



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

E. A. Poe Stories

based on the stories and poems by
Edgar Allan Poe

Written by
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edgar Allan Poe

POE, Edgar Allan (1809-49). The greatest American teller of mystery and suspense tales in the 19th century was Edgar Allan Poe. In his mysteries he invented the modern detective story. In Poe's poems, like his tales, his characters are tortured by nameless fears and longings. Today Poe is acclaimed as one of America's greatest writers, but in his own unhappy lifetime he knew little but failure.

Edgar Poe was born in Boston, Mass., on Jan. 19, 1809. His parents were touring actors. Orphaned at age 3, he was taken into the home of John Allan, a merchant of Richmond, Va. His wife reared Edgar as her son, but Allan accepted the boy largely to please her. Later Poe took Allan as his middle name, but his signature was usually Edgar A. Poe.

John Allan became one of the richest men in Virginia. He never formally adopted Poe, but the youth thought that he would be named Allan's heir. After a time, however, Allan grew cold toward him, and Poe realized that his place in the family was insecure.

When he was 17, Poe entered the University of Virginia. Allan gave Poe only a small allowance, and the young man soon began owing money. He gambled and ran into greater debt. By the end of the year he owed 2,500 dollars. He was nervous and unstable, and he began to drink. His body could not tolerate alcohol, and only a small amount made him at first intoxicated and later ill. Allan angrily withdrew Poe from school, and a few months later Poe left home.

Poe went to Boston in 1827. He persuaded a printer to issue some of his early poems in a small pamphlet. It was called 'Tamerlane and Other Poems', and the title page said simply "By a Bostonian."

Poe's money was soon gone, and he enlisted in the Army under the name of Edgar A. Perry. In his two years in the Army, he rose to be regimental sergeant major. But he wanted to become an officer, thinking that such advancement would restore him to Allan's favor. After the death of Mrs. Allan in 1829, Poe and Allan were temporarily reconciled. With Allan's help Poe was granted an honorable discharge from the Army. He then sought an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

Poe waited for more than a year. In the meantime he lived in Baltimore, Md., with his father's widowed sister, Maria Clemm, and her young daughter, Virginia. While there he published another volume of poetry, 'Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems' (1829). On July 1, 1830, he was sworn in as a West Point cadet. He hated the discipline and the restraint of the school. When John Allan married again, Poe lost all chance of becoming his heir. He deliberately neglected his classes and duties and was expelled after eight months.

For the next four years Poe struggled to earn a living as a writer. He returned to Mrs. Clemm's home and submitted stories to magazines. His first success came in 1833, when he entered a short-story contest and won a prize of 50 dollars for the story "MS. Found in a Bottle." By 1835 he was the editor of the Southern Literary Messenger. He married his cousin Virginia, who was only 13, and Mrs. Clemm stayed with the couple. The Poes had no children.

Poe's stories, poems, and criticism in the magazine soon attracted attention, and he looked for wider opportunities. From 1837 to 1839 he tried free-lance writing in New York City and Philadelphia but earned very little. Again he tried editing (1839-42). His work was praised, but he was paid little. His efforts to organize his own magazine were unsuccessful. For the next two years he turned again to free-lance writing.

Many of his best stories were written as a regular part of his editorial work. Even those he sold for a fee rarely brought him more than 100 dollars each. Some of these were: "Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" (1838); "Fall of the House of Usher" (1839); "Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1843), considered the first detective story; and "The Gold Bug" (1843). During this time his wife showed symptoms of tuberculosis.

In 1844 Poe and his family moved to New York City. By now Poe was well known in literary circles, and the publication of 'The Raven and Other Poems' and 'Tales', both in 1845, enhanced his reputation. The Poes lived in a cottage in Fordham (now in the borough of the Bronx). They were comfortable for a time, but his wife soon became sicker. Poe also grew weaker and became more dissipated. During the winter of 1846-47 they had little food or fuel. Virginia Poe died on Jan. 30, 1847.

After his wife's death Poe continued to live with Mrs. Clemm in Fordham. By now he was increasingly depressed and erratic. He courted various women, in a vain attempt to find solace for the loss of his wife. In 1849 he became engaged to a childhood sweetheart, who then was a wealthy Richmond widow. After making wedding plans, he set out for New York City from Richmond but disappeared in Baltimore. He was found five days after he disappeared-drugged, intoxicated, and very near death. He died without regaining full consciousness four days later on Oct. 7, 1849.

Poe was the first American author to be widely read outside the United States. His reputation in France, especially, was enhanced by the French poet Charles Baudelaire, who read and translated Poe's works in the 1850s. Since then Poe's reputation in literature has been secure. (See Detective Story.)

--- Courtesy of Compton's Learning Company

INTRODUCTION

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Poe Stories* by Edgar Allan Poe. It includes twenty lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to Poe's stories through a teacher-supplied pre-recorded oral presentation of *The Tell-Tale Heart* or *The Black Cat*. Students will then do the prereading work for the horror story of the teacher's choice.

This unit is set up so that the class is exposed to each of the five types of tales Poe wrote plus a selection of his poetry. The exact stories read will depend on what your school has available. On the Reading Assignment Sheet there is a note next to each tale telling what kind of a story it is. This unit is also set up so that you could use any of the stories (or the poetry) individually without doing the whole unit. Each tale has short answer study questions, multiple choice study questions, a vocabulary worksheet, and a test.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes. If your school has the appropriate equipment, it might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the text. Prior to each tale, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 10 vocabulary words in the upcoming tale. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each tale, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

There is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

One lesson is devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the text.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is to inform: students compare and contrast the narrators of the first two stories they read. The second assignment is to express personal opinions: students write a composition in which they give their own ideas about the poem they have been assigned. The third assignment is to persuade: students write persuasive arguments convincing their audiences that Poe was, in fact, a talented writer of fiction worth reading.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *Poe Stories*. This assignment may be fulfilled through the background research students will do relating to their characters. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. Before and during the tale presentations, students make **oral presentations** about the nonfiction pieces they have read, giving background information and additional information to the text. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives students the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** is a little different in this unit plan than in most of our others. Because this is for a group of short stories and poems, and because the teacher has a choice of which stories to use, our usual format would not work. We have included two different multiple choice test sheets for each of the short stories covered in the unit. We also have included two different multiple choice test sheets for the poetry covered in this unit. There are six different essay questions in the test section, and there are four different vocabulary tests in three different formats. The idea is that you can mix and match the test sections in any way you choose. There are no short answer unit tests in this unit. To keep the test section from becoming too unwieldy, we thought you could simply white out the multiple choice choices to make short answer tests if you preferred that format.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **resource sections** include suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the stories, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without infringement of copyrights. No other portion of this unit may be reproduced without the written consent of Teacher's Pet Publications, Inc.

UNIT OBJECTIVES - *Poe Stories*

1. Through reading Poe's stories students will gain a better understanding of his contributions to literature; specifically, the idea of writing for an "effect" and the techniques for writing modern detective fiction.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical and personal.
3. Students will be exposed to several different forms of short story tales.
4. Students will analyze Poe's poetry to gain a better understanding of the form and art of poetry.
6. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
7. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Poe Stories* as they relate to the author's theme development.
8. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the stories through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the stories.
9. The writing assignments in this unit are geared to several purposes:
 - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, to persuade, or to express their own personal ideas
Note: Students will demonstrate ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
 - b. To check the students' reading comprehension
 - c. To make students think about the ideas presented by the stories
 - d. To encourage logical thinking
 - e. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
10. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *Poe Stories*

Date Assigned	Reading Assignment	Story Type	Completion Date
	The Tell-Tale Heart	Psychological	
	The Black Cat	Psychological	
	The Fall of the House of Usher	Gothic	
	The Purloined Letter	Detective	
	Murder in the Rue Morgue	Detective	
	The Pit and the Pendulum	Horror	
	Masque of Red Death	Horror	
	The Cask of Amontillado	Evil/Double Personality	
	The Raven	(Poem)	
	Lenore	(Poem)	
	To Helen	(Poem)	
	Ulalume	(Poem)	
	The Bells	(Poem)	
	Annabel Lee	(Poem)	

UNIT OUTLINE - *Poe Stories*

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction PV Horror	Study ?s Horror PV Gothic	Read Gothic	Study ?s Gothic PV Detective Poetry Assign.	Writing Assignment #1
6	7	8	9	10
Read Detective	Study?s Detective PV Psycho.	Read Psycho.	Study ?s Psycho. PV Evil/Double Personality	Read Amontillado
11	12	13	14	15
Study?s Amontillado Extra ?s Poe	Vocabulary	Writing Assignment #2	Group Activity	Read & Discuss Poems
16	17	18	19	20
Read & Discuss Poems	Nonfiction Reports	Writing Assignment #3	Review	Test

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R = Read

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To distribute the materials which will be used in the unit
2. To explain the group project students will do in this unit
3. To do the prereading vocabulary work for the horror story

NOTE: Prior to this lesson you need to have acquired a recording of either *The Black Cat* or *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

Activity #1

Darken your room to provide the appropriate atmosphere for a horror story. Play the recording of either *The Black Cat* or *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

TRANSITION: Explain that *The Black Cat* (or *The Tell-Tale Heart*) is an example of the horror stories written by Edgar Allan Poe. Other kinds of stories Poe wrote were gothic, detective, psychological thrillers, and stories about people with evil or double personalities. Poe also wrote quite a large number of poems.

Activity #2

Distribute the materials which will be used in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should read the study guide questions for each tale as homework the night before each tale is to be done in class to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in the tale. After reading the section, students will as a class answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that tale. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

Vocabulary Prior to listening to or reading each tale, students will do vocabulary work related to each tale. Following the completion of the reading of the text, there will be a vocabulary review of all the words used in the vocabulary assignments. Students should keep their vocabulary work as study materials for the unit test.

Reading Assignment Sheet You need to fill in the reading assignment sheet to let students know by when their presentations have to be completed. You can either write the assignment sheet on a side blackboard or bulletin board and leave it there for students to see each day, or you can "ditto" copies for each student to have. In either case, you should advise students to become very familiar with the reading assignments so they know what is expected of them.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - E. A. POE STORIES

PROMPT

Poe was fond of using the first person narrator to tell his stories. Your assignment is to compare his use of the narrator in the first two stories we have read.

PREWRITING

One way to start is to stop and think about Poe's use of the narrator in each story. List characteristics of the narrator in the first story and jot down notes about his function in the story. Now do the same for the second story.

Take a minute to compare your two lists and your notes. Think about the similarities and differences. Think of one statement which will summarize the conclusions you have come to after looking at your data. That will be the main idea of your paper, your thesis.

DRAFTING

Write an introductory paragraph in which you introduce the fact that Poe used the first person narrator and work your way around to stating your thesis.

In the body of your composition, write one paragraph telling about the narrator in the first story you read, and then write another paragraph telling about the narrator in the second story you read.

Your concluding paragraph should summarize your ideas and give your final thoughts on the topic.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your paper, ask a student who sits near you to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.