

The Raven



Miss Patrick

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Focus: This lesson is intended for 8th grade students. Using “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe, students will explore writing poetry and adapting and creating story lines of their own.

Objectives:

(1) Students will be able to discuss “The Raven” and the important aspects of the poem.

(2) Students will be able to produce their own poetry that resembles Poe’s work.

Standards:

EL.8.1.3 2006

Verify the meaning of a word in its context, even when its meaning is not directly stated, through the use of definition, restatement, example, comparison, or contrast.

EL.8.3.6 2006

Identify significant literary devices, such as metaphor, symbolism, dialect or quotations, and irony, which define a writer's style and use those elements to interpret the work.

Metaphor: an implied comparison in which a word or phrase is used in place of another, such as He was drowning in money.

Symbolism: the use of an object to represent something else; for example, a dove might symbolize peace.

Dialect: the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation used by people in different regions.

Irony: the use of words to express the opposite of the literal meaning of the words, often to be humorous.

EL.8.5.2 2006

Write responses to literature that:

- demonstrate careful reading and insight into interpretations.
- connect response to the writer's techniques and to specific textual references.
- make supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.
- support statements with evidence from the text.

EL.8.5.7 2006

Write for different purposes and to a specific audience or person, adjusting tone and style as necessary.

Materials:

- Notecards
- Markers
- “The Raven”
- Poem Context
- Glossary Sheet
- Rewriting the Raven Worksheet

Strategies:

- Read Aloud
- Class Discussion
- Popcorn Reading
- Authors Chair (Time Permitting)

Procedure:

Before Class Begins

1. Put notecards on student desks

Class

1. Have students write names on notecards for nametags.
2. While they are writing their names, pass out “The Raven.”
3. Provide short description of context of the poem.
4. Pass out Glossary Sheet.
5. Begin reading “The Raven.”
6. During the poem, pause to work on words students may not know.
7. After some stanzas, pause and ask students questions.
8. Hold short class discussion about thoughts and ideas about the poem.
9. Pass out Rewriting the Raven worksheet.
10. Explain assignment.
11. Allow students to write for the remainder of the period.

Next Class Period (Library Day)

1. Allow students to finish up their writing.
2. Have a few students read Rewriting the Raven to the class.

Assessment:

(1) The teacher will be able to assess the students’ ability to discuss “The Raven” and important aspects of the poem by listening to them share in the class discussion.

(2) The teacher will be able to assess the students’ ability to produce their own poetry that resembles Poe’s work by listening to the students share their ideas about their writing. The teacher will also assess the students’ ability to produce their own poetry that resembles Poe’s work by reading their poetry piece.

The Story of "The Raven"

"The Raven" was originally published in 1845, but not right away.

Poe first brought "The Raven" to his friend and former employer George Rex Graham of Graham's Magazine in Philadelphia. Graham declined the poem, which may not have been in its final version, though he gave Poe \$15 as charity.

Poe then sold the poem to The American Review, which paid him \$9 for it and they printed "The Raven" in its February 1845 issue under the pseudonym "Quarles", a reference to an English poet.

The poem's first publication with Poe's name was in the Evening Mirror on January 29, 1845, as an "advance copy".

"The Raven" is the poem that Poe is most known for. It has influenced many modern works and is referenced throughout popular culture in films, television, music, and video games.



The Raven

by: Edgar Allan Poe

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

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 curtain
Thrilled me - filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
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,
'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.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, 'Lenore!'
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, 'Lenore!'
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
'Surely,' said I, 'surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore -
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; -
'Tis the wind and nothing more!'

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door -
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door -
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,' I said, 'art sure no craven.
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the nightly shore -
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!'
Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.'

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning - little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door -
Bird or beast above the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as 'Nevermore.'

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only,
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered - not a feather then he fluttered -
Till I scarcely more than muttered 'Other friends have flown before -
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before.'
Then the bird said, 'Nevermore.'

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
'Doubtless,' said I, 'what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore -
Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never-nevermore.'"

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore -
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking 'Nevermore.'

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, me thought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
'Wretch,' I cried, 'thy God hath lent thee - by these angels he has sent thee

Respite - respite and **nepenthe** from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.'

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil! - prophet still, if bird or devil! -
Whether **tempter** sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted -
On this home by horror haunted - tell me truly, I implore -
Is there - is there **balm in Gilead**? - tell me - tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.'

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil! - prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us - by that God we both adore -
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant **Aidenn**,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore -
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels name Lenore?"
Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.'

'Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!' I shrieked upstarting -
'Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black **plume** as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! - quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.'

And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the **pallid** bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted - nevermore!

The Raven

by: Edgar Allan Poe

Glossary

This poem was written in 1845. Some of the words used are not as commonly used today.
Many of the words you might not fully understand are explained below.

Use a dictionary to look up the meaning of any other words you come across in the poem
if you are not 100% sure of the meaning. The words are listed in the order you will find
them in the poem.

1. Lore = wisdom or knowledge
2. Chamber = large room used for meeting people
3. Wrought = shaped or formed
4. Surcease = relief from / a brief release from
5. Entreating = strongly requesting / begging
6. Mortal = human / earthly
7. Lattice = web/net-like pattern/ trellis
8. Obeisance = bow or genuflect
9. Mien = appearance or expression
10. Bust = life-sized statue of a persons head and shoulders
11. Pallas = Greek God of wisdom and the Arts
12. Beguiling = charmed/fascinated
13. Decorum = respectability / good manners
14. Countenance = face/ expression
15. Craven = coward/ gutless
16. Plutonian = Black/ Pluto was Greek god of the underworld
17. Discourse = communication/ conversation
18. Placid = easy-going/ calm
19. ..only stock and store.. = only thing he has got
20. Dirges = funeral song
21. Melancholy = sad and gloomy
22. Ominous = warning/threatening
23. Censer = ghost
24. Seraphim = angels of the highest order
25. Nepenthe = drug that makes you unconscious
26. Tempter = The Devil
27. ... balm in Gilead .. = medicine to relieve pain and suffering
28. Aidenn = Like Eden/ meaning-in heaven
29. Plume = feather
30. Pallid = white/ pale/ colourless

What was the speaker doing?

What did he hear?

What is the speaker wishing for?

What had he been doing? With his books? Why?

Who is Lenore?

What does the last line mean?

What type of state does he seem to be going into? Why?

Does he open the door before or after he speaks?

What does he find when he opens the door?

What does he say?

What does he hear? Does he really hear something or is it his imagination?

What do you know about Ravens?

What does the Raven do?

Where does the speaker think the bird has come from? Why?

What does the speaker ask the bird?

What does the bird reply?

How does the speaker feel about the Raven in his chamber?

Does he think that the bird's presence has any significance? Why/why not?

What does the speaker believe the bird will do?

When does he believe that the bird will leave?

What does the bird say?

What word does the speaker wish to be the last spoken between him and the bird?

Where does he tell the bird to go?

What does the speaker imply when he tells the Raven to take its beak from his heart?

How does the speaker feel about the Raven at this point?

Is he still happy to see the bird or does he perhaps wish he had never met him?

What eerie vision does the speaker give in lines three & four?

Who or what might the Raven symbolize?

What does it mean when the speaker says that the shadow on the floor shall be lifted evermore? (He will always carry his guilt/mourning.)

What conclusions can we draw about what effects the Raven has had on the speaker?

Review and Conclusion questions:

Why did Poe use a Raven instead of another bird?

When did the speaker become paranoid? Why?

When have you felt paranoid/scared? Why?

Why would Lenore be at his door if she died?

How do you think she died?

THEME

If someone is dead, are they dead in all ways?

OTHER CHARACTERS

Lenore?

Rewriting "The Raven"

Could you be the next Edgar Allan Poe?
Let's find out if you have what it takes to be as dark and mysterious!

For this assignment, you will be writing your own ending to "The Raven." By taking off the last few stanzas, rewrite the poem to have an alternate ending and/or a different story line. Try to use the same rhyme scheme and practice using different poetry techniques including, but not limited to, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, internal rhyme, and personification.

Try to get creative! Think about some of the things we discussed in class and expand on them or go a completely different route. You could even try to make it creepier, if that's possible!

