

9.2.1

Lesson 4

Introduction

In this lesson, students closely read paragraphs 4 through 7 of “The Tell-Tale Heart” (from “Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious” to “—to feel the presence of my head within the room.”) and respond to questions about the text. In this excerpt, the actions of the eighth night are slowly revealed as the old man awakens fearfully, and the narrator plans his next move.

Through this lesson’s text analysis, students will learn how the narrative point of view contributes to the reader’s understanding of the central ideas of madness and obsession. Additionally, students will continue to consider how Poe makes structural choices regarding manipulation of time. Students will engage in evidence-based discussions in pairs and small groups, as well as complete a brief writing assignment to close the lesson. For homework, students will preview the following lesson’s text by reading and annotating paragraphs 8–13. Additionally, students will continue to read their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) through the lens of their focus standard (RL.9-10.4) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
CCRA.R.6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.5	Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
W.9-10.9.a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. a. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play

	by Shakespeare]”).
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Assessment

Assessment(s)

The learning in this lesson will be captured through a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students will answer the following prompt based on the close reading (citing text evidence and analyzing key words and phrases) completed in the lesson:

- How does the narrator’s point of view contribute to the reader’s understanding of a central idea?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response may include the following:

- Through the narrator’s point of view, as he retells the story, Poe further develops the central idea of madness. The narrator discusses how powerful and accomplished he feels as he carries out his plan on the eighth night: “Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph.” This shows how mad he is because he feels excited about carrying out his plan to kill the old man. He also can identify with the old man’s terror and he pities him but also laughs at him, revealing his contradictory nature or madness: “I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart.”
- Through the narrator’s point of view, as he retells the story, Poe further develops the central idea of obsession. The narrator continues to enter the old man’s room, even when the old man is startled: “and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.” This shows how obsessed the narrator is; the old man startling will not prevent the narrator from carrying out his plan. Additionally, the narrator does not move for an hour while the old man is sitting up; the narrator relentlessly carries out his plan.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- sagacity (n.) – the ability to make good judgments or to plan ahead

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- suppositions (n.) – assumptions or hypotheses
- vain (adj.) – baseless or worthless

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.2, CCRA.R.6, RL.9-10.5, W.9-10.9.a Text: “The Tell-Tale Heart,” paragraphs 4–7 	
Learning Sequence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Paragraphs 4–7 Reading and Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 65% 15% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Checklist and Rubric (refer to 9.2.1 Lesson 1)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
	Plain text (no symbol) indicates teacher action.
	Bold text (no symbol) indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text (no symbol) indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
❗	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction to Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and sharing the assessed standards for this lesson: RL.9-10.2 and CCRA.R.6. In this lesson, students will explore paragraphs 4–7, in which the actions of the eighth night are slowly revealed as the old man fearfully awakens, and the narrator plans his next move. Through this lesson’s text analysis, students will learn how the narrative point of view further develops the central

ideas of madness and obsession. Additionally, students will continue to consider how Poe makes structural choices regarding manipulation of time.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

① Students analyzed standards CCRA.R.6 in Lesson 1 of this unit, and RL.9-10.2 in Module 9.1.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Ask students to take out their Lesson 3 reflective writing homework. Instruct students to form pairs and discuss their responses. (Lesson 3's homework prompt: How does Poe continue to develop and refine the central ideas of madness and obsession in paragraph 3?)

- ▶ Student pairs discuss their Lesson 3 homework responses.

Lead a brief share out to ensure the responses are supported by the text and demonstrate understandings of key ideas.

☞ Student responses may include the following:

- Poe reveals how slow and cautiously the narrator is moving to demonstrate his madness and obsession.
- The narrator does not want to “disturb the old man’s sleep,” so that he can shine the “single thin ray” on the “vulture eye.”
- The narrator seeks out the eye so he can “do the work,” showing his obsession.
- The narrator executes his plan at night and then acts friendly to the old man in the morning, revealing his madness. He does this for “seven long nights,” showing his obsession and madness, as he is willing to continue this routine so that he can catch a glimpse of the eye to kill the old man.

Instruct students to stay in their pairs from the previous activity and take out their annotated copies of “The Tell-Tale Heart.” Instruct student pairs to share their paragraphs 4–7 annotation (Lesson 3's homework).

☞ Student responses may include:

(Paragraph 4)

- Box around the word *sagacity*.
- Star near the idea, “I fairly chuckled at the idea” – noting the narrator wants to laugh about his plan.
- Star near, “for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled.” – this night is different in that the old man awakens.

- Exclamation point near, “and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily” – noting the narrator’s fearlessness; he wants to kill the old man.
- (Paragraphs 5 and 6)
- Star near, “For a whole hour I did not move a muscle” – he is waiting a long time to make his next move.
 - Box around *death watches*.
- (Paragraph 7)
- Boxes around the words *bosom*, *suppositions*, *vain*, *unperceived*.
 - Question mark near, “the terrors that distracted me” – What terrors frighten the narrator?
 - Question mark near, “He had been saying to himself” – How does the narrator know what the old man is thinking?

Activity 3: Paragraphs 4–7 Reading and Discussion

65%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment (How does the narrator’s point of view continue to develop a central idea?). Explain to students that this is the lesson assessment and the focus for today’s reading.

- ▶ Students read the assessment and listen.

① Display the Quick Write assessment for students to see.

Instruct students to form small groups and read aloud paragraph 4 in their groups (From “Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious” to “and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.”)

- ▶ Students form small groups and read aloud paragraph 4.

① Consider forming heterogeneous groupings to support students with reading this complex text.

Post or project the following questions for the student groups to discuss:

① Consider writing the questions on a handout for the small groups.

Why does the narrator experience “feelings of triumph”?

- 💬 He feels powerful and accomplished because the old man is unaware of his plans: “and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts”.

① Consider giving students the definition of *sagacity*: “the ability to make good judgments or plan ahead”.

What does the use of “chuckled” reveal about the narrator’s feelings in this paragraph?

- 💬 The narrator feels good about his methodical planning: “he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts.” He is proud of himself for his strategic planning.

How does the narrator respond to the old man's sudden movement?

- 🗣️ He continues to push into the old man's room: "Now you may think that I drew back—but no." He continues to open the door "steadily, steadily."

- ① Circulate and listen to the small groups' discussions. Remind students to use evidence from the text to support their thinking.
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Instruct small groups to read aloud paragraphs 5–6 (From "I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern" to "hearkening to the death watches in the wall").

- ▶ Small groups read aloud paragraphs 5–6.

Post or project the following questions for the student groups to discuss:

- ① Consider writing the questions on a handout for the small groups.

How does the narrator respond to the old man "crying out"?

- 🗣️ He does not move for "a whole hour."

Why does the narrator not "move a muscle" for a "whole hour"?

- 🗣️ He is determined to see the old man's eye; he wants to move forward with his plan.

Remind students of their work with RL.9-10.5 in the previous lesson, and their ongoing work with W.9-10.9.a. Instruct the small groups to discuss and annotate this excerpt for Poe's structural choices concerning manipulation of time.

- 🗣️ The narrator does not move for a whole hour and the old man does not lie down: "For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down." The story's action is halted.

- ① Circulate and listen to the small groups' discussions. Remind students to use evidence from the text to support their thinking.
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Instruct small groups to read aloud the first part of paragraph 7 (from "Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan" through "I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart") and answer the following questions:

- ▶ Small groups read aloud the first part of paragraph 7 and answer the following questions:

- ① Post or project the questions for the student groups to discuss.

① Consider writing the questions on a handout for the small groups.

Why does the narrator pity the old man?

- Student responses should include the following: The narrator says he pities the old man because he has felt the same terror “many a night.”

Explain the narrator’s feelings in the following sentence “I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart.” What is the purpose of the word “although” in this sentence?

- It sets up a contrast to reveal the narrator’s madness. It shows a disconnect between feeling pity for the old man and laughing at his fear.

Instruct students to return to the text and annotate for evidence of the narrator’s point of view (POV). Remind students that as they annotate, they are beginning to identify evidence to be used in upcoming writing assessments.

Instruct small groups to read aloud the second part of paragraph 7 (from “I knew that he had been lying awake ever since” through “—to feel the presence of my head within the room”) and answer the following questions:

- ▶ Small groups read aloud the second part of paragraph 7 and answer the following questions.

① Post or project the questions for the student groups to discuss.

① Consider writing the questions on a handout for the small groups.

What are the old man’s *suppositions*?

- The reasons for his fears: “He had been saying to himself—‘It is nothing but the wind in the chimney’”
- ① Some students may note the similarity to the word *suppose*, to suggest that the old man’s *suppositions* are thoughts that he *supposes* to be true.

Why are the old man’s *suppositions* in *vain*?

- The old man’s reasons are all worthless because the narrator knows that death is coming to the old man.

What does *in vain* mean in this context?

- *In vain* means “useless or worthless.”

What is the “unperceived shadow” in the last sentence?

- ☞ Student responses may include the following: It is “Death” stalking the old man. It is the narrator putting his head in the room.

① The narrator is personifying Death. Some students may say the shadow is the narrator and some may say it is Death. Encourage this discussion, as it continues to develop the central idea of madness.

Remind students of their work with RL.9-10.5 in the previous lesson, and their ongoing work with W.9-10.9.a. Instruct the small groups to discuss and annotate for Poe’s structural choices in this excerpt concerning manipulation of time.

- ▶ Students discuss and annotate for Poe’s structural choices in this excerpt.
- ☞ Students responses may include:
 - There is no action in this paragraph, only the narrator and old man listening to each other. The narrator is revealing his thinking about the old man’s terror and impending death.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does the narrator’s point of view contribute to the reader’s understanding of a central idea?

Remind students to use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide their written responses.

- ① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.
- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
 - ☞ See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to continue their Accountable Independent Reading through the lens of their focus standard (RL.9-10.4) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

Instruct students to preview the following lesson’s text by annotating paragraphs 8–13 according to the protocols established in 9.1.1, and using the codes CI, SC, and POV.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Continue reading your Accountable Independent Reading text through the lens of the assigned focus standard (RL.9-10.4) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.

Preview the following lesson's text by annotating paragraphs 8–13.