

The Raven

Central Quote:

PRE-GRAMMAR | Preparation

*Prepare the student for understanding the Central One Idea
by drawing upon his or her prior knowledge or experience.*

1. Do you have a particular object in your life that reminds you vividly of a memorable experience, either good or bad? Briefly explain.

GRAMMAR | Presentation

The student is presented with and discovers essential facts, elements, and features of the poem.

READING NOTES

1. **speaker** – In poetry, we refer to the narrating voice as the speaker. In short stories and novels, we refer to the one telling the story as the narrator.
2. **meter** – the recurrence of a rhythmic pattern in a line of poetry. In short, the rhythm in a line of poetry.
3. **foot** – the combination of stressed and unstressed syllables in a unit of meter in a line of poetry
4. **trochaic** – A trochee is a particular kind of foot that has a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable.
Ónce ůp | ón ă | mídnġht | dreárġ, | whġle Ĩ | pónġered, | weák ănd | weárġ (1.1)
5. **octameter** – eight metrical feet per line
6. **morrow** (2.3) – the next day
7. **mien** (7.4) – appearance; demeanor
8. **bust of Pallas** (7.5) – a head-and-shoulders statue of Pallas Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom
9. **Night’s Plutonian shore** (8.5) – a phrase in which Poe brings darkness and night together with Pluto, the Roman god of the underworld, and possibly the shore of the afterlife
10. **Seraphim** (14.2) – a special class of angels; literally “burning ones”; the highest rank in the Christian angelic hierarchy
11. **nepenthe** (14.4) – a medicine used by the ancients to bring forgetfulness of sorrow; an anti-depressant
12. **quaff** (14.5) – to drink heartily
13. **balm in Gilead** (15.5) – a healing compound made from a bush that grew plentifully in Gilead
14. **distant Aidenn** (16.3) – from Hebrew “Eden”; paradise

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

accumulated facts, traditions, or beliefs
about a particular subject

attractively unusual or old-fashioned

awkward; clumsy

to bring to an end; to stop

charming or enchanting, sometimes in a
deceptive way

propriety and good taste in conduct
or appearance

respect; deference

rest or relief

suitably; appropriately

a vessel made for burning incense

1. Over many a **quaint** and curious volume of forgotten lore (1.2)

2. Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten **lore** (1.2)

3. From my books **surcease** of sorrow – sorrow for the lost Lenore (2.4)

4. Not the least **obeisance** made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he (7.3)

5. Then this ebony bird **beguiling** my sad fancy into smiling (8.1)

6. By the grave and stern **decorum** of the countenance it wore (8.2)

7. Much I marveled this **ungainly** fowl to hear discourse so plainly (9.1)

8. Startled at the stillness broken by reply so **aptly** spoken (11.1)

9. Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen **censer** (14.1)

10. **respite** and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore (14.4)



Read "The Raven," marking the poem in key places.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. The opening line, "Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary" gives us a revealing insight into:
 - a. comedy and terror
 - b. form and content
 - c. setting and character
 - d. irony and apostrophe

2. In stanza two, the speaker gives specific details about the setting. Identify two.

3. The **alliteration** in 2.5, "For the rare and radiant maiden," might have been employed by Poe for what purpose?
 - a. It enhances how the speaker feels about Lenore.
 - b. no purpose at all
 - c. It provides a way for the speaker to discuss what he is reading in his books.
 - d. paradox

4. This is Poe's most well-known poem, published in 1845, for which he quickly became famous. What words, lines, or features of the poem stand out to you? List three.

5. Describe three particulars of **sound imagery** the narrator hears, beginning in stanza 3 and following.

6. List three characteristics of the raven.

7. Describe the progression of the speaker's conversations with the raven. Include a few lines from the poem in your answer.

8. Does the raven leave the speaker alone in the end? Include a line from the poem in your answer.

LOGIC | Dialectic

The student reasons with the facts, elements, and features of the poem, and begins to uncover and determine the Central One Idea.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The poem consists of eighteen six-line stanzas written in **trochaic octameter**. The rhyme pattern is *abcbbb*, with the *b* lines rhyming with "Lenore" and "nevermore." This pattern evokes _____ in the **mood** of the lyric.
- a. fear and excitement c. darkness and gloom
b. softness and intelligence d. freedom and humor
2. What effect does the frequent **dialogue** provide the poem?

3. Do you see the raven as a **symbol** for something? What might it represent?

4. Why do you suppose Poe chose a raven for the creature to relay the man's worst fear?

5. What does the speaker discover from the raven when he seeks information about whether he will see Lenore in the afterlife? How might this connect to the Central One Idea?

6. Where do we find the speaker's soul in the last stanza of the poem? What might the raven's eyes and shadow **represent**?

7. How does the last stanza encompass the Central One Idea of the poem?

RHETORIC | Expression

The student explains in his or her own words the Central One Idea with supporting details.

1 CENTRAL ONE IDEA

1. In a few sentences, **summarize** “The Raven.”

2. Write the **Central One Idea** of the story in a complete sentence.

3. List two or three features of the poem that support your determination of the Central One Idea.

4. Choose a line(s) from the poem that you think best embodies the Central One Idea – and with good penmanship, write it in the Central Quote section at the beginning of this lesson.

1 CENTRAL ONE IDEA (as expressed by the teacher)

ESSAY OPTION

Write an essay in which you discuss the role of the main symbol in the poem (the raven) and how it contributes to and/or reveals the speaker’s deteriorating mental state.