumult of despairing cries, saying again: "Is it not—O, God, is it not a very pitiful sight?"

Phantasies such as these, presenting themselves at night, extended their terrific influence far into my waking hours. My nerves became thoroughly unstrung, and I fell a prey to perpetual horror. I hesitated to ride, or to walk, or to indulge in any exercise that would carry me from home. In fact, I no longer dared trust myself out of the immediate presence of those who were aware of my proneness to catalepsy, lest, falling into one of my usual fits, I should be buried before my real condition could be ascertained. I doubted the care, the fidelity of my dearest friends. I dreaded that, in some trance of more than customary duration, they might be prevailed upon to regard me as irrecoverable. I even went so far as to fear that, as I occasioned much trouble, they might be glad to consider any very protracted attack as sufficient excuse for getting rid of me altogether. It was in vain they endeavored to reassure me by the most solemn promises. I exacted the most sacred oaths, that under no circumstances they would bury me until decomposition had so materially advanced as to render farther preservation impossible. And, even then, my mortal terrors would listen to no reason—would accept no consolation. I entered into a series of elaborate precautions. Among other things, I had the family vault so remodelled as to admit of being readily opened from within. The slightest pressure upon a long lever that extended far into the tomb would cause the iron portal to fly back. There were arrangements also for the free admission of air and light, and convenient receptacles for food and water, within immediate reach of the coffin intended for my reception. This coffin was warmly and softly padded, and was provided with a lid, fashioned upon the principle of the vault-door, with the addition of springs so contrived that the feeblest movement of the body would be sufficient to set it at liberty. Besides all this, there was suspended from the roof of the tomb, a large bell, the rope of which, it was designed, should extend through a hole in the coffin, and so be fastened to one of the hands of the corpse. But, alas! what avails the vigilance against the Destiny of man? Not even these well-contrived securities sufficed to save from the uttermost agonies of living inhumation, a wretch to these agonies foredoomed!

There arrived an epoch—as often before there had arrived—in which I found myself emerging from total unconsciousness into the first feeble and indefinite sense of existence. Slowly—with a tortoise gradation—approached the faint gray dawn of the psychal day. A torpid uneasiness. An apathetic endurance of dull pain. No care—no hope—no effort. Then, after a long interval, a ringing in the ears; then, after a lapse still longer, a prickling or tingling sensation in the extremities; then a

11 inactivity, repose, tranquility
12 something that vanishes like vapor, passing especially quickly into and out of existence
seemingly eternal period of pleasurable quiescence\textsuperscript{11}, during which the awakening feelings are struggling into thought; then a brief re-sinking into non-entity; then a sudden recovery. At length the slight quivering of an eyelid, and immediately thereupon, an electric shock of a terror, deadly and indefinite, which sends the blood in torrents from the temples to the heart. And now the first positive effort to think. And now the first endeavor to remember. And now a partial and evanescent\textsuperscript{12} success. And now the memory has so far regained its dominion, that, in some measure, I am cognizant of my state. I feel that I am not awaking from ordinary sleep. I recollect that I have been subject to catalepsy. And now, at last, as if by the rush of an ocean, my shuddering spirit is overwhelmed by the one grim Danger—by the one spectral and ever-prevalent idea.

For some minutes after this fancy possessed me, I remained without motion. And why? I could not summon courage to move. I dared not make the effort which was to satisfy me of my fate—and yet there was something at my heart which whispered me it was sure. Despair—such as no other species of wretchedness ever calls into being—despair alone urged me, after long irresolution, to uplift the heavy lids of my eyes. I uplifted them. It was dark—all dark. I knew that the fit was over. I knew that the crisis of my disorder had long passed. I knew that I had now fully recovered the use of my visual faculties—and yet it was dark—all dark—the intense and utter raylessness of the Night that endureth for evermore.

I endeavored to shriek; and my lips and my parched tongue moved convulsively together in the attempt—but no voice issued from the cavernous lungs, which, oppressed as if by the weight of some incumbent mountain, gasped and palpitated, with the heart, at every elaborate and struggling inspiration.

The movement of the jaws, in this effort to cry aloud, showed me that they were bound up, as is usual with the dead. I felt, too, that I lay upon some hard substance, and by something similar my sides were, also, closely compressed. So far, I had not ventured to stir any of my limbs—but now I violently threw up my arms, which had been lying at length, with the wrists crossed. They struck a solid wooden substance, which extended above my person at an elevation of not more than six inches from my face. I could no longer doubt that I reposed within a coffin at last.

And now, amid all my infinite miseries, came sweetly the cherub Hope—for I thought of my precautions. I withered, and made spasmodic exertions to force open the lid: it would not move. I felt my wrists for the bell-rope: it was not to be found. And now the Comforter fled for ever, and a still sterner Despair reigned triumphant; for I could not help perceiving the absence of the paddings which I had so carefully prepared—and then, too, there came suddenly to my nostrils the strong peculiar odor of moist earth. The conclusion was irresistible. I was not within the vault. I had fallen into a trance while absent from home—while among strangers—when, or how, I could not remember—and it was they who had buried me as a dog—nailed up in some common coffin—and thrust deep, deep, and for ever, into some ordinary and nameless grave.

As this awful conviction forced itself, thus, into the innermost chambers of my soul, I once again struggled to cry aloud. And in this second endeavor I succeeded. A long, wild, and continuous shriek, or yell of agony, resounded through the realms of the subterranean Night.
“Hillo! hillo, there!” said a gruff voice, in reply.

“What the devil’s the matter now!” said a second.

“Get out o’ that!” said a third.

“What do you mean by yowling in that ere kind of style, like a cattymount?” said a fourth; and hereupon I was seized and shaken without ceremony, for several minutes, by a junto of very rough-looking individuals. They did not arouse me from my slumber—for I was wide awake when I screamed—but they restored me to the full possession of my memory.

This adventure occurred near Richmond, in Virginia. Accompanied by a friend, I had proceeded, upon a gunning expedition, some miles down the banks of the James River. Night approached, and we were overtaken by a storm. The cabin of a small sloop lying at anchor in the stream, and laden with garden mould, afforded us the only available shelter. We made the best of it, and passed the night on board. I slept in one of the only two berths in the vessel—and the berths of a sloop of sixty or seventy tons need scarcely be described. That which I occupied had no bedding of any kind. Its extreme width was eighteen inches. The distance of its bottom from the deck overhead was precisely the same. I found it a matter of exceeding difficulty to squeeze myself in. Nevertheless, I slept soundly; and the whole of my vision—for it was no dream, and no nightmare—arose naturally from the circumstances of my position—from my ordinary bias of thought—and from the difficulty, to which I have alluded, of collecting my senses, and especially of regaining my memory, for a long time after awaking from slumber. The men who shook me were the crew of the sloop, and some laborers engaged to unload it. From the load itself came the earthy smell. The bandage about the jaws was a silk handkerchief in which I had bound up my head, in default of my customary nightcap.

The tortures endured, however, were indubitably quite equal, for the time, to those of actual sepulture. They were fearfully—they were inconceivably hideous; but out of Evil proceeded Good; for their very excess wrought in my spirit an inevitable revulsion. My soul acquired tone—acquired temper. I went abroad. I took vigorous exercise. I breathed the free air of Heaven. I thought upon other subjects than Death. I discarded my medical books. “Buchan” I burned. I read no “Night Thoughts”13—no fustian14 about churchyards—no bugaboo tales—such as this. In short I became a new man, and lived a man’s life. From that memorable night, I dismissed forever my charnel apprehensions, and with them vanished the cataleptic disorder, of which, perhaps, they had been less the consequence than the cause.

There are moments when, even to the sober eye of Reason, the world of our sad Humanity may assume the semblance of a Hell—but the imagination of man is no Carathis15, to explore with impunity16 its every cavern. Alas! the grim legion of sepulchral terrors cannot be regarded as altogether fanciful—but, like the Demons in whose company Afrasiab17 made his voyage down the Oxus, they must sleep, or they will devour us—they must be suffered to slumber, or we perish.

13 poem about life, death, and immortality, written by British author Edward Young in 1742
14 excessively embellished or affected writing or speech
15 character in “The History of the Caliph Vathek,” a Gothic novel by William Thomas Beckford
16 freedom from any punishment, loss, or consequences
17 character from Firdowsi’s Persian epic, Shahnama (The Epic of Kings), written around 1000 A.D.
Contents

The Fall of the House of Usher ................................................................. F-2
    Reading by Edgar Allan Poe

Words to Know ......................................................................................... F-14
    Worksheet

Words with Contextual Clues ................................................................. F-15
    Background Information
Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “The Fall of the House of Usher” was first published in 1839 in William E. Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine.

Son coeur est un luth suspendu;  
Sittôt qu’on le touche il résonne.  
De Béranger.

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—and an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium—the bitter lapse into every-day life—the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in the unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country—a letter from him—which, in its wildly importunate nature, had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness—and of a mental disorder which oppressed him—and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best, and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said—it was the apparent heart that went with his request—which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

1 marsh grasses  
2 anything  
3 small steep-banked lake or pool
3 Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested, of late, in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognizable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honoured as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other—it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission, from sire to son, of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the “House of Usher”—an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

4 I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment—that of looking down within the tarn—had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition—for why should I not so term it?—served mainly to accelerate the increase itself.

Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy—a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity—an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

5 Shaking off from my spirit what must have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinising observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

---

4 great generosity; lavish  
5 anything derived from one’s father or ancestry; heritage  
6 seemingly contradictory
6 Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the studio of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me—while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy—while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this—I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master.

7 The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

8 Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality—of the constrained effort of the ennui man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity;—these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated

---

7 display of optical effects and illusions; constantly shifting succession of things seen or imagined
8 hopeless; beyond remedy
9 dissatisfied; bored
10 lack of substance or strength; slenderness; thinness
11 accustomed; inclined
12 something light; delicate
rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque\textsuperscript{13} expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence—an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy—an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter, than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical confirmation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision—that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation—that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance, which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy—a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.

To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. “I shall perish,” said he, “I must perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of the soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence\textsuperscript{14} of danger, except in its absolute effect—in terror. In this unnerved, in this pitiable, condition I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, fear.”

I learned, moreover, at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints, another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth—in regard to an influence whose supposititious\textsuperscript{15} force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be re-stated—an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion had, by dint\textsuperscript{16} of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit—an effect which the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the morale of his existence.

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin—to the severe and long-continued

\textsuperscript{13} elaborate or intricate pattern

\textsuperscript{14} hatred or loathing; an extreme repugnance

\textsuperscript{15} based on a hypothesis; assumed; believed or mistakenly believed

\textsuperscript{16} by force of; because of
illness—indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution—of a tenderly beloved sister—his sole companion for long years, his last and only relative on earth. “Her decease,” he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, “would leave him (him, the hopeless and frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers.” While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread; and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother; but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary waness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears.

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character were the usual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed; but on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain—that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself; and during this period I was busied in earnest endeavours to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together, or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe in one unceasing radiation of gloom.

I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphureous lustre over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the painting over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly, because I shuddered knowing not why—from these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavour to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least, in the circumstances then surrounding me, there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.
One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor.

I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid facility of his impromptus could not be so accounted for. They must have been, and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasies (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses, which were entitled “The Haunted Palace,” ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:—

I.
In the greenest of our valleys,
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought’s dominion—
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

II.
Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago);
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallied,
A winged odor went away.

III.
Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute’s well-tuned law;
Round about a throne, where sitting
(Porphyrogene!) In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

IV.
And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

V.
But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch’s high estate;

18 very hot; burning
19 wing
20 protective barriers; broad embankments raised as fortifications
21 son born after the accession of his father to the throne; one born in the purple (from Porphyrogenite)
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him, desolate!) And, round about his home, the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

VI.
24 And travellers now within that valley, Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a rapid ghastly river, Through the pale door;
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh—but smile no more.

25 I well remember that suggestions arising from this ballad led us into a train of thought wherein there became manifest an opinion of Usher’s which I mention not so much on account of its novelty (for other men* have thought thus), as on account of the pertinacity with which he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience22 of all vegetable things. But, in his disordered fancy, the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest abandon of his persuasion. The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers. The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of the collocation of these stones—in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many fungi which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around—above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence—the evidence of the sentience—was to be seen, he said, (and I here started as he spoke), in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added, in that silent yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made him what I now saw him—what he was. Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none.

26 Our books—the books which, for years, had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid—were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the “Ververt et Chartreuse” of Gresset; the “Belphegor” of Machiavelli; the “Heaven and Hell” of Swedenborg; the “Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm” by Holberg; the “Chiromancy” of Robert Flud, of Jean D’Indaginé, and of De la Chambre; the “Journey into the Blue Distance” of Tieck; and the “City of the Sun” of Campanella. One favorite volume was a small octavo edition of the Directorium Inquisitorum, by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela, about the old African Satyrs and Ægipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic—the manual of a forgotten church—the Vigilæ Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ.

27 I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when, one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment), in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother

---

* Watson, Dr. Parcival, Spallanzani, and especially the Bishop of Landoff. —See “Chemical Essays,” vol. v. (Poe’s note)

22 awareness; responsiveness to sense impressions
had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family. I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution.

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep, and, in later days, as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

Having deposited our mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them. Our glances, however, rested not long upon the dead—for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toil, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the house.

And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, an objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue—but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was labouring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified—that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline...
within the donjon, that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch—while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me. I endeavoured to believe that much, if not all of what I felt, was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room—of the dark and tattered draperies, which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts were fruitless. An irrepressible tremour gradually pervaded my frame; and, at length, there sat upon my very heart an incubus\(^\text{24}\) of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, hearkened—I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me—to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night), and endeavoured to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.

I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognized it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped, with a gentle touch, at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual, cadaverously wan—but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes—an evidently restrained \textit{hysteria} in his whole demeanor. His air appalled me—but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief.

“And you have not seen it?” he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—“you have not then seen it?—but, stay! you shall.” Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm.

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity; for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind; and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this—yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars, nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapor, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion.

“You must not—you shall not behold this!” said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him, with a gentle violence, from the window to a seat. “These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical phenomena not uncommon—or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank \textit{miasma}\(^\text{25}\) of the tarn. Let us close this casement;—the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favourite romances. I will read, and you shall listen:—and so we will pass away this terrible night together.”

\(^{24}\) evil spirit; one that oppresses or burdens like a nightmare

\(^{25}\) vaporous exhalation formerly believed to cause disease; an influence or atmosphere that tends to deplete or corrupt
36 The antique volume which I had taken up was the “Mad Trist” of Sir Launcelot Canning; but I had called it a favorite of Usher’s more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which agitated the hypochondriac, might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

37 I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the Trist, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:

“And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and maliceful turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace upright, and, with blows, made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarumed and reverberated throughout the forest.”

38 At the termination of this sentence I started and, for a moment, paused; for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me)—it appeared to me that, from some very remote portion of the mansion, there came, indistinctly to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story:

39 “But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the maliceful hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanour, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten—

Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;
Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win.

40 And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard.”

41 Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement—for there could be no doubt whatever that, in

26 condition of being unduly prolonged, drawn out, or too long; wordiness
27 marked by fearless resolution; valiant
28 conference with an enemy; discussion
29 inclination to; a desire to
this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusually screaming or grating sound—the exact counterpart of what my fancy had already conjured up for the dragon’s unnatural shriek as described by the romancer.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of the second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question; although, assuredly, a strange alteration had, during the last few minutes, taken place in his demeanour. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast—but I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea—for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded:

―And now, the champion, having escaped from the terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound.”

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than—as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heavily upon a floor of silver—I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic, and clangorous, yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips; and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words.

―Not hear it?—Yes, I hear it, and have heard it. Long—long—long—many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it—yet I dared not—oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am!—I dared not—I dared not speak! We have put her living in the tomb! Said I not that my senses were acute? I now tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them—many, many days ago—yet I dared not—I dared not speak! And now—to-night—Ethelred—ha! ha!—the breaking of the hermit’s door, and the death-cry of the dragon, and the clangor of the shield—say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh! whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart? Madman!—here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul—Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door!”

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency
of a spell, the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust—but then without those doors there did stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold—then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were along behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon, which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure, of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet close sullenly and silently over the fragments of the “House of Usher.”
Words to Know

Directions: Learn the following words to enhance your reading comprehension and your speaking and writing vocabularies. Define each word, use it in a well-constructed sentence, and write a personal connection to the word that will help you remember its meaning. Second, to give you the opportunity to learn the words well, write a paragraph, about any topic, that uses at least 15 of the words from the list. Circle each word from the list that you used in the paragraph.

1. oppressive
2. singularly
3. melancholy
4. sentiment
5. precipitous
6. alleviate
7. malady
8. manifest
9. equivocal
10. discern
11. scrutiny
12. accost
13. pallid
14. reminisce
15. solace
16. morbid
17. palpable
18. emaciated
19. reel
20. usher
Words with Contextual Clues

The following words appear in “The Fall of the House of Usher” and do not require a glossary or dictionary, but they may need to be discussed.

1. insufferable
2. insoluble
3. boon
4. MS.
5. forthwith
6. appellation
7. confirmation
8. concision
9. stupor
10. succumbed
11. collocation
12. waned
13. casement
14. hearkened
15. upbraid
16. potency
17. aghast
18. whence
19. tumultuous
Appendix G: Days 10-15

Contents

“The Fall of the House of Usher” Character Questions ................................................................. G-2
Worksheet

“The Fall of the House of Usher” Character Questions Key ........................................................... G-7
Key

“The Haunted Palace” Questions ........................................................................................................ G-12
Discussion Guide

The Cask of Amontillado ...................................................................................................................... G-13
Reading

“The Cask of Amontillado” Study Guide ........................................................................................... G-18
Worksheet

“The Cask of Amontillado” Study Guide Key .................................................................................... G-20
Key
“The Fall of the House of Usher” Character Questions

Name: ___________________ Period: _____ Date: _________

Directions: Answer, in complete sentences, only the questions for your group. For each answer, include the evidence (quotations from the story) and a page reference for that evidence.

The Narrator

1. Why does the narrator visit Roderick Usher?

2. What is the narrator’s relationship with Roderick Usher?

3. What had the narrator learned about the Usher race?

4. How does the narrator feel as he approaches the mansion and is looking into the tarn? Why do you think he feels this way?

5. What does the narrator see on the outside of the house?

6. How does the narrator describe the hallways leading to Usher’s room?

7. What does the narrator see when he first enters Usher’s room?

8. Why is what Usher tells the narrator about “life and reason” important?

9. What is Usher telling the narrator when the narrator gets a glimpse of Madeline?

10. From the first time that he hears Usher sing “The Haunted Palace,” what does the narrator perceive about Usher?

11. What does the narrator help Roderick Usher do? Why?

12. How does the narrator describe the vault?

13. What does the narrator discover about Madeline and Roderick Usher?

14. Why do Usher and the narrator not find peace after they bury Madeline?
The House

1. Describe the setting as the narrator approaches the house.

2. Why does the narrator say, “There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime”?

3. Why is the house described with “vacant and eye-like windows”?

4. Why does he describe the house as a “mansion of gloom”?

5. Why do the peasants refer to the mansion and the Usher family as the “House of Usher”?

6. What do you think “No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones” could mean?

7. What do you think of as happening when fungi overtake something?

8. Does the narrator see a crack in the house? Is it a big obvious crack? How long is the fissure? What could the fissure represent in terms of the dream world?

9. What could be the significance of the Gothic archway?

10. Why does the narrator use the adjectives dark, intricate, somber, black, and phantasmagoric to describe the hallways?

11. Why might the armorial trophies rattle as the narrator walks through the hallways?

12. Describe the setting of Roderick Usher’s room.

13. How long has it been since Usher ventured forth from the mansion? Why has it been so long?

14. What does the narrator say caused decay of the family mansion?

15. What is the significance of the narrator getting a glimpse of Madeline through a remote portion of the apartment?

16. Describe the vault.

17. Does Usher’s health improve or worsen after he buries Madeline? Does the narrator’s mood change? If so, in what way? Does he seem to be more concerned or worried about something?

18. What happens to the house at the end of the story?
Roderick Usher

1. Why does Usher request a visit from the narrator?

2. How close was the relationship between the narrator and Usher?

3. Why might the physician warn the narrator not to continue his journey to visit Roderick Usher?

4. How does Usher look when he is first introduced?

5. Why does the narrator describe Usher with “an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison”?

6. Describe Usher’s habits and actions.

7. Why does Usher claim that his illness is a family evil?

8. Why do you think Usher says, “I shall perish . . . I must perish”?

9. Why does Usher compare his illness to the gray walls of the mansion?

10. What is the significance of the narrator getting only a glimpse of Madeline as she “passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment”? What is significant about the door closing upon her?

11. What does the narrator mean by saying “If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher”?

12. What is significant about the narrator’s perception of “a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne”?

13. What reason does Roderick Usher give for burying his sister in a vault in the house?

14. Why is it significant that Roderick and Madeline Usher are twins?

15. After Usher and the narrator bury Madeline, does Usher’s health improve? How is the narrator affected?

16. How does Poe describe Roderick Usher’s artwork? What might that foreshadow?

17. What might be the significance of the name Usher?
Madeline Usher

1. When does the narrator first see Madeline Usher?

2. What does Roderick Usher claim is happening to Madeline?

3. How does Roderick Usher describe his relationship to his sister?

4. What is significant about the door closing upon her?

5. Name the diagnosis Madeline Usher’s physicians gave her disease. Why do you think the disease had them baffled?

6. After Madeline Usher dies, why does Roderick not want doctors to examine her?

7. Where do Roderick Usher and the narrator bury Madeline?

8. Describe the second door that closed upon Madeline Usher. Why is it significant?

9. What does “the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip” foreshadow?

10. When Madeline Usher stands outside the door, what does Roderick call the narrator?

11. What happens when the door opens?

12. What does the narrator do after the deaths of Roderick and Madeline Usher?
The Eye

1. When is the first time that “eye,” in the singular, is mentioned in the story?

2. Why do you think the narrator describes the windows as “vacant and eye-like”? Why does he mention them twice in the same passage?

3. When the narrator is describing the exterior of the house, why does he say that “perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might discover a barely perceptible fissure”?

4. Why does the narrator say, “The eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling”?

5. When the narrator describes Roderick Usher’s physical appearance, why does he use the expression “an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison”?

6. How does “the eye” cause a feeling of fear and personal insignificance?

7. Why does the narrator later say that “his eyes were tortured by even a faint light”?

8. After Roderick Usher and the narrator bury Madeline, the narrator asserts that “the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out.” Why do you think this happened?

9. On the night of the storm the narrator describes Roderick Usher’s countenance: “there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes—an evidently restrained hysteria in his whole demeanour.” Interpret why the narrator says eyes rather than eye.

10. While the narrator is reading “The Mad Trist” to Roderick Usher, he checks to see if Roderick is asleep, but the narrator could tell that he was not because of “the wide and rigid opening of the eye.” Again, the narrator refers to “the eye” in the singular. Why?
“The Fall of the House of Usher” Character Questions Key

The Narrator

1. The narrator received a manuscript from Roderick Usher that “had admitted of no other than a personal reply.”

2. They were “boon companions in boyhood.”

3. They were known “for a peculiar sensibility of temperament” illustrated through “many works of exalted art,” charitable deeds, and “a passionate devotion to the intricacies…of musical science.” He also learned that the Usher race ended with Roderick.

4. He felt a terrifying oppression. Accept all student responses as to why he felt this way. Try to lead students to see that the narrator signals something is wrong. He does not see himself as the person he was as a child.

5. He sees “decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued. . . . Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinising observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.”

6. “Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me—while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy—while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this—I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up.”

7. Accept all student answers, but the room represents the area of the conscious part of the mind wherein thought and creativity take place—such as an art, music, or writing studio.

8. “I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, fear.” Accept all answers to the importance of this statement. However, it foreshadows the end when Madeline comes back from the deep recesses of the house and causes Roderick and Madeline Usher (conscious and unconscious parts of the mind) to die and the narrator to flee.

9. He is telling the narrator that his affliction could be attributed to the illness and approaching death of his sister Madeline.

10. He perceives “a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne.”

11. He helps bury her in a deep part of the house. Usher tells the narrator that he does not want medical examiners to probe into Madeline’s illness and because of the “remote and exposed situation of the burial ground of the family.” He does not want others nosing around in his troubles.

12. “The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. Its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.”
13. He discovers that they are twins. The conscious and unconscious parts of the mind might be considered twin parts of the mind. In this interpretation, Madeline is the cause of the illness that he wants to push into the unconscious. Do not tell the students this, but guide them to discover it.

14. Because Roderick Usher keeps hearing Madeline Usher, and the narrator is restless, though he does not know why.

**The House**

1. All answers similar to gloomy, sad, oppressive, depressing should be acceptable. Have the students point out terms that support their answers such as dull, dark, clouds, insufferable, melancholy, desolate, or terrible.

2. He knew that something was terribly wrong, but he did not know what.

3. Students will probably say that they did not have curtains, but accept all reasonable answers. In addition, point out the singular eye and ask the students to define *vacant*.

4. Accept all answers, but have the students support their answers with textual references. The outer house represents what the narrator will find inside—a sick brother and a dying sister who finally causes her brother’s death.

5. The “House of Usher” represented the members of the family as well as the mansion. Now, the house and its members are deteriorating.

6. Accept all answers. The house, once well-built, is still intact; however, it is deteriorating.

7. Accept all student answers. One possible answer is “a parasite eats until it destroys its host. In this case, Madeline represents the evils, sadness, or horrors that are eating away at Roderick.”

8. The narrator sees a barely perceptible crack that extends from the top of the house to the bottom. The fissure could represent many things—possible answers include a cracked mind and a crack between worlds.

9. Accept all student answers. Remind students that Gothic is a form of architecture with pointed arches, flying buttresses, and high curved ceilings; it is also a style of literature characterized by gloom and darkness, often with a grotesque or supernatural plot.

10. Students will need to define the terms. Usher has allowed his house to decline due possibly to evils that have entered his life veiled in robes of sorrow, which may have caused him to neglect the trophies he has received throughout life.

11. The trophies rattle because the house appears not to be on a solid foundation. Students may have experience living in a house not built on a concrete pad. If so, invite them to describe what it is like to feel the floor shake when you walk or run.

12. Have the students point out words that create mood (large, lofty, long, narrow, pointed, black, inaccessible, feeble, crimsoned, dark). The room is large, yet dark and gloomy. It is cluttered with old and tattered furnishings.

13. “For many years, he had never ventured forth” from the mansion due to an influence too shadowy to mention.

14. Long sufferance of “some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion” caused a dint in or the decay of the mansion.

15. Accept all student answers. First, students need to define *glimpse* and *remote*. A rhetorical question in response to their discovery that a *glimpse* is like a hint can be a useful conversation-starter: “A hint at what?”

16. The vault lies deep below the narrator’s bedroom. It had not been opened for so long that their torches were nearly smothered by the “oppressive atmosphere.” It “was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light . . . . It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep, and, in later days, as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.”
17. Usher’s health worsens, and the narrator’s mood changes. The narrator also seems worried or afraid that something is wrong. Students should supply evidence from the text to support these claims.

18. The house collapsed. If the house represents the narrator’s mind—with Roderick Usher symbolizing the conscious part of the mind, and Madeline Usher the unconscious—then the collapse of the house suggests the narrator has finally lost his mind.

**Roderick Usher**

1. Usher says that “by the cheerfulness of . . . society” the narrator could provide “some alleviation of his malady,” an “acute bodily illness—of a mental disorder . . . and of an earnest desire to see me.”

2. They have known one another since boyhood, at which time they were “boon companions”—close friends. They had been “intimate associates.”

3. Here again, this question has no concrete answer, so accept all reasonable responses. Ask the students if they have been told or know of someone who has been told by a doctor that he or she does not need to visit a sick person. Then ask them why the doctor said that. It could be because the illness was contagious or that the visiting person may cause the patient to contract unneeded germs, or the visitor could agitate the patient. You just want the students to think of possibilities for the physician to accost him.

4. “A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely molded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten . . . . The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.”

5. Some students may say that Usher is a Cyclops; assure them he is not. Ask students if they can think of any time they remember referring to “the eye” or hearing someone else referring to “the eye”; then ask to what eye were they referring? Accept all reasonable answers (eye of a needle, for the eye to behold, eye of a storm, etc.), and ask them if they have ever heard of the “mind’s eye.” In this case, Poe may be referring to the mind’s eye.

6. Accept all student answers that are supported by evidence from the text. Usher’s habits and actions suggest that something is seriously wrong with him.

7. Accept all reasonable answers. You want the students to stop and contemplate some possible reasons his illness could be considered a family evil. Could Usher’s relatives have been abusive, alcoholic, or mentally ill? (This is a rhetorical question—the story does not say.)

8. Usher knows that he cannot continue in his present state of health and that he will not get better. It foreshadows the end of the story, when Usher does perish.

9. The gray walls of the mansion were deteriorating, just like his mind.

10. Accept all student answers, but guide students to think of the narrator’s glimpse of Madeline as a glimpse of remembering something disturbing, like having something on the tip of your tongue, a fleeting thought. The significance of the glimpse lies in Madeline causing Roderick Usher’s illness. In this interpretation, the narrator gets a glimpse of the trouble, or the cause of the trouble is on the tip of his tongue (or mind) but he cannot quite get a full understanding of it. Notice that he “regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread—and yet . . . found it impossible to account for such feelings.”

11. Ideas spring from the mind. At one time, Roderick Usher had a strong, creative mind.

12. This supports the interpretation that Roderick Usher represents the conscious part of the narrator’s mind. To spur discussion, it may help to ask, “What is the antecedent to her?” The antecedent is reason.
13. Usher wanted to protect his sister from the scrutinizing inquiries of the physicians.

14. Accept all student answers, but you may want to suggest the interpretation that the twins symbolize the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind. Roderick Usher is creativity and reason; Madeline is the unconscious.

15. Usher’s health worsens. Students should cite evidence from the text. The narrator becomes increasingly agitated.

16. “One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device.” In other words one painting at least looks like a coffin. This might be a foreshadowing of his own or his sister’s death.

17. An “usher” takes someone some place. The Ushers could be taking the narrator into a different world.

**Madeline Usher**

1. The narrator first glimpses Madeline Usher during his first conversation with Roderick Usher.

2. “The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character were the unusual diagnosis.” Remind students that *catalepsy* means an unconsciousness that occurs in schizophrenia—again illustrating that Roderick’s problem has something to do with the mind.

3. He describes her as “his sole companion for long years, his last and only relative on earth.”

4. When a thought is on the tip of someone’s tongue then fades away, it’s like a door in the mind closes on that thought. The significance lies in Madeline causing Roderick’s illness. The narrator gets a glimpse of the trouble or the cause of the trouble is on the tip of his tongue (or mind), but he cannot quite get a full understanding of it.

5. Accept all answers. It has baffled her physicians because it is a psychological problem, a problem with the mind. (Teacher note: Remember, Madeline is a troubling part of the unconscious part of the mind, which is almost impossible to get to.)

6. Roderick Usher was afraid of what the doctors might find if they examined Madeline (the unconscious part of the mind). “The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family.”

7. They buried her in a vault that had been unopened so long that their torches, “half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere.” It “was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment.”

8. The door was “of massive iron. . . . Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.” Accept students’ answers to the significance of the door. Then ask the students, “What types of things would we want to put behind such a door? Why would it be necessary to put a dead person behind such a door?” Normally people would put something they did not want out behind such a door. How strong is the door or wall that separates our conscious from our unconscious parts of our minds? It’s really strong. We put things there that we don’t want to remember or recall, usually things that cause us pain. (Of course there are things that time deposits into our unconscious, but those things that we put there are more often painful.)

9. Accept student answers, and then ask, “Could it foreshadow the understanding that she would ultimately cause the death of Roderick?” The teacher could also discuss the actual color of a dead person without the aid of makeup. (Of course, the teacher may transpose the question into a statement that it does foreshadow her return and the death of Roderick Usher.)

10. He calls him “Madman!”
11. “For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold—then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.”

12. He flees.

**The Eye**

1. When the narrator first sees the house, he describes the windows as vacant eye-like windows.

2. Accept all student answers. Students usually say the windows are actually shaped like eyes. At this point just allow the students to guess.

3. Accept all answers. (Eventually guide the students to understand that the eye is the eye of the mind.)

4. Quiz the students on when they have heard someone refer to “the eye of something.” They may say “the eye of a needle” or “the eye of a storm.” Ask them if they have heard someone refer to the eye of the mind? Then refer to the previous question, and ask where creativity begins. The students should say in the mind.

5. At this point, the students will probably be thinking in the concrete rather than in the abstract, so they will most likely say Roderick Usher has watery eyes. Remind them that the narrator says “eye” not eyes. Remind them again of the mind’s eye. The mind’s eye may be watery. This could mean that the mind is sick or crying out for help.

6. Accept all student answers. The eye was large, liquid, and was struggling to reach “the remoter angles of the chamber.” The fact that the eye was struggling to read the inaccessible areas of the mind frightened the narrator. He may be afraid of what the eye may find.

7. The narrator is saying that Roderick Usher is so ill that even his eyes are sensitive to light. Here Poe is representing Roderick in the concrete as an individual. Symbolically, though, Roderick represents the conscious part of the mind. Whose mind? (rhetorical question)

8. Accept all student answers. Remember that the eye had been struggling “in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber (possibly the unconscious part of the mind – Madeline), so when they bury Madeline, the enlightening qualities of the mind’s eye goes out.

9. Here, Poe has the narrator refer to Roderick, the mentally tortured person.

10. Accept all student answers. The mind’s eye sees that the evils, or sorrows, in the unconscious part of the mind are still alive and are returning to the conscious part of the mind.
“The Haunted Palace” Questions

- Read the first stanza. Ask, “What is the ‘greenest of our valleys’? What does green represent?” They might say “new life” or “nature.” Then ask, “When is life new for us?” Answers might include, “When we are children” or “When we are beginning something new.” Next, direct their attention to the lines “a fair and stately palace / reared its head.” Ask, “What is the antecedent to the pronoun its? Students should trace the antecedent back to palace. Extend the question: “Where does the palace stand?” Students should say, “In the monarch Thought’s dominion.” Then ask, “What does monarch mean?” Most students should have at least a general idea that a monarch is a ruler of a country. Follow up with, “If it means ruler, why is monarch not possessive? Why is Thought’s capitalized and possessive?” Thought is personified. The literary term personification should be one with which they’re familiar. “What does dominion mean?” If it means territory, would it not stand to reason that this line should be written, “In the Monarch’s thought dominion?” Why might the poet have written it as he did? Could it mean “in the ruling thought’s territory” or “in the mind?”

In this stanza was the mind a good or bad place in childhood?

- Read the second stanza. Ask, “What do ‘Banners yellow, glorious, golden’ represent?” If necessary, extend the original question by asking, “What do you think is the roof?” “Where is the mind housed?” Students should say, “in the head.” If that is true, then what is the roof? They should respond, “the top of the head or skull.” What would be “yellow, glorious, golden” on top of the head? Most will say “hair.” What does “gentle air” and “sweet day” tell the reader about this time of life? Most will say it is a good time because the adjectives are positive.

- Read the third stanza. Summarize the poem. So far, students have identified a head with yellow hair. Next, ask “What do the ‘two luminous windows’ represent?” If they struggle ask, “What are the windows to the soul?” They should reply, “the eyes.” According to this stanza, what do travelers in this “happy valley” see? Students should say, “Spirits.” Then ask, “What kind of spirits?” They should respond, “Spirits moving musically / To a lute’s well-tuned law.” What does well-tuned mean? Students should respond that the spirits are dancing to good music. Then ask, “Where were they dancing?” They should say, “Round about a throne.” Next, ask, “What is this throne?” The students should say it is the mind. Thus, the mind is working well because it is like good music created by a well-tuned lute.

- Read the fourth stanza. Ask students to identify the symbolism of the fair palace door. If students struggle, remind them that they have identified a head with blond hair and eyes. Ask, “What would the door be?” Students will say, “The mouth.” Next, ask, “What flowed from that mouth?” You may have to help with this. The answer is “Echoes” of “sweet duty” “to sing” “of surpassing beauty, / The wit and wisdom of their king.” Then ask, “What is the king?” The students may reply, “Porphyrogene.” Share with them that Porphyrogene was an ancient king. In this interpretation, however, it refers to a person’s mind, the ruler of thought.

- Read the fifth stanza. Ask, “What has happened now?” Students should reply that evil things came into his mind. Then, ask, “How are these evil things dressed?” Students should reply, “In robes of sorrow.” Ask, “What has happened to the glory of youth?” They should say it is gone or is only a “dim-remembered story.”

- Read the sixth stanza. Ask, “Now, what do travelers see through the windows?” They should respond, “Vast forms that move fantastically / To a discordant melody.” Then ask, “What kind of windows?” Students should respond, “Red-litten windows.” “When people have red eyes, what does that usually indicate about them?” They will respond with words such as sick, drugged, tired, or mad. Next ask, “What kind of melody is taking place now?” Students should respond with “discordant melody.” Follow up with, “What is coming from the mouth now?” Students should say, “A hideous throng rush out forever, / And laugh—but smile no more.” Finally, ask, “What does ‘laugh—but smile no more’ mean?” Students should respond that it is a hideous laugh, not a happy laugh.

- Discuss the muses of Greek mythology. Ask students who Roderick’s muse could be. Ask students what it might be like to be haunted.
The Cask of Amontillado
Edgar Allan Poe

The short story “The Cask of Amontillado” was first published in 1846 in Sarah Josepha Hale’s popular magazine Godey’s Lady’s Book.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him, that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him: “My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts.”

“How?” said he, “Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!”

“I have my doubts,” I replied; “and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain.”

“Amontillado!”

“I have my doubts.”

“Amontillado!”

“And I must satisfy them.”

“Amontillado!”

“As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me—”

“Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry.”

---

1 one who is fortunate
2 person who has great skill at some endeavor; one skilled in or having a taste for the fine arts
3 the season before Lent, often marked by riotous excess and masquerade
4 medium dry sherry (literally, as done in the Spanish town of Montilla)
“And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own.”

“Come, let us go.”

“Whither?”

“To your vaults.”

“My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi——”

“I have no engagement;—come.”

“My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre.”

“Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado.”

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a roquelaire closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

“The pipe,” said he.

“It is farther on,” said I; “but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls.”

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

“Nitre?” he asked, at length.

“Nitre,” I replied. “How long have you had that cough?”

“Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!”

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

“It is nothing,” he said, at last.

“Come,” I said, with decision, “we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi——”

“Enough,” he said; “the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough.”

“True—true,” I replied; “and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you

---

5 knee-length cloak worn in the 1700s and 1800s
6 large, imposing building, such as a residence (palace) or museum (especially in Italy)
7 literally, one who seeks treasure
unnecessarily; but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps.”

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

“Drink,” I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

“I drink,” he said, “to the buried that repose around us.”

“And I to your long life.”

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

“These vaults,” he said, “are extensive.”

“The Montresors,” I replied, “were a great and numerous family.”

“I forget your arms.”

“A huge human foot d’or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel.”

“And the motto?”

“No me impune lacessit.”

“Good!” he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

“The nitre!” I said; “see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river’s bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough——”

“It is nothing,” he said; “let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc.”

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grève. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

“You do not comprehend?” he said.

“Not I,” I replied.

“Then you are not of the brotherhood.”

“How?”

“You are not of the masons.”

“Yes, yes,” I said, “yes, yes.”

“You? Impossible! A mason?”

“A mason,” I replied.

“A sign,” he said.

“It is this,” I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my roquelaire.

“You jest,” he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. “But let us proceed to the Amontillado.”

“Be it so,” I said, replacing the tool.

---

8 No one challenges me with impunity. (Latin)

9 Fortunato is referring to the Freemasons, a fraternal organization established in 1646 that has secret rituals. The Freemasons’ emblem is a square and compass. These tools were used by masons to build structures with bricks or stones.
beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

“Proceed,” I said; “herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi——”

“He is an ignoramus,” interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

“Pass your hand,” I said, “over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power.”

“The Amontillado!” ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

“True,” I replied; “the Amontillado.”

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibration of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated—I trembled. Unsheathing my
rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed—I aided—I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he!—a very good joke indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud:

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again:

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. In pace requiescat!"
“The Cask of Amontillado” Study Guide

Name: ____________________________________________________  Period: ____  Date: __________

Directions: Label each question “right-there,” “putting-it-together,” “author-and-me,” or “on-my-own.” Then, answer each question, providing evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. Why does Montresor want revenge against Fortunato?

2. What role does deceit play in Montresor’s revenge?

3. How does Montresor give the impression he is logical?

4. How are Fortunato and Montresor similar?

5. How does Montresor characterize Italians?

6. Explain what might be considered ironic in the fourth and fifth paragraphs.

7. How is Montresor insincere in his interactions with Fortunato?

8. What personality traits of Fortunato does Montresor appeal to by asking him to authenticate the amontillado?

9. What effect does the mention of “Luchesi” have on Fortunato?
10. How do you know Montresor leaves nothing to chance in his plot to lure Fortunato to his death?

11. As they descend into the catacombs, how does Montresor further provoke Fortunato?

12. When Montresor says, for the last time, “Once more let me implore you to return. No?” do you think that Fortunato understands his fate? Why?

13. How does Poe build suspense in the story?

14. What is the significance of the allusion to Masons (Freemasons)?

15. When does Fortunato realize that Montresor plans to bury him alive? Is there any evidence Fortunato understands why Montresor is doing it?

16. Why does Montresor repeat Fortunato’s words when he says, “for the love of God!”?
"The Cask of Amontillado" Study Guide Key

1. Why does Montresor want revenge against Fortunato? (right-there)

“The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge.” Although as readers we do not know what the insult is, Montresor tells us that being insulted is the reason he seeks revenge.

2. What role does deceit play in Montresor’s revenge? (putting-it-together)

Students will be able to identify a number of different sentences in the story that indicate deceit. For example:

■ “You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, precluded the idea of risk.”

■ “It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.”

3. How does Montresor give the impression he is logical? (author-and-me)

To answer this question the reader must have a personal understanding of what it means to be logical and unbiased. Then, evidence must be found in the text to support that understanding. Montresor not only describes characteristics of Fortunato that are negative (which he might be expected to do since he is seeking revenge), but mentions positives about him as well. For example, he says, “He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared.” Furthermore, he says, “In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack—but in the matter of old wines he was sincere.”

4. How are Fortunato and Montresor similar? (right-there)

Montresor says, “In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.”

5. How does Montresor characterize Italians? (putting-it-together)

As opportunists: Montresor says, “Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity—to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires.”

6. Explain what might be considered ironic in the fourth and fifth paragraphs? (author-and-me)

To answer this question students must understand the literary concept of irony. If students understand that irony involves incongruous behaviors or ideas, they should see the irony when Montresor says, “It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend.” It is ironic that he describes the “supreme madness of the carnival season” with no apparent recognition of his own madness. Furthermore, in paragraph four Montresor describes Fortunato as wearing, “a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells.” In other words, he is dressed for the carnival and looks like a dunce or a fool, but in the fifth paragraph Montresor says to him, “How remarkably well you are looking to-day!”

7. How is Montresor insincere in his interactions with Fortunato? (author-and-me)

He has told us at the very beginning of the tale that he plans to seek revenge. Consequently, we are aware that he must have a plan, and we realize that anything he says to Fortunato might be insincere. When he starts flattering Fortunato, we assume it is just part of his plan. This flattery continues almost until the end of the story.
8. What personality traits of Fortunato does Montresor appeal to by asking him to authenticate the amontillado? (author-and-me)

Montresor appeals to his vanity, for Fortunato sees himself as an expert connoisseur in wine. The insincerity of Montresor’s flattery should be obvious to most students, since it is a type of social interaction that most have been involved in, either as the one who flatters or the one who is flattered.

9. What effect does the mention of “Luchesi” have on Fortunato? (putting-it-together)

Twice Fortunato states that Luchesi cannot tell one wine from another. At first mention of Luchesi, Fortunato says, “Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry.” Soon after that he reiterates, “And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado.” From these sentences, and the repetition of the ideas, we can conclude that Fortunato does not think Luchesi knows anything when it comes to identifying wine. The repetition may also suggest that Fortunato is a bit tipsy from celebrating.

9. How do you know that Montresor leaves nothing to chance in his plot to lure Fortunato to his death? (putting-it-together)

In the first paragraph of the story, Montresor says that not only does he want revenge, but he also has no intention of being caught. He has a plan that leaves nothing to chance. “At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.”

A little later in the story, Montresor says he has set the stage for his plot by getting his servants out of the house. “There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honour of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.”

11. As they descend into the catacombs, how does Montresor further provoke Fortunato? (putting-it-together)

One thing Montresor does is to state several times that they need to turn around because the damp atmosphere (as evidenced by the wet nitre gleaming on the walls) in the vault is not good for Fortunato’s health. Fortunato insists he wants to proceed and his health is not an issue, even though he has long bouts of coughing. Fortunato says he will not die from coughing. Montresor replies, “True, true.”

Another thing that Montresor does is to offer an already inebriated Fortunato more wine (Medoc and De Grave) to drink. As a result, Fortunato becomes even more drunk. “His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.” Finally, Montresor goads his vanity again by bringing up Luchesi’s name again, to which Fortunato responds, “He is an ignoramus.”

12. When Montresor says, for the last time, “Once more let me implore you to return. No?” do you think that Fortunato understands his fate? Why? (author-and-me)

Fortunato has already been “fettered” to the granite wall. Even though he may not be able to anticipate exactly what his fate will be, he is probably starting to understand that all is not well. His drunkenness undoubtedly impedes his thinking to some extent although Montresor says, “I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off.” As the wall Montresor is building nears completion, Fortunato desperately hopes that his imprisonment is “a very good joke indeed,” but he knows it is not.
13. How does Poe build suspense in the story? (author-and-me)

We know from the first paragraph that Montresor will seek revenge on Fortunato. What we do not know is how he intends to do it. The step-by-step leading of Fortunato to his death by being enclosed in a vault for premature burial builds suspense. By occasionally offering Fortunato opportunities to turn around and leave, Poe places Fortunato’s fate in his own hands, which adds to the suspense. Also, Fortunato’s total trust increases the tension. Because we all have our own set of fears, our reactions to the circumstances in the story add to the suspense. All of us can envision how we would act in a similar situation and project what our reactions would be to the dampness, closeness, and fear of being buried alive.

14. What is the significance of the allusion to Masons (Freemasons)? (author-and-me)

In the story Fortunato refers to the Masons, which is a fraternal organization which has secret rituals. When Fortunato throws a wine bottle upwards and gestures in a way that Montresor finds “grotesque,” Fortunato says, “You do not comprehend?” and Montresor replies, “Not I.” If Montresor were actually a Mason, he would undoubtedly know the secret gesture. Fortunato goes on to say, “Then you are not of the brotherhood . . . You are not of the masons.” And Montresor replies, “Yes, yes . . . yes, yes.” Fortunato replies, “You? Impossible! A mason?” Montresor responds, “A mason.” Fortunato asks for a sign and Montresor produces a trowel, one like a stonemason would use. Even though Montresor probably does not belong to the fraternal organization that Fortunato belongs to, he refers to himself as a mason because his plan is to build a brick wall that will entomb Fortunato. At this point, Fortunato does not understand his fate. Both men use the word mason to mean different things. Montresor’s use is deadly literal.

15. When does Fortunato realize that Montresor plans to bury him alive? Is there any evidence Fortunato understands why Montresor is doing it? (author-and-me)

Until Fortunato’s last plea, “For the love of God, Montresor!” he gives the impression with his (probably nervous) laughter that there is still the possibility that being walled in by Montresor is a joke or an action done in jest. The italics used in the last plea indicate the tone has changed to desperation. He realizes he is doomed and is emphatically begging Montresor to stop.

16. Why does Montresor repeat Fortunato’s words when he says, “for the love of God!”? (on-my-own)

Montresor ironically repeats the phrase because he does believe he has been wronged and for the sake of truth, goodness, and/or justice, he is doing what he needs to do: get revenge (an eye for an eye). Fortunato references love. Montresor has no love and so parrots the words with no understanding or empathy.
Contents
“The Cask of Amontillado” Fishbowl............................................................................................................. H-2
   Directions
Evaluating and Defining an Argument............................................................................................................. H-3
   Constructed-Response Prompt
Edgar Allan Poe Essay ................................................................................................................................... H-6
   Writing Prompt
Edgar Allan Poe Essay Rubric ........................................................................................................................ H-7
   Rubric
“The Cask of Amontillado” Fishbowl

Students form either a circle or two concentric circles for seminar discussion, depending upon the size of the class. If the class is smaller than 12 students, one circle will be enough. They are to bring books and notebooks to use in the discussion. Desks are cleared of everything else. Discussion leaders are to take over leading the discussion.

Explain that, if you are using two concentric circles, the students seated in the inner circle are the fish. Like fish swimming in water, they should be active, since they are responsible for carrying the discussion. Each fish (inner circle student) should ask at least one of their three homework questions. During the discussion, the bowl, in comparison, is the outer circle of students. They are responsible for observing the fish and taking notes in their class notebooks about the content discussed and the process in general. After each member of the inner circle has asked one question and the conversation has come to a logical conclusion, ask the outer circle of students to discuss what they heard and observed.

Then, the students should switch roles and seats. Plan for approximately ten to fifteen minutes for each round. During the second Fishbowl, students may find that they have similar questions to those from the first Fishbowl. Explain that this is acceptable because students may have different perspectives to share on the topic. Your role is to sit outside the circle, take notes on the discussion leaders’ contributions, listen carefully to ideas posed by other students, and intervene only when necessary for clarity.

Students lead the discussion for 25 to 30 minutes. At the end of the discussion, move into the circle to discuss reactions to the discussion and to clarify any literary elements.
Evaluating and Defining an Argument

Directions: The following passage argues that Americans should appreciate sadness (or melancholy, as Poe might put it). After reading it, complete the chart on the next two pages. The process will help you plan an argumentative essay based on the reading, which will in turn help you prepare for the final assessment, an argumentative essay about the work of Edgar Allan Poe.

Good argumentative writing involves good argumentative reading: you will need to understand and be able to analyze a passage before you begin constructing your response to it. By identifying and evaluating arguments, you are better able to recognize the values and ideas, to consider the opposing arguments, and to determine the qualifications, implications, and solutions that may enhance your argument.

To practice reading and evaluation strategies, examine the following passage, which argues that Americans are too interested in being happy; we should instead appreciate sadness. As you read the passage, consider the author’s argument and how you might respond to it.

Right now, if the statistics are correct, about 15 percent of Americans are not happy. Soon, perhaps, with the help of psychopharmaceuticals, we shall have no more unhappy people in our country. Melancholics will become unknown.

This would be an unparalleled tragedy, equivalent in scope to the annihilation of the sperm whale or the golden eagle. With no more melancholics, we would live in a world in which everyone simply accepted the status quo, in which everyone would simply be content with the given. This would constitute a dystopia of ubiquitous placid grins, a nightmare, a police state of Pollyannas, a flatland that offers nothing new under the sun. Why are we pushing toward such a hellish condition?

The answer is simple: fear. Most hide behind the smile because they are afraid of facing the world’s complexity, its vagueness, its terrible beauties. If they stay safely ensconced behind their painted grins, then they won’t have to encounter the insecurities attendant upon dwelling in possibility, those anxious moments when one doesn’t know this from that, when one could suddenly become almost anything at all. Most immediately flee from this situation. They try to lose themselves in the laughing masses, hoping the anxiety will never again visit them.

To foster a society of total happiness is to concoct a culture of fear. Are we ready to relinquish our most essential hearts for a good night’s sleep, a season of contentment? We must ignore the seductions of our blissed-out culture and somehow hold on to our sadness. We must find a way, difficult though it is, to be who we are, sullenness and all.

To be against happiness, to avert contentment, is to be close to joy, to embrace ecstasy. Incompleteness is the call to life. Fragmentation is freedom. This is the rapture, burning slow, or finishing a book that can never be completed, a flawed and conflicted text.

1 overly cheerful and optimistic people

Adapted from Eric G. Wilson, Against Happiness. ©2008 by Eric G. Wilson.
**Directions:** Complete the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading and Evaluation Strategies</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determine the Author’s Purpose</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the author trying to accomplish with the passage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who is the audience of the passage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What issues does the author have with current thinking on this topic?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summarize the Argument</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the key idea or thesis of the passage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What should the reader know after reading the passage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluate the Argument</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What makes this an effective or ineffective argument?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How is the author convincing or unconvincing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Define Your Argument</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How would you respond to the prompt?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What would your thesis be on the issue?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use Evidence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What evidence is there to support your position?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How does this evidence relate to your thesis?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address Significance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What values, ideas, or concepts does the passage address?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualify Your Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what situations—when? how? why?—would your position on the issue be correct?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Consider Opposing Arguments

- How can you reveal weaknesses in or critique the claims of the opposing side of the issue?
- Write one acknowledgement statement, one critique statement, and one concession statement to oppose arguments that do not support your position on the issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgement Statement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critique Statement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concession Statement:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Describe the Implications

- What is significant about your perspective?
- What will likely happen if we follow your views and/or the views of the opposing perspective?

### Propose a Solution of “Common Ground”

- What practical and logical answers are applicable to the problem or issue presented in the passage?
- How would these answers or solutions appease those involved with the issue?

### Reading and Evaluation Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider Opposing Arguments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the Implications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propose a Solution of “Common Ground”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Edgar Allan Poe Essay

Name: ____________________________________________________  Period: _____  Date: __________
Due Date: ____________________

Directions: Choose one of the following essay topics or develop one of your own, and write a 2–3 page essay in response. To write the essay, formulate a working thesis statement that can be supported with direct quotations from relevant text(s), which include the works of Edgar Allan Poe, the film studied during the unit, lecture and discussion notes, and any independent research you do. Each source should be correctly cited in MLA or APA style, and you must submit a works cited or references list with your essay. When you have completed a draft, ask a fellow classmate, friend, or parent to read your paper and, using the rubric as a guide, write comments on the draft that will help you improve its content, language, and mechanics. Submit the draft with the comments along with your final draft.

1. Defend the argument that a strength of Poe’s writing is its unity. Begin your defense with an argument that unity is important in all writing. Provide examples from writing you see in daily life (e.g., newspaper articles, television reports).

2. Poe said that through poetry one achieves beauty and through prose one achieves truth. Do you agree or disagree? Defend your position. (Be sure to define beauty and truth.)

3. Defend or refute the idea that Poe’s writing should be included in the English 11 curriculum.

4. Paul Strathern, a lecturer in philosophy and mathematics, has written “Montresor (‘my treasure’) is the sober rational side of Poe, while Fortunato (‘fortune’ or ‘fate’) is the alcoholic, self-destructive element with which he is cursed” (p.63).¹ Defend or refute this claim.

5. Explain how Poe’s influence can be found in the work of another writer, such as Stephen King, Ambrose Bierce, William Faulkner, or Alfred Hitchcock. The work can either be print or film.

6. In the introduction to Twentieth Century Interpretations of Poe’s Tales, William L. Howarth says, “Like other writers he [Poe] had to invent characters who could think, act, or tell his tales believably. But on this score the critics have always found him inadequate. They have called his characters flat, undeveloped” (p. 12).² Using support from Poe’s work, agree or disagree with Howarth.

7. Using the poems and short story in this unit, defend or refute the idea that Poe adheres to his theories about poetry and short stories.

8. Compare Poe’s “The Fall of the House of Usher” and Alfred Hitchcock’s Vertigo. Using specific details from both works to support your ideas; argue that Poe’s story influenced Hitchcock’s Vertigo. You may want to consider the theme of the psychological fall of the main characters of each work.

9. Defend or refute the claim that each of Poe’s works concern a search for the narrator’s identity or self-knowledge.

10. David Galloway says, “Poe was a master of intensity of the picture he is able to construct from essentially ‘Gothic’ materials. But Poe attempted to go beyond the popular gothic tradition, and deplored the meretricious use of terror and grotesquerie” (p. xxxi).³ Explain what Galloway is saying by first defining what makes literature “Gothic” and then determining whether or not Poe’s work goes “beyond the popular gothic tradition.”

Edgar Allan Poe Essay Rubric

Directions: Use the criteria to guide the writing of your persuasive essay. The rubric will be used to evaluate your writing process and final paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4     | ■ Assignment is complete; response is thorough.  
      | ■ Response clearly identifies and insightfully defends or refutes important features of the argument.  
      | ■ Response includes ample evidence from the passage that effectively supports the main ideas in the response. Interpretations of the passage are accurate, supported by logic and reasoned evidence.  
      | ■ Response is fluent, precise, and has minimal errors. |
| 3     | ■ Assignment is complete; response is adequate.  
      | ■ Response clearly identifies and defends or refutes some important features of the argument.  
      | ■ Response provides adequate evidence from the passage that generally supports the main ideas in the response. Interpretations of the passage are mostly accurate and mostly supported by logic and reasoned evidence.  
      | ■ Response is clear; errors do not distract or confuse. |
| 2     | ■ Assignment is partially complete; response is inadequate.  
      | ■ Response identifies a few relevant features of the argument, but defense or refutation is underdeveloped or lacks focus on significant elements of the argument.  
      | ■ Response provides some evidence from the passage, though it may not support ideas in the response very well. Interpretations of the passage are only partially accurate, with some illogical evidence or reasoning.  
      | ■ Language use in the response is basic and occasionally unclear; frequent errors may impede understanding. |
| 1     | ■ Assignment is incomplete; response is insufficient and unsatisfactory.  
      | ■ Response includes minimal identification of the features of the argument; there is little evidence of the ability to understand and defend or refute the argument.  
      | ■ Response provides minimal evidence from the passage; if evidence is apparent, its relevance to any ideas in the response is not clear. Interpretations of the passage are inaccurate, with illogical evidence or reasoning apparent.  
      | ■ Language use in the response is unclear; frequent errors impede understanding. |
Appendix I: Days 19–20

Contents

Poe’s Short Stories Quiz .......................................................... I-2
Quiz

Poe’s Short Stories Quiz Key .................................................... I-6
Key
Poe’s Short Stories Quiz

Name: ____________________________________________________  Period: _____  Date: __________

Part I

Directions: Choose the alternative that best answers the question. Write the corresponding letter in the blank.

1. In “The Fall of the House of Usher,” what is the relationship between the narrator and Roderick Usher?
   A. Brothers
   B. Cousins
   C. Friends
   D. Business associates

2. What does the narrator see when he looks at the house of Usher?
   F. A chimney
   G. A gargoyle
   H. Hanging moss
   J. A fissure

3. Who accosts the narrator upon his arrival at the house of Usher?
   A. The valet
   B. The butler
   C. Roderick Usher
   D. The physician

4. What mood does Poe create within the first two paragraphs of “The Fall of the House of Usher”?
   F. Melancholy
   G. Fear
   H. Calm
   J. Vitality

5. Which of the following statements best describes the central idea of “The Haunted Palace”?
   A. It is about a mansion that had ghosts robed in evil.
   B. It is about a person changing from a happy child to a person with a mental disorder.
   C. It is about a man living in a scary castle.
   D. It is about a man who lost his wife.
Part II

Directions: Choose the alternative that best completes the sentence. Write the corresponding letter in the blank.

6. His interest in dead bodies and ancient burial customs seemed rather _____ to Prachuab.
   A. morbid
   B. discernible
   C. pallid
   D. trepidatious

7. Even though Laretta tried hard to convince her mother she was not sick, the _____ color of her cheeks betrayed her.
   F. pallid
   G. emaciated
   H. insipid
   J. specious

8. The disease _____ itself in small red dots all over Wedad’s body.
   A. bewildered
   B. fissured
   C. manifested
   D. alternated

9. The veterinarian examined the _____ body of the little kitten and saw that it had not eaten for a long time.
   F. armorial
   G. melancholy
   H. discernible
   J. emaciated

10. To _____ his fears, José focused on happy memories as he entered the hospital room.
    A. alleviate
    B. scrutinize
    C. pervade
    D. succumb

11. The detective was _____ the area, looking closely at every object that might provide a clue.
    F. ruminating
    G. alleviating
    H. scrutinizing
    J. reminiscing

12. After her dog died, Emiko’s mood was decidedly _____, and she found herself in tears several times a day.
    A. intricate
    B. orthodox
    C. oppressive
    D. melancholy
13. The day seemed dark and the clouds hung ____ low when the narrator came upon the house.
   F. oppressively  
   G. pallidly  
   H. melancholy  
   J. vacantly

14. The _____ led Alverna and Kareem where they needed to go.
   A. usher  
   B. sconce  
   C. palpable  
   D. malady

15. When Amahl heard the terrible news, his head _____.
   F. hearkened  
   G. emaciated  
   H. accosted  
   J. reeled

Part III

Directions: In 2–3 sentences, respond to each of the following questions or prompts about “The Cask of Amontillado.” If you need more space, write on the back.

16. If Montresor had not said he was seeking revenge against Fortunato, what might your reaction be at the end of the story?

17. What role does Luchesi play?
18. Identify at least one similarity between Madeline in “The Fall of the House of Usher” and Fortunato.

19. What is the significance of the allusion to Masons (Freemasons)?

20. List three elements of Montresor’s plot to murder Fortunato.
Poe’s Short Stories Quiz Key

Part I
1. C
2. J
3. D
4. F
5. A

Part II
6. A
7. F
8. C
9. J
10. A
11. H
12. D
13. F
14. A
15. J

Part III
16. The short story is structured to reveal immediately that Montresor plans to seek revenge on Fortunato for an alleged insult. As the story unfolds, Montresor manipulates Fortunato into walking to his premature burial. The reader does not know exactly what Fortunato’s fate will be but realizes that something bad will probably happen. If the reader did not know in advance that Montresor was plotting revenge, the ending would be a complete and seemingly unprovoked surprise. (Some of the power of the element of suspense would be lost.)
17. Montresor and Fortunato both know Luchesi; although only his name and not his person appear in the story. Montresor uses Luchesi’s name and his reputation as a connoisseur to provoke Fortunato into accompanying him and identifying the wine. Luchesi is part of the bait used to lure Fortunato.
18. There are several similarities which include, but are not limited to, the following:
   ■ Both are buried alive.
   ■ Both are seen by some critics to be the alter-egos or guilty minds of the main characters Roderick and Montresor.
   ■ Both fall victim to the main character’s madness.
   ■ Both have a weakness that makes them easy prey (illness and drunkenness).
19. Montresor tells Fortunato (ironically) that he, too, is a Mason like Fortunato, or in other words, a fellow member of a philanthropic fraternal organization. Montresor is actually emulating a mason, or stone worker, when he walls Fortunato into his tomb. They are talking about similar ideas, but Fortunato’s meaning would make them “brothers” and Montresor’s meaning makes him Fortunato’s tomb builder.

20. Students’ lists will vary, but some possibilities include:

- Choosing carnival season as the time for his revenge so that Fortunato’s drunkenness and absence from his family might not be noticed
- Knowing Fortunato well enough that he can play on his vanity and ego to persuade him to taste the wine
- Goading Fortunato by alluding to a different wine connoisseur (Luchesi)
- Planning every detail and leaving nothing to chance
- Offering Fortunato the opportunity to turn back by patronizing him about his health, ultimately making it Fortunato’s decision to proceed to the end
- Having his tools and materials ready to use in the vault
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Enigma</td>
<td>J-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading by Edgar Allan Poe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Valentine</td>
<td>J-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading by Edgar Allan Poe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonnet—to Science</td>
<td>J-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading by Edgar Allan Poe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“An Enigma,” was first published in the *Union Magazine of Literature and Art*, in March 1848. The poem is an acrostic that contains the name Sarah Anna Lewis, poet and playwright from Baltimore who was an acquaintance of Poe’s. In this acrostic, the first letter of the first line is the first letter of Lewis’s name, the second letter of the second line is the second letter of her name, and so forth.

“One Enigma,” says Solomon Don Dunce,
“Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.
Through all the flimsy things we see at once
As easily as through a Naples bonnet—
Trash of all trash!—how can a lady don it?
Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff—
Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff
Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it.”
And, veritably, Sol is right enough.
The general tuckermanities are arrant
Bubbles—ephemeral and so transparent—
But this is, now,—you may depend upon it—
Stable, opaque, immortal—all by dint
Of the dear names that lie concealed within ’t.
For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
Brightly expressive as the twins of Lœda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
Search narrowly the lines!—they hold a treasure
Divine—a talisman—an amulet
That must be worn at heart. Search well the measure—
The words—the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes’ scintillating soul, there lie perdus
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
Of poets, by poets—as the name is a poet’s, too,
Its letters, although naturally lying
Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando—
Still form a synonym for Truth.—Cease trying!
You will not read the riddle, though you do the best you can do.
Sonnet—to Science
Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe published “Sonnet—to Science” in *Tamerlane and Minor Poems* in 1829.

Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet’s heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise?
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?
Secondary Course Objectives

A primary course objective

- is the central focus of the unit and
- is explicitly assessed in an embedded assessment and/or in the summative assessment.

A secondary course objective

- is less important to the focus of the unit, but is one that students need to know and use when completing activities for this unit and
- may or may not be explicitly assessed by the summative assessment or an embedded assessment.

Course objectives considered primary for this unit are listed on pages 1–3. Below is a list of secondary course objectives associated with this unit.

A.5. Author’s Voice and Method

a. Critique the effectiveness of the organizational pattern (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution) and how clarity of meaning is affected by the writer’s techniques (e.g., repetition of ideas, syntax, word choice) in increasingly challenging texts

A.8. Words and Their History

f. Identify and interpret common idioms and literary, classical, and biblical allusions (e.g. the garden of Eden as it is used in Thomas Hardy’s novel *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*) in increasingly challenging texts

B.1. Writing Process

b. Analyze writing assignments in terms of purpose and audience to determine which strategies to use (e.g., writing a speech to inform versus a speech to persuade)

c. Create and use various tools (e.g., rubrics, checklists, models, writing conferences) to revise, refine, edit, and proofread own and others’ writing, using appropriate rhetorical, logical, and stylistic criteria for assessing the final versions of compositions

B.3. Organization, Unity, and Coherence

a. Establish and develop a clear thesis statement for informational writing or a clear plan or outline for narrative writing

b. Organize writing to create a coherent whole with effective, fully developed paragraphs, similar ideas grouped together for unity, and paragraphs arranged in a logical sequence

c. Add important information and delete irrelevant information and details to more clearly establish a central idea

e. Write an introduction that engages the reader and a conclusion that summarizes, extends, or elaborates points or ideas in the writing
B.5. Conventions of Usage

a. Correctly spell commonly misspelled/confused words

b. Correctly choose verb forms in terms of tense, voice (i.e., active and passive), and mood for continuity

c. Make subject and verb agree in number, even when a phrase or clause between the two suggests a different number for the verb

d. Use pronouns correctly (e.g., appropriate case, pronoun-antecedent agreement, clear pronoun reference)

e. Correctly choose adjectives, adjective phrases, adjective clauses, adverbs, adverb phrases, and adverb clauses and their forms for logical connection to word(s) modified

f. Correctly use parts of speech
Course Objectives Measured by Assessments

This table presents at a glance how the course objectives are employed throughout the entire unit. It identifies those objectives that are explicitly measured by the embedded and unit assessments. The first column lists course objectives by a two- or three-character code (e.g., A.1.b.); columns 2–9 on this page and 2–7 on the next list the assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded Course Objectives</th>
<th>Embedded Assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journal Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1.b.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.a.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.b.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.e.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3.a.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.4.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.5.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.5.e.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.5.h.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.6.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.7.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.8.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.8.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1.a.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.d.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.3.d.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.4.d.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.2.c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.2.g.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coded Course Objectives</td>
<td>Embedded Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1.b.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.a.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.b.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.e.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3.a.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.4.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.5.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.5.e.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.5.h.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.6.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.7.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.8.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.8.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1.a.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.3.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.4.d.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.2.c.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.2.g.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>