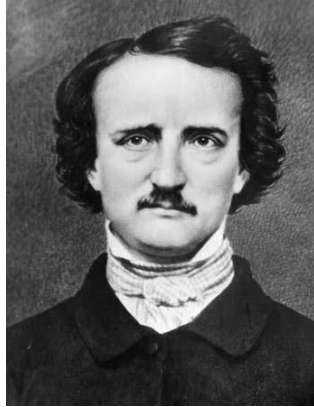


“The Tell-Tale Heart” Activity Packet



EDGAR ALLAN POE



Name _____ Period _____

Your score _____ out of 30 points possible

The Tell-Tale Heart

LITERARY FOCUS: NARRATOR A narrator is a person who tells a story. A story's narrator may be a character in the story. Another type of narrator is outside the story and observes and reports on the action that takes place. We rely on a story's narrator to let us know what is going on. But what if the narrator can't be trusted? As you read "The Tell-Tale Heart," decide whether or not its narrator is truthful—or even sane. If you cannot rely on the narrator, then the narrator is called an unreliable narrator.

IRONY: THE UNEXPECTED Irony is a contrast between expectation and reality. Much of the horror in "The Tell-Tale Heart" comes from Poe's use of irony. Look for these three basic kinds of irony as you read the story:

- *Verbal irony*: What is said is the opposite of what is meant.
- *Situational irony*: What happens is different from or even opposite of what we expected.
- *Dramatic irony*: We know something a character doesn't know.

What is a tell tale?

- **Noun**- A tell tale is a person who maliciously (with bad intentions) reveals a private or confidential (secret) matter. A tell tale is also considered to be a tattle tale.
- **Adjective** – A tell tale is something that warns or gives notice to something that is intended to be unknown. For example, when the parents asked if she was at the beach, the sand on her shoes was a tell tale to her guilt.

RELATING TO THE TEXT:

Recall a time when something was a tell tale for you.

Recount a time when a person was a tell tale. Share your example and be specific.

Biography of Edgar Allan Poe (Adapted)

Poe's Childhood

Edgar Poe was born in Boston on January 19, 1809. His parents were David and Elizabeth Poe. David was born in Baltimore on July 18, 1784. Elizabeth Arnold came to the U.S. from England in 1796 and married David Poe after her first husband died in 1805. They had three children, Henry, Edgar, and Rosalie.

Elizabeth Poe died in 1811 when Edgar was two years old. She had separated from her husband and had taken her three kids with her. Henry went to live with his grandparents while Edgar was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. John Allan and Rosalie was taken in by another family. John Allan was a successful merchant, so Poe grew up in good surroundings and went to good schools.

When Poe was six, he went to school in England for five years. He learned Latin and French, as well as math and history. He later returned to school in America and continued his studies. Edgar Allan Poe went to the University of Virginia in 1826. He was 17. Even though John Allan had plenty of money, he only gave Poe about a third of what he needed. Although Poe had done well in Latin and French, he started to drink heavily and quickly became in debt. He had to quit school less than a year later.

Poe in the Army

Edgar Allan Poe had no money, no job skills, and had been shunned by John Allan. Therefore, Poe went to Boston and joined the U.S. Army in 1827. He was 18. He did reasonably well in the Army and attained the rank of sergeant major. In 1829, Mrs. Allan died and John Allan tried to be friendly towards him and signed Poe's application to West Point.

While waiting to enter West Point, Poe lived with his grandmother and his aunt, Mrs. Clemm. Also living there were his brother, Henry, and young cousin, Virginia. In 1830, Poe entered West Point as a cadet. He didn't stay long because John Allan refused to send him any money. It is thought that Poe purposely broke the rules and ignored his duties so he would be dismissed.

A Struggling Writer

In 1831, Edgar Allan Poe went to New York City where he had some of his poetry published. He submitted stories to a number of magazines, but they were all rejected. Poe had no friends, no job, and was in financial trouble. He sent a letter to John Allan begging for help but none came. John Allan died in 1834 and did not mention Poe in his will.

In 1835, Poe finally got a job as an editor of a newspaper because of a contest he won with his story, "The Manuscript Found in a Bottle". As the editor for the Southern Literary Messenger, Poe successfully managed the paper and increased its circulation from 500 to 3500 copies. Despite this, Poe left the paper in early 1836, complaining of the poor salary. In 1837, he went to New York. He wrote The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym but he could not find any financial success. He moved to Philadelphia in 1838 where he wrote "Ligeia" and "The Haunted Palace". His first volume of short stories, "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque" was published in 1839. Poe received the copyright and 20 copies of the book, but no money.

Sometime in 1840, Edgar A. Poe joined George R. Graham as an editor for Graham's Magazine. During the two years that Poe worked for Graham's, he published his first detective story, "The

Murders in the Rue Morgue," and challenged readers to send in cryptograms, which he always solved. During the time Poe was editor, the circulation of the magazine rose from 5,000 to 35,000 copies. Poe left Graham's in 1842 because he wanted to start his own magazine.

Poe found himself without a regular job once again. He tried to start a magazine called The Stylus and failed. In 1843, he published some booklets containing a few of his short stories but they didn't sell well enough. He won a hundred dollars for his story, "The Gold Bug," and sold a few other stories to magazines, but he barely had enough money to support his family. Often, Mrs. Clemm, his aunt, had to contribute financially. In 1844, Poe moved back to New York. Even though "The Gold Bug" had a circulation of around 300,000 copies, he could barely make a living.

In 1845, Poe became an editor at The Broadway Journal. A year later, the Journal ran out of money, and Poe was out of a job again. He and his family moved to a small cottage near what is now East 192nd Street. His wife's health was fading away, and Poe was deeply distressed by it. After only ten years of marriage, she died in 1847, ten days after Poe's birthday. After losing his wife, Poe collapsed from stress but gradually returned to health later that year.

Final Days

In June of 1849, Poe left New York and went to Philadelphia, where he visited his friend John Sartain. Poe left Philadelphia in July and came to Richmond. He stayed at the Swan Tavern Hotel but joined "The Sons of Temperance" in an effort to stop drinking. He renewed a boyhood romance with Sarah Royster Shelton and planned to marry her in October.

On September 27, Poe left Richmond for New York. He went to Philadelphia and stayed with a friend named James P. Moss. On September 30, he meant to go to New York but supposedly took the wrong train to Baltimore. On October 3, Poe was found at Gunner's Hall, a public house at 44 East Lombard Street, and was taken to the hospital. He lapsed in and out of consciousness but was never able to explain exactly what happened to him. Edgar Allan Poe died in the hospital on Sunday, October 7, 1849.

After reading the article "Biography of Edgar Allan Poe" (Adapted), answer the questions that follow. When necessary, return to the text and underline or highlight the details that helped you to determine the correct answer.

1. In what year was Poe born?

- a. 1796 b. 1811 c. 1809 d. 1909

2. Poe is known as Edgar Allan Poe because

- a. That is the name his parents gave him.
- b. It sounds more professional than just Edgar Poe.
- c. He took his adopted parents' name as part of his identity.
- d. Allan is his middle name.

3. What does the word shunned mean as used in paragraph #4?

- a. supported b. ignored c. encouraged d. embarrassed

4. What is the situational irony about the following from the section "Poe in the Army"?

"He didn't stay long because John Allan refused to send him any money."

- a. The reader is aware that he didn't send any money because Allan was broke.
- b. The reader would have expected Allan to send him money since it says he was trying to be friendly towards him.
- c. It says that he didn't send the money, but it means the opposite. He sent him all of his money.
- d. He wanted to send the money, but Poe had already been dismissed from the academy.

5. Which sentence expresses an opinion?

- a. "While waiting to enter West Point, Poe lived with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm. "
- b. "As the editor for the Southern Literary Messenger, Poe successfully managed the paper and increased its circulation from 500 to 3500 copies."
- c. "It is thought that Poe purposefully broke the rules and ignored his duties so he would be dismissed."
- d. "He lapsed in and out of consciousness but was never able to explain exactly what happened to him."

6. Which sentence would be an example of situational irony?

- a. "Even though "The Gold Bug" had circulation of 300,000 copies, he could barely make a living."
- b. "He renewed his boyhood romance with Sarah Royster Shelton and planned to marry her in October."
- c. "John Allan was a successful merchant, so Poe grew up in good surroundings and went to good schools."
- d. "Poe left Graham's because he wanted to start his own magazine business."

7. Organize the titles of Poe's works in order 1-6 by date of publication.

_____ "The Gold Bug"

_____ "The Haunted Palace"

_____ "The Narrative of Arthur Pim"

_____ "The Manuscript Found in Bottle"

_____ "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque"

_____ "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"

Pre-Reading Activities for "Tell-Tale Heart"

Describe five things that you usually find in a scary/horror story:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Read the following statements and circle if you agree, disagree, or are undecided.

Agree **Disagree** **Undecided**

1. People who are insane know that they are insane.

Agree **Disagree** **Undecided**

2. Sane people sometimes imagine that they hear things.

Agree **Disagree** **Undecided**

3. If you commit a crime, the worst punishment is the guilt afterward.

Agree **Disagree** **Undecided**

4. Often it's the small annoying things about people that can be the most irritating and infuriating.

Agree **Disagree** **Undecided**

5. All people are basically afraid of the same things.

Agree **Disagree** **Undecided**

6. When you've done something wrong, wondering if you'll be caught can cause great stress and anxiety.

Agree **Disagree** **Undecided**

7. If someone commits a crime, sooner or later they will be caught.

How can you tell when someone is lying? Explain your answer in detail.

Vocabulary in the "Tell-Tale Heart"

Directions: Match each definition to the word it defines.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| _____ 1. Decided | A. Cunningly |
| _____ 2. Bold courage; nerve; shameless boldness | B. Vex |
| _____ 3. Annoy, distress | C. Resolved |
| _____ 4. In a way that is skillfully dishonest | D. Stealthily |
| _____ 5. Statements or actions making fun of someone or something | E. Audacity |
| _____ 6. In a secret or sly way | F. Derision |

Directions: Fill in the blank with the vocabulary word that best fits the sentence.

Vexed v.	Derision n.	Resolved v.
Stealthily adv.	Cunningly adv.	Audacity n.

1. Anita _____ that she would study for the test so that she would get an A.

2. Can you believe her _____? I cannot believe that she spoke in that tone to her boss and did not get fired!

3. The man _____ made a plan to rob the local store by paying off the manager to keep the back door unlocked.

4. The protesters showed their _____ toward the mayor and chanted that he was incompetent and they wanted him to lose his job.

5. The boy _____ the girl when he told her that she was not smart and didn't have any friends.

6. To not be detected, the woman _____ tiptoed down the stairs.

Post-Reading Activities for “Tell-Tale Heart”

After reading “Tell-Tale Heart” by Poe, answer the following questions using short answers. Make sure to answer each part of the question thoroughly.

1. Who is telling this story (narrating)? Is it first, second, or third person? If the narrator is unreliable, **explain why using textual evidence.**

2. How does the narrator feel about the old man in general? What, then, specifically, is it about the old man that troubles/bothers the narrator? Why? How often does the narrator mention this “thing” in the story? **Cite textual evidence in your answers.**

4. What does the narrator tell us he does every night? Why?

5. How does the narrator feel immediately after he commits the murder? Do his feelings change? If so, how and why? **Cite textual evidence in your answer.**

6. What sound drives the narrator to confess to the crime? What do you think causes his paranoia?

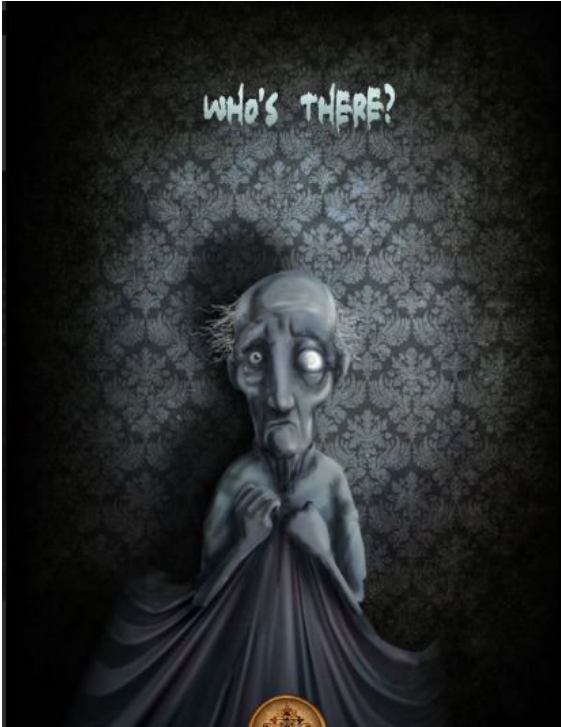
7. Find one example of each of the following:

a. **Alliteration** – Pg. ____

b. **Simile** – Pg. ____

c. Personification – Pg. ____

8. Cite **two direct and specific examples** from the story that the author uses to create an atmosphere of horror or suspense. These are sentences that set or enhance the MOOD (the general feeling) of the story. Give the page number with your examples.



Vocabulary Review

Directions: Answer each of the questions using your personal experiences or make up a situation.

How and why has someone **vexed** you?

How and why did you have the **audacity** to stand up for yourself?

Explain a task in which you **resolved** to do.

Explain a situation in which you witnessed someone show **derision** toward someone else.

Explain how you would act **cunningly** to cheat on a test.

When would it be necessary to walk **stealthily** in a public place?

Directions: Answer each of the questions using your text, "Tell-Tale Heart" only. Make sure you include the page number of where to find your answer.

What **vexes** the narrator?

What does the narrator **resolve** to do about the conflict?

How does the narrator **cunningly** treat the old man before he begins his plan?

How does the narrator **stealthily** stalk the old man before he enacts his plan?

What does the narrator have the **audacity** to do after he follows through on his plan?

Explain how the narrator shows **derision** toward the situation and what he did to the old man.