

Name: _____

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Tell Tale Heart A Literary Analysis

About the author: Edgar Allan Poe.

The Tell Tale Heart is written by an author named Edgar Allan Poe. He is most famous as a writer, but he did many more things in his lifetime other than write. He served in the army, traveled all around England and the USA, and started college twice (but never finished it).

Edgar Poe was born in Massachusetts on January 19, 1809. His parents, David and Elizabeth Poe, were both actors. Sadly, they both died when Edgar was still a baby. Poe's father deserted the family when Edgar was very young. In 1811, his mother died and the children became orphans. The three siblings were separated and went to live with different families. Edgar went to Richmond, Virginia, to live with John and Francis Allan. That's where he got his middle name, Allan.

The Allans were wealthy and sent him to private school. During his teenage years, however, Edgar frequently argued with his surrogate father about his future. Furthermore, Edgar developed a troubling gambling habit and found himself in serious debt. John disapproved of Edgar's dreams of becoming a writer and refused to help him pay his debt, so Edgar left the house to live on his own and enlisted in the U.S. Army for a five-year term. He served under the name Edgar A. Perry.

During his time in the Army in 1827, Poe published his first two books of poetry and spent a lot of time reading, including Shakespeare and the poet Milton.

In 1830, Poe left the Army to go to military school at West Point, but he was kicked out because he wouldn't go to class and his adoptive father John Allen disowned him from their family. Apparently, school just wasn't for him! He stayed in the United States, living with relatives in Baltimore and writing poetry.

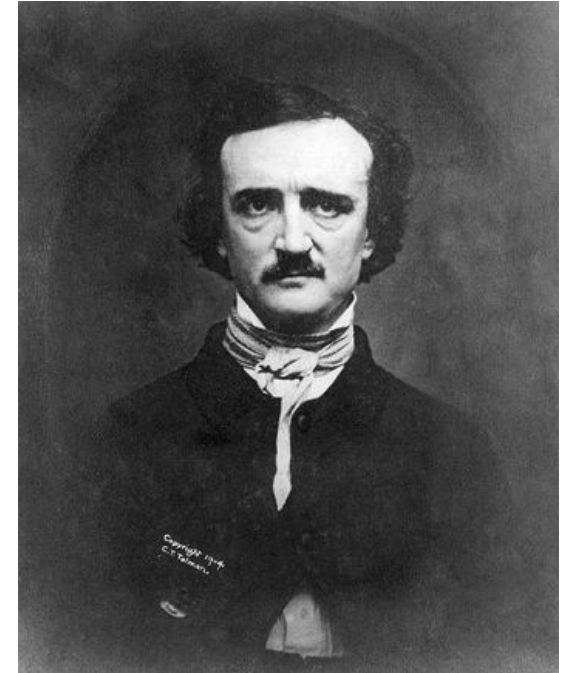
In 1836, at age 27, Poe married a girl named Virginia, who was much younger than he was. For the next few years, the Poe family moved around from city to city in the USA. Poe was writing poetry, essays, and book reviews, but he wasn't making much money, and the family struggled to pay the bills. He soon became well known for his work with the *Southern Literary Messenger* magazine he was working at. In 1837, he stopped working at the magazine and moved to New York City, then to Philadelphia. He started working as co-editor of *Burton's Magazine*. Much of his best work was featured in the magazine, including "*The Fall of the House of Usher*." In 1841, Poe started a new genre of detective fiction with "*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*."

Poe won a literary prize in 1843 for "The Gold Bug," a tale of secret codes and hunting treasure. He also published a short story called The Tell-Tale Heart. It was originally printed in Boston, Massachusetts in a journal called The Pioneer. The Gothic fiction work was a terrifying story of the murder of an old man by his caretaker. In the story, the narrator tells of being haunted by the old man's "vulture eye," and kills him to be rid of it. The narrator tries to convince the reader that it was his acute senses rather than insanity that drove him to murder.

In 1845, Edgar's famous poem "The Raven" was published, arguably the most famous poem in American history. The dark, lyrical, supernatural poem that features themes of loss, loneliness, and death. The raven itself reinforces the themes throughout the poem as it torments the subject into a descent into madness.

In 1847, Poe's wife became ill with tuberculosis and died. Edgar was devastated by the loss of his wife and developed a substance abuse problem. His depression intensified over the next few years. On October 3, 1849, Poe was found delirious (mentally unstable) on the streets of Baltimore, wearing the clothes of another person. He died four days later.

Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most influential authors in American history. He is credited with popularizing the art of writing short stories and is often considered the first, or, one of the first, science-fiction authors. His homes in New York City and Baltimore are now museums. The National Football League Baltimore Ravens are named for Poe's trademark poem *The Raven*.



Poe's life analysis- answer the following questions after the biography you just read.

1. Poe's life is often considered to have been tragic, or full of loss and sadness. Do you agree? Do you think those losses influence him in any way?
2. Describe Poe's life with his adoptive father, John Allen. Did they have a relationship that Poe enjoyed? How do you think someone like Poe felt growing up with someone like John Allen after losing both of his parents at an early age?

3. In what way(s) [if any] did Poe find success? How did that make him feel?

4. Of Poe's most famous writings such as Tell Tale Heart (about murder), The Raven (about loss), and The Pit and the Pendulum (about a mental breakdown from being tortured), there seems to be a 'theme' among his works. What MOOD do you think he sets his stories in?

5. Do you think the events in Poe's life influenced him to write that way?

"Poe's life was rather awful, and it is apparent in many of his stories and poems that the events in his past had a huge impact on his writing. In fact, if life hadn't been so cruel to him, Poe may have not written his classic tales we've come to know and love."

Vocabulary

Before you read this story (written in the 1800's) you should be familiar with these vocabulary words. Poe was very good at writing with rich, descriptive synonyms.

- **acute**- sharp.
 - *His nervousness increased his acute sense of hearing.*
- **Vexed**- disturbed
 - *He was vexed by the old man's eye.*
- **Sagacity**- intelligence and good judgement
 - *He was proud of his powers and of his sagacity.*
- **Suavity**- to be suave, smooth, 'chill'
 - The police showed perfect suavity.
- **Audacity**- having boldness or being risky, sometimes rude
 - *He was impressed by his own audacity.*
- **Vehemently**- forcefully
 - *He talked more vehemently, but he couldn't drown out the sound.*
- **Refrained**- to be holding back
 - *Although he was furious, he refrained from action.*
- **Gesticulations**- energetic gestures
 - *His violent gesticulations did not disturb police officers.*
- **Wary**- to be cautious, worried
 - *He was too wary to make a careless mistake.*
- **Derision**- ridicule or mocking
 - *He hated the smiling derision of the police.*

Assignment: You will read one of America's classic spooky, mystery stories written by Edgar Allan Poe. While you are reading, you will be working on the following skills.

- I can analyze how details and evidence within the text supports what the author states directly and what he/she implies, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- I can identify the point of view of the characters or narrator(s) in a text.
- I can determine how rhymes and sound repetitions influence a text.
- I can summarize a text.
- I can compare and contrast the written version of a story, drama, or poem to its multimedia or stage production. (Movie after story)
- I can explain how historical events, settings, or characters are represented in fictional accounts.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text

Vocabulary

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- **Blood-curdling**- causing terror or horror
 - *He told a blood-curdling ghost story.*
- **Gargoyles**- a strange or ugly human or animal figure that sticks out from the roof of a building (such as a church)
 - *People are typically afraid of gargoyle statues.*
- **Belittled**- considering something unimportant
 - *The critic belittled the author's story.*
- **Keen**- to describe something strong, and sensitive
 - *The dog had a keen sense of smell.*
- **Vexed**- disturbed
 - *He was vexed by the old man's eye.*
- **Stifled**- not being able to breathe
 - *I heard a stifle come from the scared boy.*
- **Marrow**- soft tissue that fills the inside of your bones
 - *We were frozen to the marrow in the snow.*
- **Ceased**- to stop or give up
 - *He ceased his run after finishing 3 miles.*
- **Blather**- dull, useless talking.
 - *The professor blathered on for 2 hours....*

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Instructions:

1. Read your copy of Tell Tale Heart. If your copy instructs you to read-to-the-text, do what the text asks you to do.
2. Be mindful of the following mystery writing techniques we have been focusing on in class:
 - a. **Foreshadowing**- author dropping clues about something that will happen or unravel later.
 - b. **Building suspense**- how does the author build a sense of fear or excitement for the reader?
 - c. **Making inferences**- use your prior knowledge and evidence from the text to make connections!
 - d. **Making predictions**- based on the text, what do you think will happen?
3. Fill in the chart that focuses on the narrator:

The narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart” claims that he ‘is not mad’. Do you agree? Fill out the graphic below by collecting evidence from the story. Focus on the narrator’s thoughts, words, and actions. Then, write whether or not you think the narrator is a reliable source of information. **Make sure to cite evidence from the text (use quotes and page numbers)**

<u>Sane</u>	<u>Mad</u>

4. Fill in the chart to describe how the author builds suspense:

Page and paragraph #	What is the narrator doing, or feeling? What sense of <i>suspense</i> is being created?
Line #27-33 “Oh you would have laughed...” “Would a madman have been so wise as this...?”	
Line #51-55 “And to think that there I was...”	
Line #90 “When I had waited a long time...”	
Line #110 “But even yet...”	
Line #169 “I felt myself getting pale...”	
Line #175-195 “No doubt I now...” “But anything was better than this agony!”	

5. After reading and filling in the charts from your notes, you will watch a short movie adaptation of Tell Tale Heart then write a literary analysis between the two. Instructions for that will follow after watching the movie. Be mindful to take good notes NOW (while reading) to help you cite evidence from the text in your analysis paper!

4. Fill in the chart to describe how the author builds suspense:

Page and scene #	What is the narrator doing, or feeling? What sense of <i>suspense</i> is being created?
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Mystery Literature Analysis- PEER Revising Rubric

I can determine specific elements of mystery focused literature and how they are impactful for writers and readers of the genre.

CCSS.ELA	Learning Target/s	4- Got it! 99%	3- Almost There! 86%	2- Moving There 76%	1- Just starting... 66%	0- Not evident 0%
Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems in the grade 6-8 complexity, with scaffolding as needed.	<i>-I can summarize a text. (P#1)</i>	I have clearly explained the main idea of the text; I included all/almost all of the important facts to support the main idea.	I have mostly explained the main idea of the text; I included many of the important facts to support the main idea.	I have somewhat explained some of the main idea of the text; I included some important facts to support the main idea.	I have not explained the main idea of the text; I included little to no important facts to support the main idea.	No evidence of the target demonstrated OR assignment is missing/incomplete.
Cite several pieces of text evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	<i>- I can explain how historical events, settings, or characters are represented in fictional accounts.(P#1)</i>	I clearly and with great detail described the narrator (villian), and described the setting/time period.	I mostly and with some detail described the narrator (villian), and described the setting/time period.	I kind of and with few details described the narrator (villian), and described the setting/time period.	I did not clearly and with little detail described the narrator (villian), and described the setting/time period.	No evidence of the target demonstrated OR assignment is missing/incomplete.
	<i>-I can analyze how details and evidence within the text supports what the author states directly and what he/she implies, as well as inferences drawn from the text. (P#2). (Is he mad/sane?)</i>	I chose a rich example from the text that demonstrates how the narrator (villian) acts, and drew clear inferences based on the text.	I chose a good example from the text that demonstrates how the narrator (villian) acts, and drew good inferences based on the text.	I chose an okay example from the text that demonstrates how the narrator (villian) acts, and drew some inferences based on the text.	I chose a weak example from the text that demonstrates how the narrator (villian) acts, and drew few inferences based on the text.	No evidence of the target demonstrated OR assignment is missing/incomplete.
Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.	<i>-I can identify the character(s) or narrator(s) in a text and compare their points of view. (P#2)</i>	I clearly understand how each character feels and can effectively describe it.	I mostly understand how each character feels and can generally describe it.	I moderately understand how each character feels and can decently describe it.	I barely understand how each character feels and can ineffectly describe it.	No evidence of the target demonstrated OR assignment is missing/incomplete.
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds of a story or drama.	<i>-I can determine how rhymes and sound repetitions influence a text. (P#2)</i>	I clearly identify a repetition in the text and effectively explain its importance to the story.	I adequately identify a repetition in the text and generally explain its importance to the story.	I moderately identify a repetition in the text and somewhat explain its importance to the story.	I poorly identify a repetition in the text and ineffectively explain its importance to the story.	No evidence of the target demonstrated OR assignment is missing/incomplete.
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Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects to each medium.	<i>- I can compare and contrast the written version of a story to its multimedia production. (P#4)</i>	I clearly describe the similarities <u>and</u> differences between the text version and visual versions.	I adequately describe the similarities <u>and</u> differences between the text version and visual versions.	I moderately describe the similarities <u>and</u> differences between the text version and visual versions.	I poorly describe the similarities <u>and</u> differences between the text version and visual versions.	No evidence of the target demonstrated OR assignment is missing/incomplete.
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Grader's Name: _____

/32 targets x2

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I can determine specific elements of mystery focused literature and how they are impactful for writers and readers of the genre.

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