

9.2.1

Lesson 6

Introduction

In this lesson, students read paragraph 14 through the end of “The Tell-Tale Heart” (from “When I had made an end of these labors” through “—It is the beating of his hideous heart!”), in which the narrator finally admits his murderous deed to the police.

Students will analyze how Poe drives the story toward the narrator’s confession in the last paragraph and consider how a new idea, guilt, emerges and develops in the resolution of the story. Additionally, students will continue to analyze how Poe further develops the ideas of madness and obsession through specific textual details.

Students will read independently and engage in evidence-based discussions in pairs, a small group, and the whole class, as well as complete a brief writing assignment to close the lesson. For homework, 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. Additionally, students will reflect on previous lessons’ textual analysis and write a paragraph response to the following question: Which section of the story seems to be the most successful in creating tension? Explain why, providing evidence of Poe’s structural choices to support your thinking.

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.
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.
CCRA.R.6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

W.9-10.9.a	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>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]”).</p>
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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:

- Where does a new central idea emerge? How does Poe develop this idea in the conclusion of the story?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response may include the following:

The idea of guilt emerges in paragraph 16. Poe develops this idea by:

- Creating a physical reaction in the narrator and gradually increasing the effects of this physical reaction throughout the end of the story. The narrator, at first, develops a headache and a distant ringing in his ears: “My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears.” This feeling gains intensity, as the ringing becomes more distinct and the narrator grows pale, he gasps for breath, he argues, and he paces frantically: “I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently.”
- Comparing the police officers’ actions with the narrator’s actions. The narrator is feeling guilty and thinks he hears the dead man’s beating heart. The police on the other hand, seem unaware of the narrator’s crime and don’t seem to notice the “noise” or the narrator’s guilt-provoked actions. For example, the police continue to smile and chat, as the narrator falls apart: “but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not?”
- Connecting the narrator’s guilt to his obsessive and mad tendencies. Poe ties the narrator’s guilt into his obsession and madness, which are the main reasons for killing the old man. For example, Poe describes the ringing as “a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.” This imagery is the same comparison used to describe the beating heart that triggers the narrator’s murder of the old man. Additionally, the narrator’s guilt physically reveals his insanity, as he swings a chair,

foams, raves, swears, and finally admits his “deed”: “Oh God! What could I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore!” Finally, the “beating heart” is imagined by the narrator (the old man is dead and his heart no longer beats), further revealing his madness and obsession: “I admit the deed!—tear up the planks! Here, here!—It is the beating of his hideous heart!”

- Revealing the narrator’s gradual loss of control. When the police first arrive, the narrator is arrogant and carefree about the murder: “I smiled,—for what had I to fear?” After the guilt starts to take hold, the narrator slowly loses control by imagining the “noise” of the beating heart becoming louder, increasing the intensity of his physical reactions, and speeding up the narrator’s way of speaking. For example, he begins to talk excitedly, repeat himself, and talk in more direct, simple exclamations: “I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!” This way of speaking is different from the narrator’s way of speaking when he initially plans the murder.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- reposed (v.) – rested
- dissemble (v.) – to give a false or misleading appearance
- deed (n.) – something that is done, performed, or accomplished
- fatigues (n.) – weariness from bodily or mental exertion
- gesticulations (n.) – animated or excited gestures

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

- audacity (n.) – boldness or daring, especially with confident or arrogant disregard for personal safety, conventional thought, or other restrictions
- vehemently (adv.) – emotionally, passionately, intensely
- mockery (n.) – ridicule, contempt, or derision
- hypocritical (adj.) – the pretense of having virtues, beliefs, or principles that one does not actually possess

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.5, CCRA.R.6, W.9-10.9.a Text: “The Tell-Tale Heart,” paragraphs 14–18 (end of the text) <p>Learning Sequence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Paragraphs 14–18 Reading and Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 15% 65% 10% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of 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 lesson agenda and assessed standards for this lesson: RL.9-10.2. In this lesson, students will read and annotate paragraphs 14 through 18 (the end) of “The Tell-Tale Heart” and analyze

how Poe drives the story toward the narrator’s confession. Students will consider how a new central idea emerges and develops in the resolution of the story. Students will work in pairs, small groups, and as a class, and will conclude the lesson with a brief writing assignment.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they can apply their focus standard, RL.9-10.4, to their text. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson’s AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard (RL.9-10.4) to their AIR text from the previous lesson’s homework.

Instruct students to do a Turn-and-Talk in pairs about their revised annotation from Lesson 5’s homework.

- ▶ See annotation examples from Lessons 2–5 for possible student responses.

Explain that the revised annotation focused on central idea and that this lesson’s reading will also focus on central idea as well as Poe’s structural choices.

- ▶ Students listen.

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 14–18 annotation (Lesson 5’s homework). Remind students to think about the annotation codes from Module 9.1 by looking for sections of text that are confusing, areas that are reminders of other texts, sections that strike or surprise in some way, unfamiliar words and phrases, and ideas that seem important.

Annotation may include:

(Paragraph 14)

- Boxes around the words *suavity*, *aroused*, *deputed*.
- Star near “for what had I now to fear?”

(Paragraph 15)

- Boxes around the words *bade*, *fatigues*, *audacity*, *reposed*.
- Star near “I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed,” noting the narrator’s fearlessness and confidence.

(Paragraph 16)

- Star near “My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears,” noting the narrator’s physical changes.
- Question mark in the margin: Why does the narrator begin hearing the ringing?

(Paragraph 17)

- Boxes around the words *vehemently*, *gesticulations*, *mockery*, *derision*, *agony*, *hypocritical*.
- Star near “a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton,” noting the exact same description of the beating heart previously addressed in the text.
- Exclamation point near “I foamed—I raved—I swore!” to note the narrator’s erratic behavior.
- Question mark in the margin: Are the police unaware of the narrator’s crazy behavior?
- Question mark in the margin: How can the narrator “hear” the dead man’s beating heart?

(Paragraph 18)

- Boxes around the words *dissemble*, *deed*.
- Question mark near “‘Villains!’ I shrieked,” asking why the narrator would call the police villains when he is actually the villain himself.

① The focus of this annotation is to familiarize the students with this section of the text again before additional text analysis in the following activity.

Activity 3: Paragraphs 14–18 Reading and Discussion

65%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment: (Where does a new central idea emerge? How does Poe develop this idea in the conclusion of the story?). Explain to students that this is the lesson assessment and the focus for paragraphs 14–18 reading.

- ▶ Students read the assessment and listen.

① Display the Quick Write assessment for students to see.

Instruct students to keep this assessment in mind as they analyze the text in the evidence-based discussion. Explain to students that throughout the discussion, they will stop and take notes in preparation for this Quick Write assessment.

Instruct students to independently reread paragraphs 14 and 15 (from “When I had made an end of these labors” through “the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim”).

- ▶ Students silently reread paragraphs 14 and 15.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle reading independently, consider reading aloud paragraphs 14–15 for support.

Ask students the following questions and instruct them to discuss in their pairs:

- ① Remind students to add to/revise their annotation and elaborate on ideas in a notebook or on self-stick notes.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider having the students discuss the questions in pairs before sharing out with the whole class.

Why does the narrator have a “light heart”?

- ☛ Student responses should include the following: Because he thinks he has nothing to fear: “for what had I now to fear?” He has effectively cleaned up the murder and buried the body.

In paragraphs 14 and 15, what is the effect of the narrator’s question “What had I to fear?”

- ☛ The narrator draws attention to his over-confident attitude that he will get away with the murder of the old man.

What does the narrator do in the “enthusiasm of [his] confidence”?

- ☛ The narrator leads the police into the old man’s chamber, the scene of the murder.

What is the narrator’s “perfect triumph”?

- ☛ He thinks he is getting away with the murder by fooling the police: “I bade them search—search well.” He is even willing to let the police search the old man’s bedroom and rest there: “I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues.”
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with the meaning of *fatigues*, consider giving them the definition: “weariness from bodily or mental exertion.” Also, consider providing students with the definition of *audacity*: “boldness or daring.”

What does the narrator do with “wild audacity”?

- The narrator moves his seat “upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.” He is sitting on top of the dead body, not afraid of being caught.

Lead a brief full class discussion about student observations.

Instruct students to independently reread paragraph 16 (from “The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them” through “until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears”).

- ▶ Students silently reread paragraph 16.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle reading independently, consider reading aloud paragraph 16 for support.

Ask students the following questions and instruct them to discuss in their pairs:

- ① Remind students to add to/revise their annotation and elaborate on ideas in a notebook or on self-stick notes.
- ① Consider having the students discuss the questions in pairs before sharing out with the whole class.

What does the narrator mean by “I found that the noise was not within my ears”?

- The narrator now believes that the sound of the heart beating is real and that others should be able to hear the sound as well.

What is happening to the narrator in this paragraph?

- He is becoming physically ill; he pales and experiences a headache. He begins to hear a ringing in his ears and is becoming agitated: “I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone.”

Lead a brief full class discussion about student observations.

Ask students to identify a structural choice Poe makes in paragraph 16, and describe the effect of that choice.

- Poe shows the narrator’s growing agitation through his use of repetition when describing the increasing distinctness of the ringing: “The ringing became more distinct:—It continued and became more distinct.”

Instruct students to annotate that structural choice with SC (structural choice) and explain that choice in the margin of their text.

- ▶ Students annotate.

Instruct students to independently reread paragraphs 17–18, the end of the text (from “No doubt I now grew very pale;—but I talked more fluently” through “It is the beating of his hideous heart!”).

- ▶ Students silently reread paragraphs 17–18.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle reading independently, consider reading aloud paragraphs 17–18 for support.

Ask students the following questions and instruct them to discuss in their pairs. Remind students to add to/revise their annotation and elaborate on ideas in a notebook or on self-stick notes.

- ① Consider having the students discuss the questions in pairs before sharing out with the whole class.
- ① Draw students’ attention to the narrator’s repetition of the description of the beating heart as “a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.” The narrator first describes the heart this way in paragraph 10. This repetition connects to the narrator’s obsession with the eye and the beating heart.

Describe the narrator’s way of speaking in the beginning of this excerpt.

- ☛ The narrator is speaking “more fluently,” “with a heightened voice” meaning loudly, “more quickly,” and arguing “in a high key.”

Ask students to volunteer a definition of *vehemently*. If students struggle, provide them with a definition: “emotionally, loudly, passionately.”

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider giving students the definition of *gesticulations* (“animated or excited gestures”) to further illustrate the narrator’s erratic behavior.

What effect is the “noise” having on the narrator?

- ☛ The “noise” is gradually driving the narrator insane and causing him to exhibit erratic behavior. He is arguing and talking “in a high key.” He swings a chair and grates “it upon the boards.” He is swearing and foaming: “I foamed—I raved—I swore!”

How do the police react to the narrator’s behavior?

- ☛ The police seem to be unaware of the narrator’s disturbing behavior; they are continuing to chat pleasantly and smile: “And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled.” They seem ignorant that anything is wrong.

Why does the narrator think the police were “making a mockery” of his horror?

- The police remain calm as the narrator grows more agitated. The narrator thinks the police are making fun of him or ridiculing him because, unlike the narrator, the police remain unaware of the beating heart. By contrast, the narrator is “hearing” a beating heart and he does not understand why the police continue to act as if nothing is the matter: “I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer!” This contrast shows the narrator’s madness.

Why does the narrator call the police officers’ smiles *hypocritical*?

- They are *hypocritical* or false because he believes they are pretending not to hear the beating heart.

Who does the narrator call “Villains”?

- The narrator calls the police villains.

Offer students the definition of *dissemble*: “to give a false or misleading appearance.”

What does the command, “dissemble no more” reveal about the narrator?

- The narrator believes the police are being dishonest with him, pretending not to hear the beating heart.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider giving students the definitions of *deed* (“something that is done, performed, or accomplished”) and *derision* (“ridicule or mockery”).

What drives the narrator to “admit the deed”?

- Student responses may include:
 - The narrator is driven to confess by the beating heart that only he can hear, because it represents his own obsession.
 - The presence of the police makes him confess.
 - The narrator is overwhelmed by guilt for killing the old man, whom he “loved.”
 - When the narrator was obsessed with the eye, his response was to kill the old man. Now that the old man is dead, there is nothing more the narrator can do, other than confess, to rid himself of the beating heart.

Instruct students to reread paragraphs 17 and 18 and annotate for punctuation.

- ▶ Students independently annotate paragraphs 17 and 18, noting Poe’s use of punctuation.

Instruct students to form small groups and discuss the following question about Poe’s use of text structure in paragraph 17.

- ▶ Students form small groups and discuss the following question.
- ① Display the question or provide in hard copy.
- ① Remind students that they will revisit their annotations for and discussions about text structure in the Mid-Unit Assessment, in which they will draw evidence from the text to support their analysis (W.9-10.9.a).

What is the effect of Poe’s use of punctuation in paragraphs 17 and 18?

- ☛ The short questions (“What could I do?”) and exclamations (“Oh God!” “I foamed—I raved—I swore!” “Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!” “tear up the planks! here, here!”) show that the narrator is anxious and frantic, and increase the pace of the story as the narrator completely loses control and confesses to the murder.

Activity 4: Quick Write

10%

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

Where does a new central idea emerge? How does Poe develop this idea in the conclusion of the story?

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

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.
- ① Display the Quick Write prompt for students to see or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to independent Quick Write.

- ☛ See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to continue their 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.

Additionally, instruct students to reflect on the previous lessons' textual analysis and write a paragraph response to the following question: Which section of the story seems to be the most successful in creating tension? Explain why, providing evidence of Poe's structural choices to support your thinking. Remind students to use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide their written responses.

▶ Students follow along.

① The reflective writing homework will be used to inform the instruction in the following lesson (Lesson 7).

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.

Reflect on this lesson and previous lessons' textual analysis and write a paragraph response to the following question: Which section of the story seems to be the most successful in creating tension? Explain why, providing evidence of Poe's structural choices to support your thinking.