

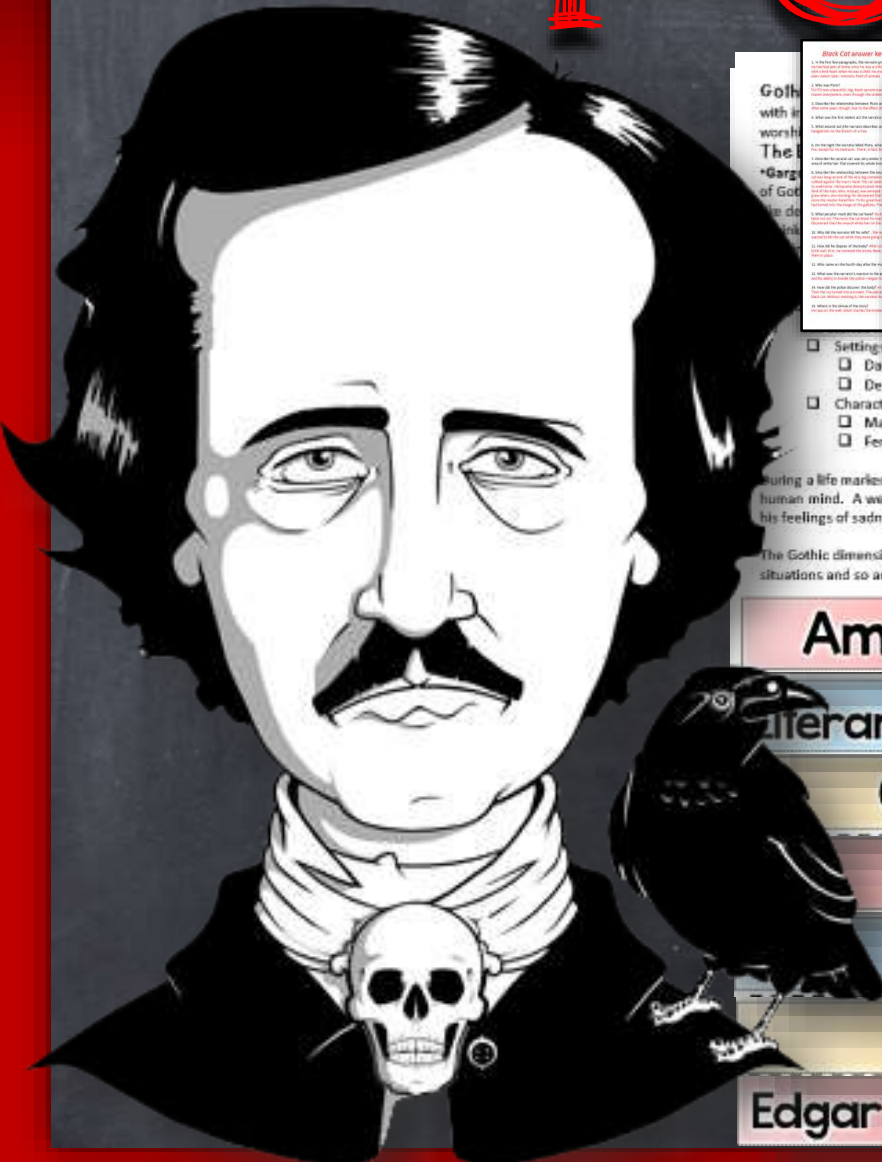
CCSS ELA 9-12 Reading Writing,  
Speaking & Listening

# Edgar Allan Poe

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Gargoyle

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- Settings
  - Dark, medieval castles
  - Decaying ancient estates
- Characters that are
  - Male—insane
  - Female—beautiful and dead (or dying)

During a life marked by pain and loss, Edgar Allan Poe wrote haunting tales in which he explored the dark side of the human mind. A well-read man with a taste for literature, Poe was cursed with a morbidly sensitive nature and made his feelings of sadness and depression the basis of a distinctive body of literary work.

The Gothic dimension of Poe's fictional world offered him a way to explore the human mind in these extreme situations and so arrive at an essential truth

## American Gothic Literature

Literary Devices and Characteristics

Cask of Amontillado

Black Cat

Tell-Tale Heart

The Raven

Edgar Allan Poe's Life and Questions

**Gothic Literary Tradition** came to be in part from the Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages. Gothic cathedrals with irregularly placed towers, and high stained-glass windows were intended to inspire awe and fear in religious worshippers.

**The Beginnings...**

- **Gargoyles**—carvings of small deformed creatures squatting at the corners and crevices of Gothic cathedrals—were supposed to ward off evil spirits, but they often look more like demonic spirits themselves.
- Think of the gargoyle as a mascot of Gothic, and you will get an idea of the kind of imaginative distortion of reality that Gothic represents.
- Gothic writers were peering into the darkness at the supernatural.



Gargoyle

When the Gothic writer saw the individual, they saw the potential of evil.

**Edgar Allan Poe**

- His stories have:
  - Settings that featuring
    - Dark, medieval castles
    - Decaying ancient estates
  - Characters that are
    - Male—insane
    - Female—beautiful and dead (or dying)
- Plots that include
  - Murder
  - Live burials
  - Physical and mental torture
  - Retribution from beyond the grave

During a life marked by pain and loss, Edgar Allan Poe wrote haunting tales in which he explored the dark side of the human mind. A well-read man with a taste for literature, Poe was cursed with a morbidly sensitive nature and made his feelings of sadness and depression the basis of a distinctive body of literary work.

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# American Gothic Literature



1. What is the meaning of the phrase "A wrong is unredeemed when retribution overtakes its redresser"?
2. Why did Montresor seek revenge on Fortunato?
3. How did Montresor know that the house would be empty?
4. Where had the stone and mortar, used by Montresor to wall up the entrance to the niche, been hidden?
5. In your own words, describe the catacombs that Fortunato is led through.
6. Where and when is the story set? Give your answer.
7. Why does Montresor take such a drink of wine?
8. What is the host's role in the story?
9. What preparations had Montresor made for his revenge?
10. Why does Montresor appear concerned about Fortunato's health?

## Cask of Amontillado

## Literary Devices and Characteristics

1. In the first few paragraphs, the narrator gives us some background information about himself. What does he most stress?
2. Who was Pluto?
3. Describe the relationship between Pluto and the narrator.
4. What was the first violent act the narrator did to Pluto?
5. What second act (the narrator describes as being done in the spirit of perverseness) did he commit on Pluto?
6. On the night the narrator killed Pluto, what happened to his home?
7. Describe the second cat.
8. Describe the relationship between the second cat and the narrator.
9. What peculiar mark did the cat have?
10. Why did the narrator kill his wife?
11. How did he dispose of the body?
12. Who came on the fourth day after the murder?
13. What was the narrator's reaction to the police?
14. How did the police discover the body?
15. Where is the climax of the story?



## Black Cat



**Poetic Elements**

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary,  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,

1. In line (a) find the two words that are an example of internal rhyme and record them:
  2. Explain the conflict in "The Raven."
  3. In what ways does the author create "mood" in the opening stanza?
  4. Is there any indication that the narrator is having a mental breakdown?
  5. What is he hoping the Raven will tell him?
  6. Copy and identify one form of figurative language used in the poem.
  7. Throughout the poem, many words are repeated (e.g. chamber, sorrow, November, Lenore). Why does Poe do this? What type of effect does it have on the reader?
- Put the events in "The Raven" in order by writing the numbers 1-6 on the lines provided.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ The raven comes in and perches above the narrator's door.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The narrator tells the raven to leave.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The narrator says "Lenore" into the hallway.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The narrator questions whether the bird is natural or supernatural.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The narrator is hit by the fire.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The narrator has something at the window and opens it.



**Textual Analysis**

Open here / flung the shutters, when, with many a fit and flutter, in there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore; that lent his ebony form on an instant stepped or stayed; but, with men of bird or body, perched above my chamber door—Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Explain what happens in the stanza above:

What word does the raven always use to answer the narrator's questions?

## The Raven

Quality	Response
Point of View	
Use of Repetition	
Use of Imagery	
Use of Sound Effects	
The Poem of itself	
Sanity vs. Insanity	
Characters	
Setting	
Sequence of Events	
Resolution/Conclusion	

## Tell-Tale Heart

**Poe Family Loss**

- Poe, orphaned at an early age, was raised by his mother's family in Baltimore, Maryland.
- In 1815, he was sent to the University of Virginia, where he studied law and literature.
- In 1819, he was sent to West Point, where he studied engineering and mathematics.

**Poe's Writing**

- After leaving West Point, he moved to Baltimore to live with his aunt Elizabeth and her young daughter Virginia. There he began writing short stories.
- In 1824, he moved to Richmond to work for the Southern Literary Messenger. His editorials in the Messenger led to his imprisonment in the debtors' prison in 1825.
- In 1826, he moved to New York City to work for the New York City Register. He was fired after a few months.

**Poe's Career**

- In 1827, he was the editor of Burton's Gentlemen's Magazine, to which he contributed both reviews and stories.
- His first collection of short stories was published, Tales of the Bizarre and the Fantastic.
- He attempted to begin his own literary magazine, but it failed.
- He accepted an offer as editor of Graham's Magazine, where he published his groundbreaking story "The Hound in the Rue Morgue." This was considered groundbreaking because it was the first detective story.

**The real trouble begins:**

- Poe was awarded a \$100 prize for his short story "The Gold Bug" published in 1843. This brought him the recognition and success that he had always wanted. With the success, he was hit with a major personal blow: Virginia, who had been battling illness since 1842, died.

**Poe's troubled success**

- In the years following Virginia's death, Poe struggled with despair as well as his own falling health.
- He moved back to Baltimore in 1845, where his health declined quickly. He collapsed on a Baltimore street where he was taken to a hospital. He died a few days later.

**Poe's Reputation**

- Poe's work generated strong responses. Either you loved his work, or they hated it.
- Shortly after his death, a one-time friend published a biography on Poe.
- This work established the view of Poe as a gifted, but socially unaccepted writer. This raised his reputation in America for many years. Today, Poe is recognized as a master of poetry, a superb writer of short stories, and a profound explorer of the secrets of the human soul.
- He wrote only one novel, around 50 poems, and 30 short stories.

## Edgar Allan Poe's Life and Questions

