



**Activity:** “The Raven” Guided Reading  
**Intended Grade/Audience:** 7th–8th

<p><b><u>Overview of the Activity:</u></b>          This <i>guided reading</i> of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven” (1845) focuses on developing student understanding of imagery and other figurative language, strengthening reading comprehension, and strengthening expository and persuasive writing skills.</p>	<p><b><u>Activity Goals:</u></b>          Provide students with an accessible reading of “The Raven” that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promotes a lasting appreciation and interest in Edgar Allan Poe’s work.</li> <li>2. Strengthens reading comprehension.</li> <li>3. Strengthens writing skills.</li> <li>4. Expands vocabulary.</li> <li>5. Expands knowledge and understanding of literary devices.</li> <li>6. Demonstrates the impact of an author’s style on a work.</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Student Objectives:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will use context clues to understand the poem.</li> <li>2. Students will identify figurative language and analyze the impact of it on the work.</li> <li>3. Students will identify the theme of the work and analyze how voice affects it.</li> <li>4. Students will understand allusions made in the work.</li> </ol>
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<p><b><u>Virginia SOLs addressed and/or met:</u></b></p> <p><b>For 7th grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Reading - 7.4</b> The student will read and determine the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases within authentic texts</li> <li>● <b>Reading - 7.5</b> The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of fictional texts, literary nonfiction</li> <li>● <b>Writing - 7.7</b> The student will write in a variety of forms to include narrative, expository, persuasive, and reflective with an emphasis on expository and persuasive writing</li> </ul> <p><b>For 8th grade:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Reading - 8.4</b> The student will apply knowledge of word origins, and figurative language to extend vocabulary development within authentic texts</li> <li>● <b>Reading - 8.5</b> - The student will read and analyze a variety of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama</li> <li>● <b>Writing - 8.7</b> The student will write in a variety of forms to include narrative, expository, persuasive, and reflective with an emphasis on expository and persuasive writing</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Common Core standards addressed and/or met:</u></b></p> <p><b>CCSS Grade 7 Reading Standards for Literature:</b>          - 1, 2, 4, 5</p> <p><b>CCSS Grade 7 Writing Standards:</b>          - 1b, 1c, 7, 9a</p> <p><b>CCSS Grade 8 Reading Standards for Literature:</b>          - 1, 4</p> <p><b>CCSS Grade 8 Writing Standards:</b>          - 1b, 1c, 7, 9a</p>
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**Resources provided in this document:**

- Structured text of “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe
- Link to unstructured text

**Guided Reading: “The Raven” (By: Edgar Allan Poe)**

**Directions:** Read the text thoroughly on its own. Then, use the text to answer the following comprehension questions in complete sentences. Make sure to use supporting evidence (i.e. quotes) from the text to support your responses.

**Text:** <https://poemuseum.org/the-raven/>

1       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.  
5       “’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  
10       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;  
15       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,  
20       “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.

25       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 stillness 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!”—  
30       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 thence is, and this mystery explore—  
35       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;  
40 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,  
45 “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,  
50 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 upon 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 farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—  
Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other friend have flown before—  
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before.”  
60 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—  
65 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore  
Of ‘Never—nevermore’.”

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy 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  
70 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;  
75 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!

80 Then, methought, 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 hath sent thee  
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;  
Quaff, of quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

85 “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!”  
90 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—  
95 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!  
100 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;  
105 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!

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**Vocabulary:** Define the following vocabulary words using context clues from the text.

Surcease:

Entreating:

Yore:

Obeisance:

Mien:

Beguiling:

Countenance:

Craven:

Placid:

Tempest:

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**Reading Questions:** Use the above text to answer the following questions.

**Comprehension:**

1. Describe the following in the context of “The Raven:”
  - a. Setting:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Characters(s):
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. Point of view:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - d. Plot:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - e. Conflict:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - f. Theme(s):
  
2. In lines 1–30, what is the narrator afraid of? What words does the author use to emphasize the narrator’s fear?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Who is Lenore? How does the narrator feel about her? What happened to her?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How does the narrator view the Raven? Does that view change overtime? How is the Raven personified?

**Style:**

1. What is the tone of the poem? List 10 words in “The Raven” that establish the tone.
2. Identify the rhyme scheme of “The Raven.” How does this rhyme scheme affect the tone of the poem? Provide examples from the text.
3. “The Raven” is one of Poe’s poems best spoken aloud. Choose a stanza to speak aloud yourself. What techniques and style choices does Poe use in that stanza to make the poem flow better? Identify an instance of alliteration in that stanza.
4. Consider these two instances where Poe repeats the same language in two sequential lines with small changes between the two. How does this affect the tone of the poem?

82           Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;  
              Quaff, of quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”

34           Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—  
              Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—

**Theme:**

1. Look at the last line of each stanza. Consider the repetition created by its rhyme, word choice, and formatting. How does the presence of a shorter final line contribute to the poem? How does this

show the theme the author is trying to create?

2. "The Raven" is a piece of gothic literature. Highlight or underline three examples from the text of gothic tone and imagery.
3. Do you think that the Raven is a good, evil, or neutral figure in this poem? What does the Raven symbolize?
4. Is the narrator reliable or unreliable? How does Poe use word choice and syntax to promote this theme of uncertainty?

**Research:**

1. In "The Raven," Poe uses several allusions to literature and mythology. Identify and research one of the allusions in "The Raven." How does this background information affect your understanding of the poem?