

A black and white portrait of Edgar Allan Poe, showing his face from the nose up, with a prominent mustache and dark hair. The background is dark and textured.

POE

MUSEUM

Richmond, Virginia

Educator Information Packet

Educator Information Packet

**Edgar Allan Poe Museum
1914-16 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23223
804-648-5523
tours@poemuseum.org**

Welcome Educators!

Thank you for requesting the Poe Museum's Educator Information Packet! We hope that you will find these resources useful for your classroom and for your own reference. Be sure to contact us if you have any questions, and if you would like to bring a field trip here to the Poe Museum in Richmond.

A standard visit to the museum consists of a one hour tour of our exhibits, which are the largest collection of artifacts related to Poe and his life and works anywhere in the world. Additional programming options include our Mock Trial, wherein a Poe Museum staffer plays the role of the narrator in Poe's great story "The Tell-Tale Heart" as though he were on trial for murder. The participants serve as judge, lawyers and jury to decide if the defendant is guilty or not guilty by reason of insanity.

The Tell-Tale Heart



LESSON PLAN 1 – How to Narrate “The Tell-Tale Heart”

Subject: English | Grade: 7th | Duration: 1-1:30hr

Objectives

Students will...

- identify and use point of view in literary works.
- experiment with narrative styles and how to use them effectively.
- practice and use new vocabulary.

Materials

Printed copy of the story, notebooks, pens/pencils

Prep Work

- Have the students read the story out loud as a class, each person taking turns (emphasis on punctuation and pronunciation) (10min)
- Teacher will lead a discussion on POV, plot, characters, vocabulary (10min)

Activities

Part I

Have each student pick a character from the list below, and have students retell the story from that character’s perspective. They should only write what their character may have seen or heard. (15min) (1 pg)

1. Old Man
2. Death
3. Neighbor
4. Police Officer

Part II

Split the class into four groups based on the narrative they chose and ask each group to create a script for their chosen character, retelling the story as they witnessed it. Emphasize the use of diction (word choice) and descriptive language to make their narrative more persuasive. (15-20min)

Part III

Groups present their narrative. Following each presentation, class will offer critiques and/or questions. (25min)

Target SOL

Communication: 7.1a; 7.2a; 7.3c Reading: 7.4a,f; 7.5a, f, g-l; Writing: 7.7a, c, g; 7.8e,h

LESSON PLAN 2 – Getting to the Heart of the Matter: Foreshadowing and other literary devices in “The Tell-Tale Heart”

Subject: English | Grades: 8th | Duration: 1:30-2hrs

Objectives

Students will...

- identify and use foreshadowing
- learn to use verbal and non-verbal communication skills to narrate a fictional story
- determine how a writer uses diction, detail, imagery, and figurative language to create tone and mood.

Materials

Projector, computer with Internet access, printed copies of the story, poster boards, magazines/newspapers, scissors, adhesive materials, markers, writing utensils

Activities

Part I

1. Students read the first paragraph of the story (see below) and write down three predictions about what the story will be about based on the title as well as the diction and tone used by the narrator in this first paragraph. (7min)

TRUE! — nervous — very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses — not destroyed — not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily — how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

2. Discuss the literary clues in the text that led to the students’ predictions. Discuss why this passage is a good example of foreshadowing. Students will explain how the passage sets the tone and mood of the story. (10-15min)
3. Show one of the animated videos of “The Tell-Tale Heart” to learn about tone and mood. (8min)

Part II

1. Divide students into five groups and to finish reading the story as a group. (10min)
2. Groups will create a poster highlighting the literary devices used to set the mood and tone of the story. (25min)

Poster Requirements:

- a title that reflects the contents of their poster
 - Direct quotations from the text (students should be prepared to defend why they chose them)
 - One illustration as a minimum (may be a sketch, magazine cutout, or artwork)
3. Groups present their posters to the class. Class critiques and questions. (25min)

Target SOL

Communication: 8.2a-h, 8.4a, f; Reading: 8.5a-c, 8.6i; Writing: 8.8a, f, g

Vocabulary

Acuteness (n.) – a harsh or sharp quality; the state or quality of being able to sense slight impressions or differences

Audacity (n.) – the willingness to take bold risks

Conceived (v.) – thought of; to come to mind

Courageously (adj.) – to act with great courage; to show no fear

Cunningly (adj.) – getting what you want in a clever way; crafty; sly; artfully subtle
Derision (n.) – contemptuous ridicule or mockery
Dissimulation (v.) – to hide under a false appearance
Distinctness (n.) – different in a way that you can see, hear, smell, or feel
Dreadful (adj.) – very bad or unpleasant
Enveloped (v.) – to wrap up, cover, or surround completely
Fancy (v.) – to imagine; to think
Fury (n.) – violent anger; wild and dangerous force
Gaily (adj.) – in a happy or lively way; in a bright and colorful way
Gesticulation (n.) – a dramatic gesture used to emphasize one’s words
Hearken (*harken*) (v.) – to listen carefully
Hideous (adj.) – very ugly or disgusting
Mournful (adj.) – feeling, expressing sadness, regret or grief
Muffled (adj.) – a suppressed sound, muted
Precisely (adv.) – exactly; without vagueness.
Profound (adj.) – to have great insight and knowledge; difficult to understand; very strongly felt
Pulsation (n.) – rhythmical throbbing or vibrating
Raved (v.) – to talk wildly or incoherently
Sagacity (n.) – having or showing the ability to understand difficult ideas and situations and to make good decisions
Scantling (n.) – a piece of lumber of small cross section
Stealthily (adv.) – to act quietly and secretly to avoid being noticed
Stifled (v.) – to make someone unable to breathe properly; to stop someone from doing or expressing something.
Suavity (n.) – a suave or smoothly agreeable quality; a courteous action
Supposition (n.) – an idea or theory that you believe is true even though you do not have proof
Unperceived (adj.) - unobserved
Vexed (v.) vex – to cause a problem; to annoy or worry someone
Welled (v.) – to rise to the surface and flow out

Resources

Text:

“The Tell-Tale Heart” with annotations
<http://www.eapoe.org/works/mabbott/tom3t002.htm>

Printable PDF version
http://www.ibiblio.org/ebooks/Poe/Tell-Tale_Heart.pdf

Animated Videos:

“The Tell-Tale Heart” by Annette Jung <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDLLHTdVSgU>

“The Tell-Tale Heart” Narrated by James Mason
<http://www.poemuseum.org/students-video.php>

The Black Cat



LESSON PLAN 1 – Symbols, Legends, and Myths

Subject: English | Grade: 7th | Duration: 1hr 30min

Objectives

Students will...

- learn how to identify symbolism and personification in Poe's work
- connect myths and legends to factual information
- learn to conduct background research using diverse sources

Materials

Student computers with Internet, paper, writing & coloring pencils, printer

Prep Work

The teacher will ask students to work in pairs to use the computer to conduct research on myths, legends, and facts about black cats. Each pair then must write down two facts and three myths about them. The teacher will then lead a discussion about how legends are born out of the most ordinary events. (15min)

Activities

Part I

Have the students remain in their pairs and read "The Black Cat" online. Ask them to focus on how the animals are personified in the story, and to take notes on examples of personification and symbolism as they read. (15min)

Part II

Students will be asked to choose an animal, (it could be a pet or an animal with which they have had constant interaction with) and to create a character biography that uses personification to describe the animal's traits. (20min)

Example:
(Drawing)

Physical characteristics: _____

Personality: _____

Likes to _____

Part III

Students will exchange character descriptions and be asked to draw the animal based on the characteristics written by their peers. Have students share their favorite drawings with the class. (20min)

Part IV

Students then need to be either allotted enough remaining class time, or out of class time, to write at least three paragraphs retelling the story from the cat's point of view. (1-2pages)(20min)

Target SOL

Communication: 7.1a-e; 7.2c; 7.3a-d Reading: 7.6a, d, e Writing: 7.7g Research: 7.9a-c

LESSON PLAN 2 – The Plot Thickens

Subject: English | Grade: 8th | Duration: 1hr

Objectives

Students will...

- learn how to create a plot diagram
- learn how to use literary devices to build suspense
- evaluate, organize, and synthesize information for use in a visual narrative

Materials

Writing materials, loose-leaf, printout of story, sharpies, and plot diagram worksheet

Activities

Part I

Discuss how plot diagrams are helpful in extracting the keys literary elements of a story. Ask students to read the Black Cat on their own and fill-out a plot diagram based on what they read. Go over each category with the class. (35 min)

Part II

Students will work in smaller groups to create a storyboard for the series of events that occurred in the story using what they learned from the plot diagram. They will present their final products to the class. (30min)

Target SOL

Communication: 8.2a-h; 8.3c Reading: 8.4a,e,f; 8.5b-d, h-m Writing: 8.7a-d; 8.8f, g

Vocabulary

Allusion	Malevolence
Atrocity	Maltreat
Bas-relief	Paltry
Chimera	Pertinacity
Conflagration	Pestilence
Conscience	Phantasm
Consign	Procure
Consummate	Remorse
Debauch	Sagacious
Disposition	Scruple
Docile	Sentiment
Equivocal	Solicit
Exult	Succinct
Felicity	Succumb
Fidelity	
Folly	
Gallows	
Goad	
Gossamer	
Hogshead	
Infamy	
Intemperance	

Resources

Annotated Version

<http://www.eapoe.org/works/mabbott/tom3t004.htm>

Printable Version

http://www.ibiblio.org/ebooks/Poe/Black_Cat.pdf

“The Black Cat” dramatization

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKN_I6ouswg&feature=youtu.be

The Masque of the Red Death

LESSON PLAN 1--Unmasking the truth behind the Red Death

Subject: English | Grade: 9th | Duration: 1:30-2hrs



Objectives

Students will...

- focus on planning and presenting oral presentations, either independently or in small groups.
- apply literary terms and mechanics into writing, speech, and in-class discussion.
- practice using outside media to compare and contrast fiction with non-fiction works.

Materials

Printed copy of the story, pencils/pens, paper

Prep Work

1. Have the students either read aloud or listen to a recording of “The Masque of the Red Death.” (20min)
2. Teach will discuss POV, plot, characters, vocabulary, etcetera. (10min)

Activities

Part I

The teacher will present a brief lesson touching on different people in Poe’s life. These include Elizabeth Arnold Poe, his mother; Virginia Poe, his wife and cousin; Frances Allan, his caretaker; and William Henry Leonard Poe, his brother, all of who died of Tuberculosis. (15-20min)

Part II

The students will break off into small groups and further discuss the story in-depth, all the while applying key aspects of the story, including the “Red Death” epidemic, to the different Poe-related characters previously discussed. (15-20min)

Part III

The students, divided into four groups, are then to further research one out of the four people (each group being assigned one different person) and present a 5-10 minute oral presentation regarding who their subject was, how tuberculosis was related to and affected them, and finally how this may have influenced Poe’s writing of “The Masque of the Red Death.” This may require research outside of the classroom. (50-70min)

Target SOL

Communication: 9.1a-e, g-l Reading: 9.3e-g; 9.4a-m; 9.5a-k Writing: 9.6a-i; 9.7a, b, d-f Research: 9.8a-h

LESSON PLAN 2--Unmasking the truth behind the Red Death

Subject: English | Grade: 10th | Duration: 1:30-2hrs

Objectives

Students will...

- learn to communicate skillfully in small groups.
- continue to develop vocabulary and language mechanics, as well as practice analyzing texts.
- improve writing and research skills.
- apply the story of topic to different cultural references and eras.

Materials

Printed copy of story, pencils/pens, papers

Prep Work

1. Have the students either read aloud or listen to a recording of “The Masque of the Red Death.” (20min)
2. Each student will discuss POV, plot, characters, vocabulary, et cetera. (10min)

Activities

Part I

After having read or listened to the story, students are to break off into small groups and further research the Bubonic Plague. The students will then apply this to “The Masque of the Red Death.” (30min)

Part II

Students are to then find one instance of either the Bubonic Plague showing up in another literary text, or find a literary text in which the Red Death appears. Explain how this evokes the same message and terror as Poe used in his story. (30-?min)

Examples of this include:

- The Red Death in Gaston Leroux’s The Phantom of the Opera
- Several allusions are present in The Shining by Stephen King
- A re-telling of Poe’s story in webcomic format by Wendy Pini
- Terry Pratchett’s Discworld novels
- Albert Camus’ The Plague

Part III

Students are then to present a 10-15 minute oral presentation discussing their research. This may require research outside of class. (45-60min)

Target SOL

Communication: 10.1a-k; 10.2a-d Reading: 10.3b, e-g; 10.4a-d, g-i, k, m; 10.5b, d, f-h Writing: 10.6a-g; 10.7c Research: 10.8a-f

LESSON PLAN 3--Unmasking the truth behind the Red Death

Subject: English | Grade: 11th | Duration: 1:30-2hrs

Objectives

Students will...

- analyze information and present a persuasive oral presentation, focusing on delivery and accuracy of information.
- practice identifying and applying study of American literature, drawing conclusions from text, and further develop grammar and other language mechanics.

Materials

Printed copy of story, pencils/pens, paper

Prep Work

- Have the students either read aloud or listen to a recording of “The Masque of the Red Death.” (20min)
- Teacher will discuss point of view, plot, characters, vocabulary, etcetera. (10min)

Activities

Part I

Students will research the Cholera Epidemic of 1831 and connect this with Poe’s “The Masque of the Red Death.”

Part II

Students will then, either independently or in groups of two or three, present a persuasive oral presentation along with some form of tangible presentation device. In order to research this topic, students must familiarize themselves more in depth with background information provided at the following link: <http://www.eapoe.org/works/mabbott/tom2t051.htm>

This will aid students in their research as it contains a good wealth of information regarding Poe’s inspirational ties with the epidemic happening at that time. Students, in order to vary what topics are presented, may choose a specific location where the plague occurred. This research project may require work outside of the classroom.

Target SOL

Communication: 11.1a-h Reading: 11.3b, e-g; 11.4e, g, h, j; 11.5a, d Writing: 11.6a-g; 11.7a Research: 11.8a-j

LESSON PLAN 4--Unmasking the truth behind the Red Death

Subject: English | Grade: 12th | Duration: 1:30-2hrs

Objectives

Students will...

- use verbal and nonverbal presentation skills, as well as organizational skills to effectively deliver an oral presentation, as well as research project.
- develop advanced knowledge of grammatical skills.

Prep Work

1. Have the students either read aloud or listen to a recording of “The Masque of the Red Death.” (20min)
2. Teacher will discuss point of view, plot, characters, vocabulary, etc. (10min)

Activities

Part I

Students will choose a Poe story of their choosing; read it, and compare/contrast it to “The Masque of the Red Death”. Students will focus on analyzing both stories and comparing and contrasting Poe’s use of literary style and technique, language, historical context, and other literary devices.

Part II

Students will then write a 5-7-page paper and then present a 3-5 minute speech regarding their research topic. The in class research will take up all of the class period, and all other research may be done in class the following day(s) or outside of class. This paper is to present the student’s knowledge of grammar, understanding of the text, skills regarding beyond the classroom research, as well as organizational application. The speech is to represent the student’s advanced understanding of organizational skills, non-verbal and verbal communication, as well as how effectively he or she presents. Questions may follow the speech if time allows for it—this will exercise the student’s ability to research and render information and discuss it knowledgeably.

Target SOL

Communication: 12.1a-h; 12.2a, b Reading: 12.3d-f Writing: 12.6a-d, f-h; 12.7a-c Research: 12.8a, c-h

Vocabulary

Amplify	Dominions	Ingress	Rôle
Arabesque	Eccentric	Jest	Sable
Avatar	Egress	Lofty	Sagacious
Battlements	Emanating	Massy	Scrutiny
Bedewed	Fête	Monotonous	Sedate
Brazier	Folly	Mummer	Shrouded
Candelabrum	Gaunt	Peal	Solemn
Casements	Girdled	Peculiar	Subdued
Ceased	Grotesque	Perforce	Termination
Cerements	Habiliments	Pervaded	Throng
Cessation	Hale	Pestilence	Tremulousness
Contagion	Hearken	Piquancy	Unimpeded
Countenances	Hoarsely	Phantasm	Untenanted
Courtiers	Hue	Precincts	Vesture
Dauntless	Impeded	Prevailing	Visage
Disapprobation	Imperial	Profuse	Voluptuous
Disconcert	Impetuosity	Provisioned	Wanton
Dissolution	Improvisatory	Reverie	Writhe

Resources

“The Masque of the Red Death” story as published in 1845:

<http://eapoe.org/works/tales/masqueb.htm>

Recording Readings:

As read by Nick Gisburne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kkCPGvJ71c>

As read by Gabriel Byrne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A69P-Lcikzw>

As read by Basil Rathbone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQVodmy6QB0>

Edgar Allan Poe's Life and Times

Poe's Life

1809

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, January 19, second of three children, to actors David and Eliza Arnold Hopkins Poe. Eliza Poe, born in England, is a well-known ingénue and comedienne whose mother, Elizabeth Smith Arnold, was also prominent in early American Theater. David Poe, son of an Irish-born Revolutionary War patriot, abandons the family the following year; Eliza, with children, continues touring.

1811

Mother dies December 8 in Richmond, Virginia. Children William Henry, Edgar and Rosalie become wards of different foster parents. John Allan, a prosperous Richmond merchant born in Scotland, and his wife Frances, informally adopts Edgar. He is renamed Edgar Allan.

1815

John Allan, planning to set up a branch office abroad, moves family to Scotland briefly, then to London. Edgar attends school in London and in suburban Stoke-Newington.

1820

Allan family returns to Richmond via New York, July 1820. Edgar resumes schooling in private academies, shows aptitude for Latin, acting, swimming, and poetry.

1824

Serves on the junior honor guard that escorts Revolutionary War hero Lafayette through Richmond on the latter's return to the United States. Allan's firm dissolves in 1824, but an inheritance he receives two years later leaves him a rich man.

World Events

1809

Abraham Lincoln and Alfred, Lord Tennyson born; Madison becomes President



Left: Washington Irving, one of the most popular writers in the United States during Poe's childhood. Among his best known tales are "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." (1820)

1812

War of 1812 begins, Louisiana becomes a state.

1814

Washington burned by the British, 1814.

1815

Napoleon defeated; Walt Whitman born.

1817

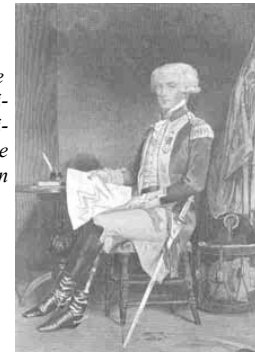
Monroe becomes President; Henry Thoreau born.

1820

Missouri admitted as slave state.

1823

Monroe Doctrine proclaimed.



Right: General Lafayette, the Frenchman who aided the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He visited the United States to great fanfare in 1824.

1825

Poe becomes devoted to Jane Stith Craig Stanard, mother of a schoolmate, later immortalized in Poe's lyric "To Helen."

1826

Enters the University of Virginia and distinguishes himself in ancient and modern languages. Allowed insufficient funds by Allan, resorts to gambling and loses \$2,000. Allan refuses to back the debts, and Poe returns to Richmond to find that John Allan and the Roysters have quashed his engagement to Elmira

1827

Quarrels with Allan and sails for Boston. Enlists in U.S. Army as "Edgar A. Perry" and is assigned as an artilleryman to Fort Independence in Boston Harbor.



Persuades a young printer to issue his first book, *Tamerlane and Other Poems* ("By a Bostonian"), which goes unreviewed. Transfers with his artillery unit to Fort Moultrie in Charleston, South Carolina.

Left: Cover of Poe's first book *Tamerlane*, published in 1827.

Right: Poe's drawing of Elmira Royster, copied by Nora Huston.



1825

John Q. Adams becomes President.

1826

Deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, July 4, 1826. James Fenimore Cooper publishes The Last of the Mohicans



Above: *The University of Virginia as it appeared in Poe's time.*

1827

Death of Ludwig van Beethoven



Above: *Poe's room at the University of Virginia.*

1828

Poe is appointed an artificer. Transfers with his unit to Fort Monroe in Virginia

1829

Attains rank of Sergeant Major. Foster mother Frances Allan dies February 28, 1829. Poe reconciles with John Allan, is honorably discharged, and seeks appointment to United States Military Academy at West Point. Awaiting word, lived with various Poe relatives in Baltimore and asks Allan to subsidize second volume of poems. Allan refuses, but *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems* is published under Poe's name in December 1829. It sells poorly, but advance sheets of the volume receive encouraging notice.

1830

Enters West Point; excels in languages and lampoons officers in verse. John Allan remarries, severs relations with Poe.

1831

Poe deliberately absents himself from classes and roll calls, and is court-martialed and expelled in February 1831. In New York, publishes *Poems: Second Edition* with subscriptions raised from fellow cadets. Resides in Baltimore with paternal aunt, Maria Clemm, and her daughter Virginia. Household includes paternal grandmother and Poe's brother, William Henry, who dies of tuberculosis in August 1831. Submits five tales to Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*.

1832

Lives in Baltimore in the home of his paternal grandmother. Also present are Poe's aunt Maria Clemm and her children Virginia and Henry.

1833

Submits tales and poems in *Baltimore Saturday Visitor* contest; "MS. Found in a Bottle" wins first prize for best tale, and "The Coliseum" places second for poetry. Both appear in *Visitor* in October 1833.

1834

His tale "The Visionary" appears in January 1834 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*, a national publication. John Allan dies in March 1834 and leaves Poe nothing.

1828

Birth of Jules Verne; construction begins on first American railroad.

1829

Andrew Jackson becomes President.

1830

Revolution forces France's Charles X to abdicate; Emily Dickinson is born.

1831

Nat Turner leads unsuccessful slave rebellion; William Lloyd Garrison helps launch abolitionist movement.



Above: West Point in Poe's day.

1833

Slavery abolished in British Empire.



Above: Baltimore in Poe's day.

1835

In March 1835, he begins contributing to Richmond's *Southern Literary Messenger*, which prints "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall," the first modern science fiction story. Moves to Richmond, joins *Messenger* staff, and dramatically increases magazine's circulation and national reputation. Returns to Baltimore to court his cousin Virginia; admonished for his drinking by *Messenger* proprietor Thomas W. White. Returns to Richmond with Mrs. Clemm and Virginia.

Right: Portrait representing Poe as he would have appeared while he was working at the *Southern Literary Messenger*.



1836

Marries Virginia Clemm in May, shortly before her fourteenth birthday. Moves wife and Mrs. Clemm to Richmond. As its new editor, writes book reviews, stories, and poems for *Messenger*, borrows money from relatives for a boarding house to be run by Mrs. Clemm. Fails to find publisher for his early *Tales of the Folio Club*, despite assistance from established authors.



Left: The offices of the *Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond, Virginia. Poe's office was on the second floor of this building.

1835

Death of John Marshall, longest serving Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.



Above: John Marshall attended Monumental Episcopal Church in Richmond, which Poe and his foster parents also attended. Today he is best known as the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court who established the Court's use of judicial review, the power to overrule laws it deems violate the Constitution.

1836

Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* published. Texas gains independence from Mexico. Ralph Waldo Emerson publishes *Nature*.

Right: Charles Dickens, a British author whose works Poe admired. Poe and Dickens would meet in Philadelphia in 1842.



Left: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Transcendentalist writer who disliked Poe's works almost as much as Poe disliked his. Emerson derided Poe for writing poetry without a moral, and Poe called the Transcendentalists "ignoramuses."

1837

Resigns from *Messenger* in January 1837. Takes family to New York to seek employment but is unable to find editorial post.

1838

Publishes poems and tales, including "Ligeia." Mrs. Clemm manages a boarding house to help make ends meet. In July 1838, Harper's publishes *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, Poe's only completed novel. Moves family to Philadelphia, continues to freelance but considers giving up literary work.

1839

In financial straits, agrees to let name appear as author of a cut-price naturalists' manual, *The Conchologist's First Book*. "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "William Wilson" appear in William Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine*. Late in 1839, Lea and Blanchard publish *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (two volumes).

1840

Poe attempts to lay groundwork for *The Penn Magazine*, to be under his own editorial control. Quarrels with Burton and is dismissed from the magazine. George Rex Graham buys *The Gentleman's Magazine*, merges it with own to create *Graham's Magazine*, to which Poe contributes "The Man of the Crowd" for the December issue.

1841

Becomes editor of *Graham's Magazine*; contributes "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," the first modern detective story, with new stories and poems, and articles on cryptography and autography; by year's end, *Graham's* subscriptions more than quadruple. Inquires after a clerkship in Tyler administration. Revives plans for *The Penn Magazine*.

1842

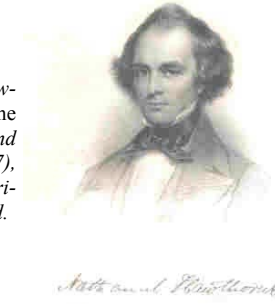
In January 1842, Virginia bursts a blood vessel, exhibits signs of tuberculosis. Poe meets Dickens. Publishes "The Masque of the Red Death" and the short story-defining review of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*. Resigns from *Graham's* in May 1842 and is succeeded by Rufus Wilmot Griswold (later Poe's literary executor). Fall publications include "The Pit and the Pendulum."

1837

Victoria becomes queen of Great Britain; Van Buren becomes President of United States; Michigan joins Union, "Panic of 1837" causes a depression, Mob kills Elijah P. Lovejoy, Illinois abolitionist publisher.

1838

Frederick Douglass escapes from slavery..



Right: Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of The Scarlet Letter (1850) and Twice-Told Tales (1837), was one of the few American authors Poe admired.

1840

"Log Cabin and Hard Cider" campaign of 1840; William Henry Harrison elected president.

1841

President Harrison dies one month after inauguration, April 1841; John Tyler becomes President.

1842

"Great Migration" to Oregon begins.

1843

Contributes “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “Lenore,” and an essay later titled “The Rationale of Verse” to James Russell Lowell’s short-lived magazine *The Pioneer*. Goes to Washington D.C. to be interviewed for minor post in Tyler administration and to solicit subscriptions for his own journal, retitled *The Stylus*; gets drunk and ruins his chances for the job. Resumes writing satires, poems and reviews but is pressed to borrow money from Griswold and Lowell. “The Gold Bug” wins \$100 prize in newspaper contest and is reprinted widely, then dramatized on the Philadelphia stage, making Poe famous as a popular writer. The first and only number of a pamphlet series, *The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe*, appears in July and includes “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.” Enters the lecture circuit with “The Poets and Poetry of America.” Fall publication of “The Black Cat.”

1844

Moves family to New York, creates a sensation with newspaper publication of “The Balloon Hoax,” which purports a transatlantic crossing by air. Works on never-completed *Critical History of American Literature* and contributes articles on the literary scene and the lack of international copyright law.

Right: Poe in 1845 from an engraving published in *Graham’s Magazine* in 1845.



1845

Poe’s “miracle year.” “The Raven” appears in the January *Evening Mirror* and creates a national sensation; Poe enters New York literary society. *Graham’s* publishes Poe’s portrait with a laudatory profile by Lowell, Wiley and Putnam publishes Poe’s *Tales*, then *The Raven and Other Poems*. Borrows money from Griswold, Greeley, and others to acquire controlling interest in *The Broadway Journal*. Conducts literary courtship in verse with poet Frances Sargent Osgood. Initiates the “Little Longfellow War,” a private campaign against plagiarism, with Longfellow the most eminent of those accused. Campaign brings notoriety and alienates friends such as Lowell. Negative publicity from his reading at the Bos-

1843

Elizabeth Barrett Browning publishes Poems.



Right: Poe as he appeared in 1843.

1844

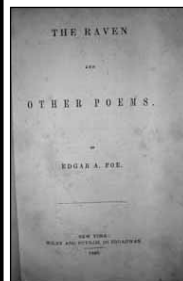
Democratic convention calls for the annexation of Texas and acquisition of Oregon; Samuel F. B. Morse demonstrates the telegraph.

Right: Circa 1846 illustration for “The Raven” by British artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In 1848, Rossetti became a founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of artists.



1845

Polk becomes President; Congress adopts joint resolution to annex Texas; Florida enters the Union; Frederick Douglass publishes Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.



Left: Title page for Poe’s *The Raven and Other Poems* (1845) the poet’s final and best-known collection of poetry. The book is dedicated to Elizabeth Barrett Browning. It was reprinted the following year in London, where it earned Poe more European admirers.

ton Lyceum, and the insulting jibes against Boston with which Poe responds, further damage his reputation and increase his fame. In the fall, Virginia Poe's illness becomes acute.

1846

Illness, nervous depression, and hardship force Poe to stop publication of *The Broadway Journal*. Moves family to cottage in Fordham, New York, where Virginia, now a semi-invalid, is nursed by family friend Marie Louise Shew. Poe and family mentioned as pitiable charity cases in the New York press. Poe manages to publish "The Cask of Amontillado," "The Philosophy of Composition," book reviews, and "Marginalia" in various magazines. Begins series of satirical sketches of "The Literati of New York City" in *Godey's*. The one on Thomas Dunn English, whom Poe had known in Philadelphia, draws a vicious attack by English on Poe's morality and sanity. Poe sues *The Evening Mirror*, publisher of the piece, and collects damages the following year. Hears rumors of his nascent fame in France, where translations and a long analysis of *Tales* appear.



Right: Poe as he appeared in 1846.

1847

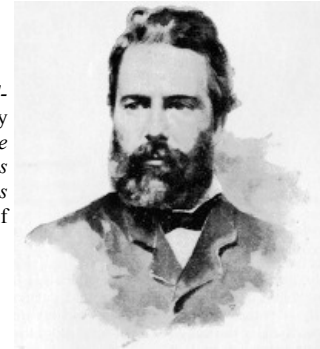
Virginia Poe dies of tuberculosis January 30. Poe falls gravely ill. Nursed back to health by Mrs. Clemm and Mrs. Shew, once more seeks support for literary magazine and fails again. Completes revised versions of Hawthorne review and "The Landscape Garden" and writes "Ulalume." Increasing interest in cosmological theories leads to preliminary notes for *Eureka*.

1848

Begins year in better health. Gives lectures and readings to raise capital for *The Stylus*. February lecture on "The Universe" in New York surveys thematic material elaborated in *Eureka*, published by Putnam in June. While lecturing in Lowell, Massachusetts, forms deep attachment to "Annie" (Mrs. Nancy Richmond), who becomes

1846

Failure of potato crop causes famine in Ireland. United States declares war on Mexico; annexes New Mexico and California; Herman Melville publishes Typee.



Right: Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick*, which some Poe scholars claim was influenced by Poe's novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.



Left: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, writer of such poems as *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855) and *Paul Revere's Ride* (1861). Poe considered him unoriginal and thought his high literary reputation was the result of his personal contacts.

1847

Mormons establish Salt Lake City; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow publishes Evangeline.

1848

Revolutions throughout Europe; Marx and Engels publish The Communist Manifesto. Gold discovered in California.

his confidante; subsequently, in Providence, Rhode Island, begins three-month courtship of widowed poet Sarah Helen Whitman, to whom he proposes marriage. When she delays answering him because of reports of his “unprincipled” character, Poe provokes a crisis, and their brief engagement is broken off. Reads “The Poetic Principle” as lecture to an audience of 1,800 in Providence. Writes “The Bells.”

Right: Photograph of Poe taken in Providence, Rhode Island in 1848.



1849

Active as writer and lecturer. In June, leaves for Richmond to seek Southern support for *The Stylus*. Stops in Philadelphia, sick, confused and apparently suffering from persecution mania. Friends care for him and see him off to Richmond. Recovers during two-month stay in Richmond, visits sister Rosalie, joins temperance society, and becomes engaged to boyhood sweetheart Elmira Royster Shelton, now a widow. Possibly intending to bring Mrs. Clemm to Richmond from New York, sails for Baltimore where, a week after arrival, he is found semiconscious and delirious outside a tavern and polling place on October 3. Dies October 7. “The Bells” and “Annabel Lee” appear posthumously late in the year. Slanderous obituary notice by Griswold blackens Poe’s reputation for many years.



Left: The last photograph of Poe, taken September 1849 in Richmond, Virginia.



Above: Poster drawing people west for California gold.

1849

Death of Chopin. California gold rush begins.

Right: Elmira Royster Shelton



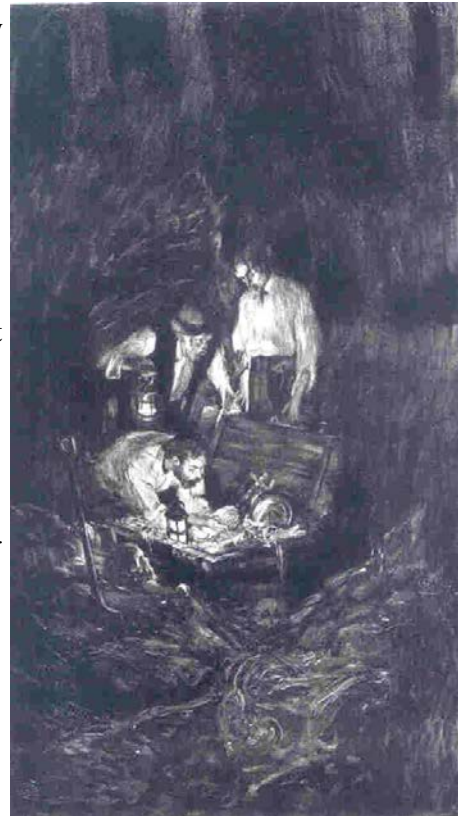
Compiled by Norman George, Courtesy G.R. Thompson

Poe's Literary Contributions

Inventor of the Detective Story

In 1841, before the word “detective” had entered the English language, Poe published the first modern detective story “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.” In this tale, Poe established the prototype future mystery writers would follow. First, there would be a seemingly impossible crime, in this case a double murder occurring inside a room still locked from the inside. Then the detective character analyzes the clues in order to solve the mystery. To show the audience just how intelligent the detective is, the narrator is not the detective but his less brilliant side-kick. “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” was so well received that Poe decided to follow it with two sequels also featuring his detective, a Parisian named C. Auguste Dupin. So assured of his own powers of analysis was Poe that in his tale “The Mystery of Marie Roget,” Poe claimed to have solved a real-life crime that had baffled the New York City police. This would be the first detective story based on a true crime. Poe’s “Thou Art the Man” became the first comic detective story and the first mystery in which the culprit turned out to be “the least likely suspect.” During the author’s lifetime, “The Gold Bug” was so popular it was adapted into a stage play. In this tale, an eccentric detective and his confused side-kick/narrator decode an encrypted treasure map in order to find Captain Kidd’s gold.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, once wrote, “Where was the detective story before Poe breathed the breath of life into it?” He considered Poe the father of the detective genre. In fact, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes is so closely based on Poe’s C. Auguste Dupin that early filmmakers looking for more Holmes mysteries to adapt to the screen merely changed the names of Poe’s characters to turn “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” into “Sherlock Holmes and the Great Murder Mystery.”



Pioneer of Science Fiction

In 1835, Poe published “The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall”, the story of a trip to the moon. Although other writers had written fantastic stories, Poe added realistic scientific details to make his stories more believable. Thus the modern science fiction story was born. Throughout his career Poe wrote stories about the limits of technology. In “The Man Who Was Used Up,” a man injured in war has his body parts replaced with synthetic ones. “Mellonta Tauta” is the tale of a future in which regular, trans-Atlantic air travel is possible. In “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar” a doctor is able to communicate with a man whose body had already died. This tale was so realistic that it was reprinted in a medical journal in England. Poe’s science fiction tales were so believable that he once reported in the New York Sun that someone had crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a balloon—decades before it would actually happen. Eager to learn all about this fantastic voyage, New Yorkers rushed to buy the paper, only later to discover they had been fooled. The story is now called “The Balloon Hoax.”

Jules Verne, who was only seven years old when “Hans Pfaall” was published, grew up considering Poe his favorite author. Verne would later become the first writer to specialize in the science fiction genre. His tales of balloon trips and space travel borrowed themes already seen in Poe’s works. In *The Sphinx of the Ice Fields* Verne showed his admiration of Poe by writing a sequel to Poe’s novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.



Right: Headline of Poe’s “Balloon Hoax” article.
Left: Illustration for Poe’s tale “MS Found in a Bottle”



[Poe’s] tales of the future lead to H.G. Wells, his adventure stories to Jules Verne and Stevenson.”
~W.H. Auden

Master of the Psychological Horror Story

Much of Poe's popular appeal rests on a few of his tales of terror, but the horror genre has frequently been ignored or derided by critics. This was the case even in Poe's day. When Poe's critics complained about his "German" (or "Gothic") tales, Poe answered, "Terror is not of Germany, but of the soul." Poe believed terror was a part of life and therefore a legitimate subject for literature.



By Poe's time, Gothic fiction had already been popularized by Horace Walpole and Charles Brockman Brown. Their tales typically centered around family curses and haunted castles. Poe's first published tale "Metzengerstein" falls into this genre, but in Poe's next horror tales he would move the action away from a remote castle and into an everyday setting like a home ("The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Black Cat") or a school ("William Wilson"). Even when Poe set his horror tale in a distant land he focused less on the location than on the psychology of his characters. Poe also wrote about the subjects that were generating newspaper headlines in his day—murders, premature burials, and grave robberies.

Author H.P. Lovecraft devoted an entire chapter of his book *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1935) to Poe. In the passage excerpted below Lovecraft explains why Poe's tales of terror were so revolutionary:

Before Poe the bulk of weird writers had worked largely in the dark; without an understanding of the psychological basis of the horror appeal, and hampered by more or less of conformity to certain empty literary conventions such as the happy ending, virtue rewarded, and in general a hollow moral didacticism, acceptance of popular standards and values, and striving of the author to obtrude his own emotions into the story and take sides with the partisans of the majority's artificial ideas. Poe, on the other hand, perceived the essential impersonality of the real artist; and knew that the function of creative fiction is merely to express and interpret events and sensations as they are, regardless of how they tend or what they prove -- good or evil, attractive or repulsive, stimulating or depressing, with the author always acting as a vivid and detached chronicler rather than as a teacher, sympathizer, or vendor of opinion. He saw clearly that all phases of life and thought are equally eligible as a subject matter for the artist, and being inclined by temperament to strangeness and gloom, decided to be the interpreter of those powerful feelings and frequent happenings which attend pain rather than pleasure, decay rather than growth, terror rather than tranquility, and which are fundamentally either adverse or indifferent to the tastes and traditional outward sentiments of mankind, and to the health, sanity, and normal expansive welfare of the species.

As a magazine editor, Poe knew what kinds of stories sold magazines. Since he was the first American author to try to live entirely from his writing, he needed to write things that would sell. After having submitted a particularly gory tale entitled "Berenice" to *The Southern Literary Messenger*, Poe wrote the magazine's owner Thomas White on April 30, 1835 to explain why he had written the story.

A word or two in relation to Berenice. Your opinion of it is very just. The subject is by far too horrible, and I confess that I hesitated in sending it you especially as a specimen of my capabilities. The Tale

originated in a bet that I could produce nothing effective on a subject so singular, provided I treated it seriously. But what I wish to say relates to the character of your Magazine more than to any articles I may offer, and I beg you to believe that I have no intention of giving you *advice*, being fully confident that, upon consideration, you will agree with me. The history of all Magazines shows plainly that those which have attained celebrity were indebted for it to articles *similar in nature -- to Berenice --* although, I grant you, far superior in style and execution. I say similar in *nature*. You ask me in what does this nature consist? In the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque: the fearful coloured into the horrible: the witty exaggerated into the burlesque: the singular wrought out into the strange and mystical. You may say all this is bad taste. I have my doubts about it... But whether the articles of which I speak are, or are not in bad taste is little to the purpose. To be appreciated you must be *read*, and these things are invariably sought after with avidity. They are, if you will take notice, the articles which find their way into other periodicals, and into the papers, and in this manner, taking hold upon the public mind they augment the reputation of the source where they originated... Thus the first men in [England] have not thought writings of this nature unworthy of their talents, and I have go[od] reason to believe that some very high names valued themselves *principally* upon this species of literature. To be sure originality is an essential in these things -- great attention must be paid to style, and much labour spent in their composition, or they will degenerate into the turgid or the absurd... In respect to *Berenice* individually I allow that it approaches the very verge of bad taste -- but I will not sin quite so egregiously again. I propose to furnish you every month with a Tale of the nature which I have alluded to. The effect -- if any -- will be estimated better by the circulation of the Magazine than by any comments upon its contents. This much, however, it is necessary to premise, that no two of these Tales will have the slightest resemblance one to the other either in matter or manner -- still however preserving the character which I speak of.

The opinion Poe expressed in the letter about increasing magazine circulation was correct. The *Messenger's* circulation increased by seven times while Poe was employed there.

Poe's tales of terror remain among his most popular and have influenced later horror writers like Stephen King and H.P. Lovecraft. Filmmakers Alfred Hitchcock and Dario Argento have acknowledged that Poe's horror tales were among their initial inspirations.



Above: A film still and movie posters from cinematic adaptations of Poe's works "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Raven," and "The Black Cat."

America's First Great Lyric Poet

“If the volume [of Poe’s poetry] of 1829 contained poetry unlike any that had as yet appeared in the United States, the volume of 1831 gave us in “To Helen,” “Israfel,” “The Doomed City,” “The Valley of Nis” and “Irene,” poetry of a kind that had not yet been written in the English language.”

~Arthur Hobson Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography*

Poe’s America was still young and struggling to establish its literary identity. Readers across the Atlantic considered American literature inferior to their own. Then Europeans discovered Poe’s poetry. British Poet Laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson called Poe “the most original American genius.” Oscar Wilde called him “marvelous lord of rhythmic expression,” and poets Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Algernon Swinburne were also among the British admirers of his work. In France the poets Charles Baudelaire and Stephan Mallarme revered Poe and his work. Poe wrote only about forty-five poems, but these include some of the best-known in the English language: “The Raven,” “Annabel Lee,” and “The Bells.”

Even though Poe made a living writing short stories and magazine articles he considered poetry his true calling. He described poetry as “the rhythmical creation of beauty.” He thought the sound of the poetry should do as much as the words to convey the meaning of the poem, and for him a poem had no other purpose than to be beautiful. Some of his poems sounded so much like music that he included words like “hymn,” “song,” or “ballad” in the titles. It is said that when he gave public readings he almost sang his poetry. To fully appreciate the musical quality of Poe’s poetry, one must read it aloud. The poetry lends itself so well to performance that after Poe’s death many composers, including Sergey Rachmaninoff and John Philip Sousa, adapted Poe’s poems to music.



Some of the devices Poe used to make his poetry sound more musical were:

Alliteration: use of a series of words starting with the same sound

Assonance: use of a series of words with the same vowel sound

Meter: the number of accented and unaccented syllables in each line of the same length

Onomatopoeia: words that sound like the sounds they represent

Refrain: a word or phrase repeated at the end of each stanza

Rhyme: the use of words that sound alike

Rhythm: the audible pattern created by alternating accented and unaccented syllables

Stanza: a grouping of verses in a poem or song

As opposed to many other poets of his day like Ralph Waldo Emerson, who derided Poe as the “jingle man” for his musical poems, Poe did not feel that a poem should instruct or edify the reader. In his essay “The Philosophy of Composition,” Poe wrote that he began each poem by considering the emotion “effect” or mood he wished to evoke with the poem. After determining the proper mood, Poe chose words, rhymes, and rhythms he thought would best convey that effect.

America's First Great Literary Critic

Poe is considered America's first great literary critic. During his lifetime American authors were generally considered inferior to their British counterparts, and many American authors imitated British literature. As a critic, Poe frequently attacked authors he considered guilty of imitation, and he was often the first to accuse an author of plagiarism if their work too closely resembled that of another author. The popular American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a favorite target. In a review of Longfellow's poetry, Poe wrote, "A few insist on his imagination—thus proving the extent of their own—and showing themselves to be utterly unread in the Old English and modern German literature of which, the author of "Outre Mer" is unquestionably indebted for whatever imagination or traces of invention his works may display."

Many critics in Poe's time knew the authors whose work they were reviewing, and, instead of writing honest critiques, these critics used their reviews to exaggerate the merits of a book in hopes of boosting sales. Poe called this practice "puffery." In a December 1835 *Southern Literary Messenger* review of the anonymously published novel *Norman Leslie*, Poe ridiculed the *New York Mirror's* excessively flattering review before revealing that the author worked at the *New York Mirror*.

Poe also thought that many American critics praised American novels written about American subjects merely because they had been written about those subjects. James Fenimore Cooper (right), author of such novels as *The Last of the Mohicans*, was one of these writers. In a November 1843 *Graham's Magazine* review of Cooper's *Wyandotte*, Poe wrote that "the interest, as usual, has no reference to plot, of which, indeed, our novelist seems altogether regardless, or incapable, but depends, first, on the nature of the theme...It will be seen that there is nothing original in this story."

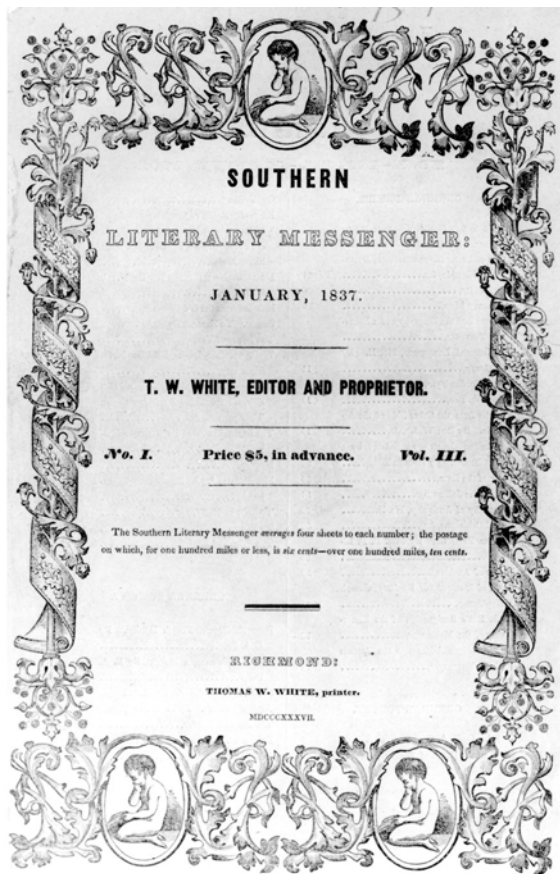
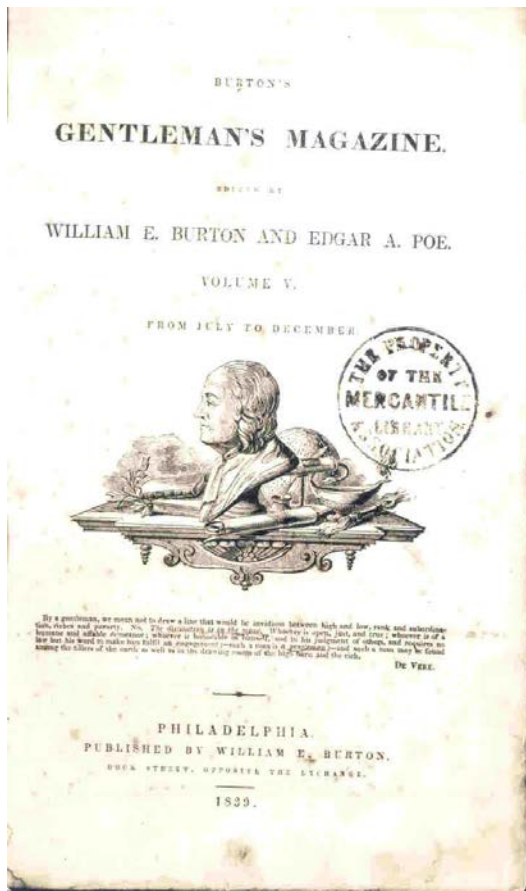
Poe's tendency to ridicule what he considered inferior writers offended many of the most important authors and editors of his day, including Rufus Griswold, who would later write Poe's biography. Poe's reviews were not, however, all negative. He called a young Nathaniel Hawthorne "a man of the truest genius" (Review of *Twice-Told Tales*, *Graham's Magazine*, May 1842), and he wrote that "it is scarcely possible to speak of ["The Old Curiosity Shop" by Charles Dickens] too well." Poe so admired the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning that he dedicated his book *The Raven and Other Poems* to her.

When judging the quality of an author's work, Poe also explained his definition of good writing. In his May 1842 review of Hawthorne, Poe defined the criteria by which he reviewed a short story. He said such a work should be original and should have an emotional impact on the reader. Poe thought that the entire story should be composed with that emotional impact in mind. He wrote



J. Fenimore Cooper

that when a great writer composes a tale “he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or singular effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect.” In other words, Poe believed a great writer begins his story by determining how it will end and what emotional effect the end should have on the reader. Every event in a story should maintain the desired emotional effect, and all unnecessary details should be eliminated. For this reason he thought a short story or poem should be brief, “requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal.” Poe considered a short story superior to a novel because “as it cannot be read in one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from totality.” If one were to take breaks in the middle of reading, the emotional impact the story is intended to evoke would be diluted by all the distractions of the real world. With this review, Poe helped to define the modern short story for years to come.



Above: Burton's Gentlemen's Magazine and The Southern Literary Messenger, two of the magazines for which Poe worked.

Poe's Technique

Poe's Use of Literary Devices in a Short Story

(English SOL 7.4b, 7.5a,b, and c)

Even critics who object to Poe's subject matter tend to concede that Poe was a master craftsman. The theories he explained as a literary critic are put into practice in his short stories and poems. Poe's primary concern was "unity of effect," which means that every element of a story should help create a single emotional impact. Poe's 1846 tale "The Cask of Amontillado" is one of Poe's best known works. It is the story of Montressor, a revenge-obsessed man who tricks his enemy Fortunato into following him into a catacomb in search of a pipe of Amontillado (a kind of sherry). Over the course of their journey, Montressor gradually reveals his plan to his victim, who is too drunk to notice. Finally, the murderer chains his victim to a wall and bricks him up alive in a compartment. In the following excerpt from the opening paragraphs of "The Cask of Amontillado," Poe quickly and effectively foreshadows the gruesome conclusion of the story with a minimum of unnecessary detail. Notice the ironic details possibly intended for humorous effect. For instance, even the victim's name Fortunato is ironic because he is, in fact, very unfortunate. At the time Poe wrote this story he was engaged in a literary feud with writer Thomas Dunn English, who Poe would eventually sue for libel.

From "The Cask of Amontillado"

The thousand injuries ¹ of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge.² You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat.³ At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitively 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.

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.

He had a weak point--this Fortunato--although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine.⁴ Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival seasons, 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 wring-

1. Hyperbole: "the thousand injuries"

* Poe does not tell us exactly what Fortunato has done to deserve Montressor's wrath, but Poe deliberately exaggerates the number and severity of Fortunato's offenses only to say that those offenses pale in comparison to the way in which Fortunato has most recently insulted Montressor.

2. Conflict: The narrator Montressor has been offended by Fortunato and must have his revenge. Montressor does not want to be caught or punished for what he will do, so he must conceive of a plan that will allow him to "punish with impunity." The first paragraph establishes the conflict.

3. Point of View: The story is told from the first-person point of view who directly addresses a listener. Some critics believe the narrator is on his deathbed confessing to a priest.

4. Foreshadowing: Poe reveals that Fortunato has a weakness for wine, and this will play a major part in Montressor's plan.

ing 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 anyone has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me --"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"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. ⁶

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 Montressors. ⁷

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

"The pipe," he said.

"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. ⁸

"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. ⁹

5. Setting: The story begins in a carnival. Montressor may have waited until carnival time to have an excuse to wear a mask in public so that no one would recognize him as he walked with his victim. He might have also waited until then to insure that his servants would all leave the house to attend the festivities so that he would have a private setting for his crime. Poe has set the story in an Italian city, mostly likely Venice, where such carnivals were common. He also chose a European locale because he needed a culture, unlike America, in which catacombs were common.

6. Irony: This term describes a contrast between the appearance of something and its reality. In this case, Fortunato thinks Montressor is trying to talk him out of trying the Amontillado, but the reader knows this is exactly what Montressor wants him to do.

7. Setting: Instead of going to a wine cellar, the murder takes his victim to a catacomb. Notice how Poe describes not only the appearance but the smell and the texture of the catacombs.

8. Metaphor: "two filmy orbs..." Poe uses this image to describe Fortunato's eyes in such a way that tells the reader how drunk Fortunato already is.

9. Irony: "Your health is precious". The murderer pretends to show concern for his victim's health.

How Poe used poetic techniques to convey mood in his poetry: (English SOL 7.5c and d)

In his essay “The Philosophy of Composition” Poe explained that he was attempting to create a melancholy mood with his poem “The Raven.” He believed the long “o” sound in the word “nevermore” had a very sad sound, so he repeated that sound at the end of each stanza. Poe also noted that the saddest subject in the world was the death of a beautiful young woman, so he chose that as the subject of his poem. He then concluded that the narrator of the poem should be her lover, the one he believed would be most deeply affected by her death. Throughout the poem Poe uses imagery that conveys a sense of sorrow over the death of the narrator’s lover Lenore. For example, he describes the dark night outside his room as a “Plutonian shore,” making an allusion to Roman god of the underworld Pluto. Poe also devoted a great deal of attention to the lyrical qualities of his poetry in order to convey a sense of beauty, the contemplation of which, he believed, “invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears.”

Poe’s metric structure in “The Raven” is unusual (which he crowed about) but very regular within the pattern that he set up: it is trochaic octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the refrain of the fifth verse, and terminating with trochaic tetrameter catalectic. Trochaic refers to trochees, which are feet characterized by a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable. Octameter means there are eight feet in each line, unusually long for poetry but not unheard of. Acatalectic simply means complete—there are eight complete feet in each line—whereas catalectic means incomplete—there are seven and a half feet in each of these lines. Tetrameter is four feet in a line, but since it is catalectic there are three and a half in Poe’s stanza-concluding lines (“Quoth the raven, ‘Nevermore’”, for instance).

“The Raven”, published in January 1845, became extraordinarily popular and made Poe an international literary celebrity. It did not make him rich, by any means, but it did at least help him foster a couple new sources of income: he increasingly took on literary clients in the form of young writers who sought him out for his editorial and literary advice for their own writing; and he became a sought-after speaker and deliverer of verse, especially of his famous “Raven”. From the publication of “The Raven” until his death his life took on more resemblance to that of his biological parents, the touring actors: Poe would travel up and down the East Coast performing, lecturing and mentoring in cities from Boston to Charleston.

From “The Raven”

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,¹
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,³
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.³
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door-
Only this, and nothing more." ⁵

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 name Lenore-
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain⁶
Thrilled me- filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;⁷
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."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,⁸
"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.

1. **Rhyme:** "...dreary....weary."

2. **Alliteration:** "...nodded, nearly napping..."

3. **Onomatopoeia:** "tapping"

4. **Repetition:** "...rapping, rapping..."

5. **Stanza:** "Once...more."

6. **Personification:** "...sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain..."

7. **Assonance:** "...terrors never felt before..."

8. **Figurative Language:** "...my soul grew stronger..."