



# Open Educational Resources Instructional Materials Review

## The Stories and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe

**Developer/Publisher:** The Big Read: National Endowment for the Arts

[View Resource](#)

**Review Year:** 2014

*Note that this resource may have been updated since the review. Check the developer website to see if there is a more recent version available.*

**Format:**

- online
- PDF
- editable document

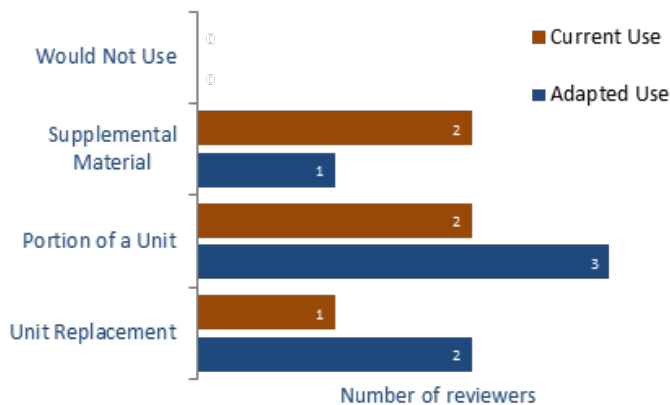
**Professional Development:**

Organizations selected to participate in The Big Read receive ample supports.

**Standards Correlation:**

Designed to meet NCTE standards

**Reviewer Usability Feedback on Current and Adapted Use**



**Amount of work required to bring into CCSS alignment:**

Moderate

[2014 OER Review Full Report](#)

*This resource was reviewed by Washington educators with subject matter expertise and deep familiarity with the state learning standards. Learn more about the review instruments and process by reading the full report.*

**Subject:**

English Language Arts

**Grade:**

9-12

**Scope:**

Unit

**Duration:**

2 Weeks

**Resource License:**

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[OER Project](#)

Learning and Teaching  
Department  
Office of Superintendent of Public  
Instruction



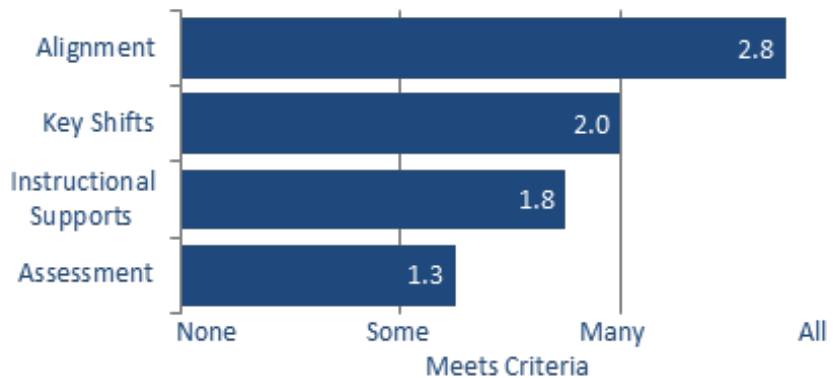
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*If any adaptations are made, remove the OSPI logo and link back to the original review. Data is only accurate in the unedited version.*

## Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP) Overall Rating:

Exemplar if Improved (8)

[learn more about EQuIP](#)



### Background from OER Project Team

The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. They support organizations across the country in developing community-wide programs which encourage reading and participation by diverse audiences. Resources include reader, teacher, and audio guides. Though the program supports organizations developing community-wide reading programs with associated events, the digital materials are available to all in pdf format which may be printed. **This unit was designed to meet NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) standards and predates the Common Core State Standards. This should factor into the viewer's analysis of the review results.**

### Reviewer Comments

#### Review 1

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#### *Comments/Ideal Use:*

The Media Audio Guide was a definite plus as many teachers use "The Fall of the House of Usher" and the expert panel discussion is an in-depth, shrewd analysis about how the story can be read on multiple levels. That Poe was actually writing about the conscious and the unconscious mind using Roderick Usher and the narrator as symbols in an allegory is a perceptive and engaging insight. Also, impressive is that the Reader's Guide has a Spanish translation.

The Big Read unit on The Stories and Poems of Edgar Allen Poe has some dynamic Essay Topics that a veteran teacher could easily use with a unit on the Romantic Movement in American Literature or on Gothic short story writers. The deeper learning opportunities on the literary elements of unreliable narrator and point of view or on the characteristics of Gothic writing and the detective story are impressive. The lessons lend themselves to deeper student interpretation, but they need to be scaffolded with more vocabulary and text-based questions. The material covered is impressive with over 12 short stories and poems being used for analysis, compare and contrast exercises and literary element activities.

#### *Concerns:*

- Few vocabulary activities to help students master the archaic prose were available. In the ten Lesson Plans, there are usually three or four words defined. Many more archaic words are in Poe's poems and stories; there needs to be more scaffolding.



- Few text-based questions to help students comprehend the meaning in the short stories and poems were evident. After the Discussion Activities, there were generally three or four in-depth questions posed for the class. Missing were the close reading activities needed for each student to master the poems and short stories.
- No writing rubrics, student exemplars and elements of process writing were included. The students were to organize their ideas around a thesis about the stories or poems with clear reasons and references to the text and a conclusion--but no scoring guidelines, student exemplars or revising/editing templates were given. An outline was asked for in unit nine.

*Suggestions:*

- Include more student vocabulary activities and text-based questions (and answer guides) for every Poe short story and poem that is to be used.
- Include more student exemplars, writing rubrics and revising and editing templates for every writing exercise in the ten Teacher Lesson Plans and in the Essay Topics.

Review 2

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*Comments/Ideal Use:*

This unit is carefully built to engage the student in the study of Poe's poetry and stories, which makes it a cohesive unit and offers a comprehensive approach to the subject through various media and strategies. Using the works of Poe, as content, opens the door to different purposes for writing requiring various writing styles. The end result is that the student learns both writing and literature reading skills. Because of the careful construction of the unit, it should stand alone. The beginning teacher would easily be able to introduce this unit, while the more practiced teacher would be able to enhance the unit.

*Concerns:*

- The resource does a comprehensive study of the topic - Poe's poetry and stories. The students are immersed in the topic, but there is no indication of what the student is learning or if the student is learning the subject. No assessments are specified, no rubrics are in the teacher's guide nor in the lesson plans.

*Suggestions:*

- It is assumed that rubrics have been established, but if not, both modeling and rubrics would add support for the instruction.



## Review 3

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### *Comments/Ideal Use:*

This material has potential for strong instructors in the ELA to utilize as supplemental or resource materials to develop CCSS aligned lessons and activities. It's Edgar Allen Poe, come on!

The ideal scenario for this resource would probably be in an 8th or 9th Grade reading / English Language Arts classroom. It could be provided to a more general education group of students who might have a section on research and writing biographies that would combine classic literature and genre writing. The teacher level experience should be moderate, as there are not many 'specific' ideas directly related to fulfilling CCSS through proposed / developed learning experiences present in the object. It will require a team of teachers with an appreciation for the works of Edgar Allen Poe, time to strategize and develop their own assessment, rubrics, graphic organizers, etc. to make it work. The resource could be utilized as an extension for students who might benefit from further exploration of themed literature with some extended essay writing to develop their exposure to classic American literature, literary vocabulary and methodology for writing development through interest in the legend of Edgar Allen Poe.

### *Strengths:*

- The website is a good multi-media resource for directing students to explore. Has graphics and functional links to other information (POEmuseum, etc.).

### *Concerns:*

- The standards that are mentioned (NCTE) are applied in a way that is too vague. It gives a list but is not specific towards CCSS.
- Little variety in the options for assessment of student learning aligned with CCSS. Each lesson is very much the same, uninspired work without clear directions for students towards expectations or development of standardized skill sets.
- Scaffolding, progression of learning, extensions, etc. - NOT PRESENT. The object gives some ideas for extensions and differentiated learning, but is largely vague and does not diversify the actual lessons it presents.

### *Suggestions:*

- Create Lessons that target specific CCSS explicitly.
- Build off of the 'Capstone' and other lessons with some variety, create rubrics and graphic organizers for instructional application and use.

## Review 4

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### *Comments/Ideal Use:*

What this unit really does is provide quality questions and a good approach to studying Poe in a thoughtful progression with some potential projects that connect multimedia to literature.



There are modifications that need to be made to be made for it to be directly aligned to CCSS standards as its language does not align with the core principles. However, this unit has many of the fundamental principles of CCSS instruction and for some teachers there is enough here as a jumping of point. For others, they will need more of the pieces - argumentative writing strategies, ways to teach students how to provide feedback to each other, close reading strategies, writing rubrics, discussion formats, etc...

There is potential for a variety of assessments, but only if you use the capstone projects as the writing assessments are somewhat repetitive and very similar in nature. They also assume some level of previous writing skill.

For some teachers the fact that there is not writing instruction will be a weakness, for others the prompts will be enough and they can incorporate their own writing program into the literature unit. This unit is focused on reading literature deeply and it assesses a student's ability to do that by providing a variety of writing prompts, allowing students to practice their writing skills at the same time.

There are numerous discussion questions that help students discuss each component. Each lesson focus on a different literary component. As it was developed as a community read, its weakness is in providing rubrics to assess the various components.

*Concerns:*

- No rubrics.
- In this unit students are expect to utilize the text to support their discussions and writing, but there is no evidence of close reading strategies. The teachers' who would likely use this unit would have to embed these strategies.
- The specificity of these lessons are minimal. It is simply a set of discussion questions, a writing prompt and homework that leads into the next lesson. There is no process or structure for the discussion. No templates for scaffolding the reading for students who may have difficulty like ELL and SPED students. There are not extensions for those who need things beyond, it does not using technology and media to deepen the learning.
- The lessons do not provide the information text need to support the literary lessons and although there is the on-demand tasks there is little evidence of the process writing. There are also opportunities for focused research projects in the capstone projects and essays that are not being capitalized on.

*Suggestions:*

- Provide scoring guides for the key writing assignments and discussions.
- Providing close reading strategies; potential discussion formats.
- This being said, it would take little revision to provide opportunity for students to revise some of the essays the students are writing. It would only take minor shifts in the restructuring of the unit plans to allow for the research needed in the capstone projects.

