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### Edgar Allen Poe Short Stories

#### **Advantages and Disadvantages to Teaching Edgar Allan Poe**

Edgar Allan Poe's short stories are canonical, genre-creating and excellent examples of literary device. They are also written in antiquated language, heavily relied upon in secondary education and boring in appearance for a majority of students. Regardless, his works can lead to excellent lessons and learning experiences when used in the classroom.

In their most basic plotlines, Poe's stories are very appealing to the senses and are constructed heavily around the idea of what scares us and haunts our dreams. Horror is one of the most popular genres with young audiences, which puts these stories a step above most of the fiction students are required to read. Because of the visceral quality of Poe's work, there are also many movie and television adaptations of his stories and poems, which can be easily located.

This provides opportunity to show clips to classes, as a way of introducing a story or making it easier to get a feel for the way his language is meant to flow.

Poe's stories illustrate many literary devices that are required learning for literature education, including recognizable rhyme schemes, metaphor, personification and onomatopoeia. Therefore, his work acts as an excellent way to introduce rhyme (for more complicated poetry) and literary constructions that function within rich texts that have multiple meanings and appeal. Along with these devices, Poe also loads his stories with themes that he explores time and again, including transcendentalism, despair, loneliness, and fear. Having these themes as a bridge makes it easier to create a cohesive narrative and for students to create a concrete definition of Poe's work.

On the other hand, Poe's works represent a number of challenges that need to be overcome when presenting them to a class full of students, especially those who are living in an era of rapid technology. Poe's stories have been highly studied, resulting in volumes upon volumes of analysis and pay per print essays and term papers. Websites like SparkNotes and Wikipedia provide all the background needed to avoid reading a text, as well as analysis of theme, motif and symbolism (plus much more). This may seem daunting, but what it requires of teachers is the ability to be inventive and create projects and assessments that force students to do their own work. For example, we paired the reading of *The Tell Tale Heart* with creating an iPod playlist that requires knowledge of the murderer and his personality paired with a library of songs that can fit such a person. Instead of choosing at random, students must explain their reasoning for selecting the songs that they did.

Poe's works also present a language barrier, even if they are written in American English. Most students in middle school would not have come into contact with too many pieces that were written in anything but contemporary English, which most often results in students shutting down in regard to learning the material. Not being able to get past the surface characteristics of a text is a large factor for disengaging in the classroom. On a positive note, this can lead to the opportunity to examine language as it has changed through different eras. Introducing texts that are even more complicated can make Poe seem much easier by comparison. It can also be very helpful to create guides for translating common phrases and going over vocabulary to discover synonyms that make uncommon words easier to understand. (As we are doing with our Mad Libs style worksheet for *The Tell Tale Heart*.)

Beyond the content-related difficulties of Poe, there are psychological and emotional effects to consider as well. The dark themes in Poe's stories could echo dark home lives of

students in class, which is important for the teacher to be aware of. If this happens, pointing out the metaphors and allegories at work can be helpful for explaining that not all of Poe's stories are necessarily about death.

Students often react to unfamiliar text with the assumption that it will be too difficult. This may be true in some aspects of Poe, but his ambiguity when it comes to metaphor can be where the difficulties truly lie. He also draws many comparisons to things that are not common knowledge for people in 2011, so these references require extra instruction. For his more difficult themes, scaffolding can be used with other fiction (see the bibliography) and they can be simplified using movie clips, hands on activities, role-playing situations and group discussion. We have worked all of these teaching methods into our lesson plan to create a well-rounded experience for teaching Edgar Allan Poe.

## **Teaching Strategies/Methods**

### **1. Reading Journals**

- Students will use the reading journals to record their responses to the text, discussions, and classroom activities.
- The purpose of this strategy is to help the students organize their thoughts and improve their analytical abilities as they read the text and think through possible answers to challenging discussion questions.

### **2. Graphic Organizers**

- Throughout this unit, the teacher will use a few different types of graphic organizers such as the KWL (Know-Want to Know-Learned) chart, plot diagrams, and Literature Mind Maps.
- The purpose of this strategy is to help the students visualize the information in the stories and to organize the information systematically.

### 3. Forms of Media

- The students will watch one video clip related to Edgar Allan Poe, a Peanuts song about the biographical information about Poe. Both videos are relatively short and will be used to introduce Poe and his stories to the students.
- Students will also view an online, guided tour of Edgar Allan Poe's home.
- The iPod playlist assignment has students taking what they are familiar with and applying it to something they are learning.
- The purpose of this strategy is to capture the students' interests and to demonstrate to the students that learning about Poe can be enjoyable.

### 4. Guided Note-Taking

- During some lectures, students will use fill-in-the-blank notes to guide their note-taking.
- The purpose of this strategy is to exemplify to students possible note-taking techniques that they can then emulate independently later on in the course or other courses.

### 5. Group Work

- Students will meet several times throughout the unit to determine possible answers to discussion questions, work on small in-class projects, peer-edit their final projects (the short story), etc.
- The purpose of this strategy is to encourage students to reflect and consider their own opinions/interpretations of the text and to practice articulating their positions to their peers. Also, students will be able to hear others' viewpoints that they might not have otherwise considered independently.

### 6. Tactile Learning Activities

- Tactile learning involves hands-on experiences. In this unit, we include tactile learning activities such as creating masks during the lesson covering *Masque of the Red Death*.

- The students will create masks such as the ones worn by the party guests in *Masque of the Red Death*. The colors of the masks will associate with the colors of the seven rooms in Prince Prospero's palace: blue, purple, green, orange, white, violet, and black. On the back of the mask, students will write what the color of their mask symbolizes in the story.
- The purpose of this strategy is two-fold:
  - To vary the teaching methods used in the classroom in order to maintain students' attention/interest and to meet the various learning styles of the students
  - To reinforce the symbolism found in Poe's *Masque of the Red Death*

### 7. Role-Playing

- Students will use role-playing in a simulated courtroom activity. Drawing from the story of *The Cask of Amontillado*, students will act either as lawyers, the judge, members of the jury or the audience in a case over the narrator Montresor's sanity. Students will defend their positions using textual evidence.
- The purpose of this strategy is to provide students with the opportunity to see the story from the characters' points of view. The activity also gives students practice supporting their opinions with evidence from the text.

### 8. Vocabulary Building

- The teacher will primarily use two different activities to teach students vocabulary from Poe's short stories:
  - Poe Vocab Mad Libs: A word bank of vocabulary taken from Poe's short story *The Tell-Tale Heart* will be given to the students. After the students write out the definition of each word, the teacher will read aloud a Mad Lib to the students, asking them to fill in the blanks with vocabulary from the word bank.

- Bookmarks: Students will make their own bookmarks for their use as they read the short stories. They will progressively add on vocabulary words and their definitions as they encounter the words in the text.
- The purpose of this strategy is to enhance the students' understanding of the text, eliminating (as much as possible) confusion of the text simply because of difficulty understanding the vocabulary.

### **9. Oral Reading**

- During the lesson on *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the teacher will read aloud the story to the students. On the other hand, during the lesson on *The Murders at the Rue Morque*, the students will read aloud the ending of the story.
- For the reading of *The Tell-Tale Heart*, students could either follow along silently in their own books or simply listen to the teacher.
- The purpose of this strategy is to further enhance the theatrical aspect of Poe's short stories.
  - Characteristics such as volume and intonation of voice, as well as the environment of the room, should be used to make the readings more theatrical.

### **10. Discussion**

- Students will participate in a discussion almost daily during class. The discussion questions were designed to go beyond the surface-level information of the text.
- At the beginning of discussion time, the teacher will remind the student of the acronym "SLANT": "Sit up, Listen, Ask and answer questions, Nod your head, Track the speaker." This acronym encourages active listening.
- The purpose of this strategy is to encourage students to analyze the text at a deeper level, developing their own opinions, supporting their arguments with textual evidence, and articulating their positions clearly and effectively.

### **11. Listening to a Radio Drama**

- During the lesson covering *The Fall of the House of Usher*, we will listen to a portion of a radio drama. The radio drama originally aired in 1943.
- The purpose of this strategy is to enhance the students’ understanding and appreciation of the story by presenting them with another form of the story other than the written word.
- By having the students listen to a dramatization of *The Fall of the House of Usher* rather than a book-on-tape, students are encouraged to use their imaginations to expand upon the text.
- This strategy also maintains the students’ attention/interest. Teachers could possibly create a “spooky environment” for playing the radio program (i.e. candles, fog machine, dimmed lighting, etc.)

**12. Developing a Short Story**

- During the last week (week 4), students will write their own short stories. They will go through the writing process (planning, rough draft, revise, final draft) and ultimately produce their own minimum five-page short story, incorporating aspects of the short story they studied throughout the unit.
- The purpose of this strategy is to allow the students the opportunity to apply their knowledge of the elements of the short story into their own writing, using Poe’s works as an example.

**Lesson Plan**

**Objective:** SWBAT critically analyze and deconstruct short fiction in order to better understand literary themes, the genre of short fiction, and to create their own sample fiction. They will work individually and in groups in order to develop inter personal skills and process the information through art.

Time	Student Learning Task or Activity
DAY 1 – Monday (Week One)	

5 minutes	KWL activity about short stories. Students will write in a journal in three columns about what they know about short stories and what they want to learn. The learn column will be filled in on Thursday after all the lessons. Pass out a sheet with the homework and reading assignments for the next 3 weeks.
15 minutes	Students will read along with a select AESOP fable (or other simple short story) on board, (teacher will read-aloud) and identify plot, setting and main character as a class and come up with a class definition for a PLOT/SETTING- worksheet.
20 minutes	Students will read AESOP's fables in groups of four (different fable for every group) students will identify plot, setting and main characters in their individual stories and explain where these concepts appear in their stories to the class
10 minutes	Students will finish filling out their PLOT/SETTING worksheet individually; draw a plot chart of their fable (or class fable) and a setting picture with the plot picture.
<b>DAY 2 – Tuesday (Week One)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out folders, go over briefly the plot diagram from yesterday.
5 minutes	Using the same AESOP's fable as yesterday, identify the story's theme (moral) and then the story's motifs. As a class come up with the difference between theme and motif and have the student write the definition on their THEME/MOTIF sheet.
15 minutes	Students will read different AESOP's fables in different groups of four and identify theme and motif in their groups. Students will then explain theme and motif of their story to the class.
20 minutes	Students will finish filling out their THEME/MOTIF worksheet individually and describe the difference between the two.
5 minutes	Review, wrap up worksheets.
<b>DAY 3 – Wednesday (Week One)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out folders, briefly go over worksheet from yesterday.
5 minutes	Use a tall-tale/folklore (that students haven't read in class yet) read up to the last paragraph-omitting the ending- and ask students to help analyze the text in order to make predictions. Read ending, discuss foreshadowing and create class definition. Also analyze text for imagery and tone, create definition with class. Start filling out FORESHADOWING/TONE sheet.
15 minutes	Students in new groups will analyze a new fable for foreshadowing, tone and imagery. Each group will share one conclusion about their story and what textual evidence led them to that conclusion.
20 minutes	Students will finish filling out their FORESHADOWING/TONE worksheet individually and explain how it applied in their story (or the class story) with textual evidence
5 minutes	Homework: Bring in favorite Short Story For Thursday!
<b>DAY 4 – Thursday (Week One)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out folders/journals. Analyze short paragraph on board from a commonly used short story author (not Poe), discover- plot, setting, main character,



	theme, motif, imagery, foreshadowing and tone.
5 minutes	Collect all worksheets (should be in folder) and pass out journals
15 minutes	Make journals, be creative, design last page (create definitions with story).
15 minutes	Share last page with mini groups.
10 minutes	Wrap-up and collect folders/journals/booklets.
<b>DAY 5 – Friday (Week One)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out journals, watch Peanuts Clip about Poe as introduction and write about the influence of Poe on American culture.
15 minutes	Guided note taking (power-point) lecture on historical context/literary theory “American romantic Movement”.
20 minutes	Take online visual house tour of Poe's house, explore the website on Poe as a class.
10 minutes	What I learned this week?” Question game, “Things I understood” “Things I want to know more about” “Things I wish we had spent more time on”.
<b>DAY 6 – Monday (Week Two)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out journals, write about reaction/foreshadowing from short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" first sentence.
5 minutes	Poe- The Tell-Tale Heart, Read aloud.
15 minutes	SLANT- discussion. What do we know right away about the narrator? What clues does the text give us? Why does he murder the old man? Why does he reveal it to the police in the end?
15 minutes	Mad-Lib for The Tell-Tale Heart. Pass out Vocab Bookmark (should contain all words from the Poe stories to be reviewed that are difficult for a middle-school student to understand) - start filling that out with words from The Tell-Tale Heart.
10 minutes	Have "Fall of the House of Usher" started by tomorrow and finished by Wednesday (for HW) Keep in mind that "Ligeia" must be read by Thursday.
<b>DAY 7 – Tuesday (Week Two)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out Journals: Draw the house of Usher, using textual support, keeping Gothic literature in mind.
5 minutes	Active listening to beginning of Poe's story, Radio Drama Recording 1943, "The Fall Of The House Of Usher" and discuss reactions.
15 minutes	SLANT- discussion. Why is our narrator at the house of Usher when he doesn't seem to know Roderick very well? (how do we know this?) Is the house haunted or are these events figments of the imagination?
15 minutes	Elements of Literature Mind Maps- create a mind map of "What elements of literature make this story suspenseful?" (Gothic lit)
10 minutes	Have a few students come up and explain their mind maps (make sure they are using textual evidence to support their reasons).
<b>DAY 8 – Wednesday (Week Two)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out Journals: Analyze the Poem, The Haunted Palace from the Fall of the House of Usher in your journals. How does this poem affect the theme of the story? The main character? What is this poem saying?
10 minutes	Discuss as a class: How does the poem, “The Haunted Palace” affect how we view the characters?

10 minutes	SLANT- discussion. Does Madeline really come back to life? Why does Poe make the house and the family the same concept? (As the family breaks so does the house.)
15 minutes	Elements of Literature Mind Maps- create a mind map of "Why does Poe choose to use an outside narrator other than Roderick?"
10 minutes	Have a few students come up and explain their mind maps (make sure they are using textual evidence to support their reasons) - they should be different than the students that came up to present the day before.
<b>DAY 9 – Thursday (Week Two)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out journals. Analyze the quote on board from the beginning of the story "Ligeia" and pay special attention to the use of the word "will".
15 minutes	SLANT- discussion. How does the narrator’s use of opium affect the readers ability to tell reality from imagination/insanity in this story? Was there a murder in this story? Did Ligeia exist? Did she really come back alive? How do light and dark play a role in this story?
20 minutes	Activity: Start what songs would be on the narrator's i-Pod play list while his second wife is ill? Minimum of ten songs, each song should be chosen carefully with textual support for why he would play the song.
10 minutes	HW: Finish I-Pod playlist as homework for presentation on Friday in mini-group.
<b>DAY 10 – Friday (Week Two)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out journals. Compare and Contrast Ligeia to Rowena, what is the purpose of making them opposites and why did he marry both of them? (Light vs. Darkness)
15 minutes	SLANT- discussion. Compare and contrast Madeline's resurrection to Ligeia's. Compare the narrators, insanity, sense of reality, characters will, who controls the death, and what we know about the women as characters.
25 minutes	Presentation of I-Pod playlist to a mini-group of 4-5 students.
5 minutes	Collect Journals. HW: Read "The Cask of Amontillado" over the weekend. Keeping in mind that "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Masque of the Red Death" is also due next week. (Start reading "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" now, all but the last 12 paragraphs.)
<b>DAY 11 – Monday (Week Three)</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out Journals: Draw a courtroom in your journals and label all the members of a court if Fortunato had escaped Montresor's imprisonment and was now suing him. (Include the accused, the jury, the lawyers, the judge, and the bailiff.)
10 minutes	SLANT- discussion Why does Montresor want to murder Fortunato? How does the concept of “guilty until proven innocent” play into this story? What does that fact that Montresor is telling the story 50 years later mean about his credibility as a narrator?
25 minutes	Court Room Case activity- role playing, students act as Montresor, Fortunato, lawyers, Jury, Judge, and audience in guided, well-behaved, respectful debate. Montresor should be the defendant and Fortunato should be the plaintiff - is Montresor mentally ill or did he act with knowledge that he was doing wrong?

	Try to use textual evidence as real "evidence".
10 minutes	Discuss: Foreshadowing (I shall not die of a cough, Coat of arms, "mason" talk, catacombs) and HW "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" now, all but the last twelve paragraphs! Start collecting evidence of foreshadowing- who committed the crime? Reading "The Masque of the Red Death" Tuesday and Wednesday
DAY 12- Tuesday (Week Three)	
10 minutes	Pass out journals, examine a picture of a Venetian carnival (huge crowd of people wearing masks). Consider your feelings in a crowd of people that you can't recognize, who can you trust? How would you feel if you knew one of them had a contagious and deadly illness?
10 minutes	Short lecture: What is an Allegory and how does it help us understand this story?
25 minutes	SLANT- discussion What do the colors of the rooms mean to you as a reader? How does the idea of greed play into this story? What does the personification of death (it's unavailability) mean to the characters of this story? How do the masks/carnivals push the story forward?
5 minutes	HW: REMEMBER Finish reading "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" now, all but the last twelve paragraphs! Start collecting evidence of foreshadowing- who committed the crime?
DAY 13 – Wednesday (Week Three)	
5 minutes	Pass out Journals, examine a set of Venetian carnival masks, what does each mask make you think/feel/consider? Is it the color? Design? What mask would you chose?
15 minutes	Students will be given a blank mask on a sheet of paper. They should create a mask representing a theme/motif that was present in the story. They need to pick the colors and designs carefully, have them write the theme/motif on the back of the mask.
25 minutes	Get in new groups of four or five and share masks and theme/motif with group. Why did they choose to create the mask the way they did? How does it symbolize the theme/motif?
5 minutes	HW: Finish reading "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" now, all but the last twelve paragraphs! Start collecting evidence of foreshadowing- who committed the crime?
DAY 14 – Thursday (Week Three)	
5 minutes	Pass out Journals, Examine the quote before story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and respond in journal.
15 minutes	SLANT- discussion- "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" was the first of its kind as a detective story. How does Poe successfully use a "red herring" to build suspense and keep the reader interested? Who is the "red herring" (i.e. who did you think was guilty)?
25 minutes	Take out HW (evidence of who committed the crime) and discuss in small groups your theory of the crime- if you change your theory explain why. How do the different interpretations of the same textual evidence make the story captivating?

5 minutes	Hand in HW sheet, read ending for tomorrow.
<b>DAY 15 – Friday (Week Three)</b>	
5 minutes	Read aloud end of story- popcorn reading.
15 minutes	SLANT- discussion- The ending of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is surprising. Why do you think Poe chose an Orangutan to be the murderer in the story? Animals are a common symbol throughout his short stories - what do you think they symbolize?
20 minutes	"What I learned these past two weeks?" Question game, "Things I understood" "Things I want to know more about" "Things I wish we had spent more time on".
10 minutes	Spend the last ten minutes making sure the Vocab Bookmark is filled out - see if they have any questions. Collect journals.
<b>DAY 16- Monday (Week Four) NOTE: Reserve Computer Lab for Thursday.</b>	
5 minutes	Pass out journals and folders. Let them know they can keep it for this week. Journals should already be graded for completion and content.
15 minutes	Lecture - Review - Elements of a short story using worksheets/discussions and journals from the past few weeks summarized in a PowerPoint presentation. Pass out note-taking guide with a full summary of all the literary elements, plot diagram, etc. so that they can use it for the final project.
10 minutes	Pass out rubric for the final project which is to write a short story. Explain what is required of them - writing a minimum 5 page short story to contain all the elements just gone over and an additional 2 page paper describing the elements in their story. Elements should be highlighted with different colors in their paper when they turn it in. Explain they need to submit it to turnitin.com and submit that as well along with all their rough drafts.
10 minutes	PowerPoint Presentation of how to create an outline. Make it interactive by creating a simple one with the class.
10 minutes	Last 10 minutes of class will be giving them time to work individually on an outline. Use the plot diagram given earlier, have them create their own for their story and outline characters and what they want to happen. If they do not finish, it is homework for tomorrow.
<b>DAY 17 – Tuesday (Week Four)</b>	
5 minutes	Go around and do a check or "x" for each student's outline. Want to check for completion.
15 minutes	PowerPoint Presentation of how to create a rough draft. Use the outline the class created together from yesterday to write a brief rough draft. Explain that by the end of the first rough draft, it should resemble a story. It should be almost like a free-write for the first rough draft.
25 minutes	Give students time to write a rough draft. If they do not finish, it is homework.
5 minutes	Wrap-up, ask if students have any questions about writing a rough draft. Have them print out 4-5 copies of their rough draft for peer editing the next day.
<b>DAY 18 – Wednesday (Week Four)</b>	
5 minutes	Go around and do a check or "x" for each student's rough draft and copies. Want to check for completion.

40 minutes	Divide students into groups of 4-5 for peer edit. Have them peer edit based off of the rubric criteria. Students should be actively engaged in reading and editing each person's paper. Each student should get back their papers with peer reviews.
5 minutes	Tell the students that the next day they will be going to the computer lab for revising and writing the final draft.
<b>DAY 19 – Thursday (Week Four)</b>	
5 minutes	Gather students and bring them to the computer lab.
40 minutes	Let students finish typing their final draft. Remind them about turnitin.com and the additional 2-page paper describing the elements of their story.
5 minutes	Bring students back to classroom; ask if there are any questions. Remind them that they should also bring all rough drafts and outline for the next day to turn in.
<b>DAY 20 – Friday (Week Four)</b>	
5 minutes	Ask students to have their final project out and ready to go. Arrange them in groups of 4-5.
20 minutes	Have each student share their story in their mini-groups. They should have a small discussion after every story and see if they are able to pick out the theme and elements of their peer's story. Walk around and make sure they are on topic and discussing. Have the students select the most interesting story to share with the class.
20 minutes	Have students come up and read to the class their chosen story from each group. If there is time in the end, briefly discuss the central themes to some of the stories.
5 minutes	Wrap-up, have students turn in their final project.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

**Vincent Price movie House of Usher (1960)**

Corman, Roger, dir. *The Fall Of The House Of Usher*. Perf. Vincent Price. 1960. American international Pictures. DVD.

- There are many reasons to show films in the classroom. Students will be able to read the short story as well as watch an adaptation of the story. Students will be asked to identify differences between the text and the film. What effects do the visuals of the movie provide to viewers that reading the text doesn't? Students will be asked to pay attention to the way the film score has an effect on the audience.
- A brief introduction of the film as well as some background information about Vincent

Price would also be beneficial for students. Vincent Price starred in many horror films in the 1960's and many of them were adaptations of Poe's work.

### **Philosophy of Composition**

Poe, Edgar A. "The Philosophy of Composition." *Graham's Magazine* 28.4 Apr. (1846): 163-67. Print.

- Asking students to read this essay by Poe will be a valuable jumping off point for nonfiction. Students will be asked to describe the tone Poe takes in the text (especially when referring to the ideas of other writers). Some explanation of the structure of the essay would also be useful (e.g. discussing the differences between a plot and an argument)
- There will be a strong focus on the line about the death of a beautiful woman being the most beautiful images in all literature? Students will be first asked if they agree with this statement, and then to respond why they think Poe felt this way.
- After reading, what does Poe believe are the most important things to the success of a piece of literature? Go over with students the ideas of length (that stories should be able to be read in one sitting), method (that writing is analytical and not spontaneous), and unity (do the parts play off of each other)
- As an introduction to literary theory, ask the students to respond to Poe's argument. Do they agree with him? What role do they think literature functions in society? Is it important to be realistic in writing or is it sometimes better to depict situations that don't seem realistic?

### **Sherlock Holmes for Murders on the Rue Morgue**

Doyle, Arthur C. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Doubleday, 1986. Print.

- Edgar Allen Poe is sometimes credited as inventing the detective story. What are the similarities and differences between Sherlock Holmes and C. Dupin? This will allow students to

see the importance of Poe as an influential figure in a particular genre. Specifically, this site offers different Sherlock Holmes stories and teacher's or students can pick their favorites to read.

### **Biography**

Silverman, Kenneth. Edgar Allen Poe: Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance. New York: Harper Perennial, 1991. Print.

It is important for students to understand both the society as well as the author they are reading.

One of the most talked about aspects of Poe's life is that he married his fifteen year old cousin.

No one knows how he died but he died young. The former is important because much of Poe's work concerns the death of a beautiful young woman. Parallels could be drawn for students of why Poe would believe the death of a beautiful woman is such a beautiful image.

### **Pictures of New England (Edgar Allen Poe's house)**

<http://www.destination360.com/north-america/us/maryland/images/s/edgar-allan-poe-house.jpg>

- While this seems to be a pretty trivial inclusion, showing students where Poe lived could prove to be very beneficial. Seeing Poe's house will allow students to see what typical housing looked like in New England during the mid half of the 1800's. It also shows students that Poe was never a rich writer.

- Showing Poe's house doesn't need to be given a lot of an attention but it should be included in a PowerPoint presentation as an introduction to the author.

### **Story by Hawthorne (Dark Romantics) "Young Goodman Brown"**

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. Mosses from an Old Manse. New York: Modern Library Classics, 1993. 58-71. Print.

- Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of the most respected authors of the Romantic period. More

specifically, he like Poe, wrote many short stories that are considered to be very influential.

However, Poe disagrees with much of the praise that Hawthorne receives and is generally dismissive of him. (Quinn, Arthur Hobson. *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998: 334). Readers could discuss the similarities and differences between Poe and Hawthorne.

### **Transcendentalist (Walden)**

Thoreau, Henry D. *Walden*. USA: Megalodon Entertainment, 2008. Print.

- The movement that occurred almost simultaneously to Romanticism is Transcendentalism.

This movement contrasts to Romanticism in compelling and important ways. The movement, unlike Romanticism, emphasizes the inherent good of the human spirit. In order to awaken this spirit, humans must become closer to nature.

- *Walden*, offers specific chapters that get across the ideas of transcendentalism so that teachers won't be tied to teaching the entire book. Instead, classes can focus on one aspect of the argument of Transcendentalism and expand upon it through discussion.

### **Contemporary horror (Stephen King "The Man In The Black Suit")**

King, Stephen. *Everything's Eventual*. New York: Pocketbooks, 2002. 35-69. Print.

- "The man in the black suit" won the O Henry award. It is a modern horror story by Stephen King, one of the most popular authors of all time. By reading contemporary horror, students will be able to see the similarities and differences in the genre between the 1840's and the 1990's.

- Stephen King describes the story as a homage to Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown", so if students have read the short story before this one, they will be able to make comparisons to not only Poe but also Hawthorne.



- Because Stephen King is popular, students will be able to discuss the merits and literary value of popular writers.

### **Peanuts song Edgar Allen Poe**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8JKG6L2hp8>

- This supplies a really nice introduction to Edgar Allen Poe because it is pretty comical while offering a few facts on his life. It offers a nice little song to get students to respond to visual media. It is interesting to see what information the students are worried the teacher will ask them to identify. Rather than conceptual questions about any of his works, the students are worried they will be asked to identify obscure dates in Poe's life. This interesting aspect should be brought to the students' attention.
- The same video can be shown at the end of the unit and ask the students to include new facts in the song. The students will be able to reflect on information they think would be important to remember. Chances are, the students would not choose the same obscure publishing dates that the Peanuts students do.

### **Poe Online Index**

<http://poestories.com/index.php>

This resource is great for teachers and students because it provides more poems and poems that Poe wrote as well as portraits of him, his wife Virginia, and his home. It also has a list of vocabulary words that students may struggle with as they read.

### **Group Contributions**

Finding ways to teach Poe successfully and innovatively was the first challenge our group had to face. Since Poe is a widely taught author and his stories are complex, we worked together to try and find a way to make it interesting for middle school students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We came up with many activities to keep the students actively engaged in learning. Although we agreed to split the parts, we convened and helped each other while planning by creating a Google Document. Since most of us lived off-campus and had jobs, the Googledocs enabled us to share ideas and check over what we all wrote and edit as it was being posted.

We met around 3-4 times in person to complete the project and all group members contributed equally to the final project. First, we split the parts by having Holeigh write the Advantages and Disadvantages of teaching Poe, Dustin agreed to find and annotate bibliography, Alecia did the teaching methods and Anne and Jessica split the lesson plan (Anne did Weeks 1, 2 and half of week 3, Jessica edited the whole thing and finished it). Additionally, we all helped each other out in some way. We all knew we wanted to incorporate different kinds of media and a lot of creative work in order to help students with their analysis skills while making Poe an enjoyable experience. We each contributed with ideas for activities in the lesson plan, some Advantages and Disadvantages of Poe and finding some bibliography. However, we were still responsible for making the ideas cohesive for each of our respective parts, which was executed cleanly.

Each group member has contributed equally to the project, from planning to printing and feel that this is a lesson plan that has many innovative ways of teaching Poe to middle school students.