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Teaching Unit™

Sample

Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide

The Raven and Other Favorite Poems

by Edgar Allan Poe

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Notes

This Poetry Teaching Unit is designed to be worked through in the order the poems are presented. Occasionally, a study question on one poem may refer to another poem encountered earlier in the Unit. This approach encourages students to build on what they have learned and make connections, as they will when progressing through a novel's chapters.

Teachers wishing to bypass certain poems or to teach them in a different order will find that the Unit can be easily adapted to their needs. The vast bulk of the study questions focus on the poem directly at hand; the majority of the test questions focus on the poems deemed most likely to be taught if others are passed over. To adapt the Unit, teachers can simply scan the study and test questions crossing out any undesired ones before reproducing the pages for students.

Please also note that, in order to complete the essay portion of the provided test, students will need access to either their books or photocopies of the poems to be discussed.

All references come from the 1991 Dover Thrift Edition of *The Raven and Other Favorite Poems*, edited by Stanley Appelbaum.

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. understand and explain the relationship of a poem's form to its content.
2. compare and contrast two or more poems through an examination of both form and content.
3. compare and contrast two or more poems' treatment of the same subject.
4. distinguish between the poetic forms of sonnets, ballads, and elegies, and point out examples of each in the text.
5. comment on the themes, concerns, and trends in Poe's poetry.
6. define all of the vocabulary words listed in the study guide.
7. identify the following figures of sound and point out examples of each in *The Raven and Other Favorite Poems*: alliteration, assonance, consonance, and half rhyme.
8. identify the following forms and elemental units of poetry and point out examples of each in *The Raven and Other Favorite Poems*: sonnet, stanza, couplet, quatrain, catalog verse, sestet, dialogue poem, lyric poem, elegy poem, and free verse.
9. identify the following figures of speech and point out examples of each in the text: metaphor, simile, irony, allusion, imagery, personification, narrator, chiasmus, parallelism, theme, and tone.
10. understand the value of poetry as a form of self-expression.
11. infer details not explicitly stated in the text.
12. understand the difference between the poet and the speaker of the poem.
13. understand the effects of repetition, diction, and syntax in a poem.
14. identify a poem's rhyme scheme and be able to write it out.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Discuss the use of repetition and onomatopoeia in “The Raven” and “The Bells.”
2. Compare and contrast “The Coliseum” and “The Haunted Palace” in terms of their tones and views of the world.
3. Consider Poe’s “The City in the Sea” and “The Valley of Unrest” in terms of their development of a common theme.
4. Discuss the ways Poe mourns the loss of youth in his poems.
5. Discuss the ways both “The Conqueror Worm” and “Eldorado” attempt to define the “successful man.”
6. Discuss Poe’s use of the poem as an inspirational device, particularly through his “To—” and “Dreams.” Is poetry an effective form of inspirational writing in today’s society?
7. Imagine that you are the one being spoken to in “A Dream within a Dream.” How would you respond to Poe’s concluding question?
8. Discuss the ways in which alliteration and internal rhyme saturate Poe’s “The Raven” and the effect they have on the poem’s tone.
9. Discuss the way that Poe uses the image of Helen of Troy in his two “Helen” poems.
10. Compare the ways “The Raven” and “Romance” use animals to convey their themes.
11. Discuss the stream-of-conscious form of “The Happiest Day, the Happiest Hour” in terms of its use of interruptions.
12. Discuss the use of natural imagery by Poe in his sonnets.
13. Compare the ways Poe discusses man’s mortality in “Sonnet–Silence” and “Alone.”
14. Discuss the speaker’s emotional response to his journey in “Ulalume.”
15. Choose your favorite poem from the anthology and discuss why it appeals to you both formally and thematically. Use specific examples from the poem to explain how it works for you.

“Spirits of the Dead”

VOCABULARY

orbs – eyes
pry – search; look into
solitude – loneliness; isolation

1. What does the speaker mean when he writes, “Be silent in that solitude,/Which is not loneliness—”?

2. What poetic device is used in section III?

3. “From their high thrones in the heaven” is an allusion to what?

4. What is meant by the simile in the fourth stanza?

5. What is the “mist upon the hill” a “symbol and a token” of?

“To —”

VOCABULARY

baubles – worthless trinkets
bowers – anchors carried at the front of a ship
desolately – dreary; sad
wantonest – most immoral

1. Who or what in the first stanza “Are lips”?

2. What is the “truth” that the speaker seeks to buy?

“The Coliseum”

VOCABULARY

despotic – oppressive; tyrannical
entablatures – upper sections of the coliseum
mimic – to copy or imitate closely
pallid – dull; pale
plinths – bases for columns and stones
pomp – a dignified display
reliquary – something that stores sacred relics

1. What literary device is employed in line 9?

2. Poe’s mention of Gethsemane is an example of what literary term?

3. What does the poem suggest about the power to withstand time?

4. What is the state of the Coliseum in the poem?

5. What message does “Echoes” extend to the speaker of the poem?

6. The last three lines of the poem are an example of what two literary terms?
