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 **Prestwick House**
Activity Pack
Literature Made Fun!



The Best of Poe
BY EDGAR ALLAN POE



Prestwick House

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Poe's Contemporaries

Objective: Comparing the author's contemporaries

Activity

By researching other writers during Poe's lifetime (1809-1849), you will be able to understand the literary environment in which he was writing. Some of the individuals listed on the following chart wrote in the same genre, while others wrote very differently than Poe did.

Research and make notations about each of the writers on the chart. Record the respective field (for example, poetry, essays, or general literature), his or her country of origin, year of birth and death, and major literary accomplishments. The first has been completed for you.

CONTEMPORARIES CHART

Person	Origin	Field	Accomplishments
Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)	American	Literature	The Scarlet Letter; The House of Seven Gables
Herman Melville (1819-1891)			
Washington Irving (1783-1859)			
Mary Shelley (1797-1851)			
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)			
Lord Byron (1788-1824)			
Ralph Waldo Emerson (1802-1882)			
Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)			
Charles Dickens (1812-1870)			

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Create a Newspaper

Objectives: Distinguishing fact from opinion
Writing in various newspaper styles

Activity

In this activity, you will create an edition of a newspaper based on the events in Poe's short story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue."

News stories answer the following questions: *Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How*. This information is usually contained in the first paragraph, with the rest of the story filling in the secondary details. Excellent journalists can put the facts in the first sentence without it appearing forced. The main purpose of a news story is to inform and educate readers, by simply stating factual information.

While most "hard" news stories try to answer these questions in the first or second paragraph, "feature" or "human interest" stories may answer them throughout the piece.

Human interest stories concentrate less on the facts and do not always place the 4Ws, 1H in the beginning; this type of journalism focuses more on how the story will resonate with the paper's readers. Human-interest stories deal with subjects the editors of the paper feel their audience wants to explore. These types of stories are frequently about animals, achievements, curiosities, or unusual happenings—almost any aspect of "human interest." Their purpose is to entertain.

Editorials, however, take facts and develop an opinion based on the facts. The 4Ws, 1H may or may not even be in the editorial. They present information, but in a biased way. Editorials are meant to persuade readers, to have them take action on a subject, or to enlighten readers about an issue on which there are differing views.

1. First, the class as a whole will decide on a name for the newspaper and a slogan, using a brainstorming technique and then choosing from among the suggestions based on a vote.
2. Then, as an individual, pick one of the following types of articles to write. Make sure to give it a catchy headline!

Name: _____

Date: _____

Never Bet the Devil Your Head

Writing a Play

Objective: Re-writing a short story as a play

Activity

The narrator gives the reader a lot of information in just a few short pages that make up this story. Re-read it, imagining the characters on a stage; then rewrite it as a scene in a play. Below is an example that you may use to start your scene. Make sure you include stage directions. You should not change the story, but you may change words or phrasing if needed in order to make the characters on stage speak naturally to each other.

As the play opens, the narrator, an older man, is reflecting on his past life. The story is told in a flashback as the narrator speaks to the audience about his experience with Toby Dammit.

Narrator: It is not my design to vituperate my deceased friend, Toby Dammit. [he pauses reflectively]

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Pit and the Pendulum

The Spanish Inquisition

Objectives: Researching
 Making a presentation
 Creating a poster

Activity

“The Pit and the Pendulum” takes place during the Spanish Inquisition, but the author does not provide many details about this historical event. He names the actual Inquisition only a few times during the story, letting the reader fill in the details. When the narrator first finds himself in the dark cell, he remarks, “And the death just avoided, was of that very character which I had regarded as fabulous and frivolous in the tales respecting the Inquisition.”

Based on your first impressions reading the story, list a few details about the Inquisition which you inferred from the text. Do not worry about whether or not they are accurate; simply brainstorm about how the author presents the event and what your impressions were.

After you have shared with the class what Poe’s images of the Inquisition were, conduct your own research at your school library or media center on the Spanish Inquisition. Your teacher will help you to form topics based on your group brainstorm. Complete the research in small groups.

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Tell-Tale Heart

Characterization

Objective: Interpreting the thoughts and language of a character

Activity

In the first page of the story, the narrator tells the reader that he has been very nervous but is not mad (insane). It might be safe to assume that he is responding to you, the reader, questioning his judgment and actions in retrospect.

Assume that the narrator has been asked by a therapist to describe himself in terms of his personality, attitude, motivation, and emotions. Take notes on the following page.

In small groups, take notes on what the group thinks the narrator would say to the therapist. Base your description on what he tells you about himself in the short story. You may use direct quotations.

Each group will share its notes on **The Narrator's Description of Himself**.

THE NARRATOR'S DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF

1. Personality

2. Attitude

3. Emotions

4. Motivations

Name: _____

Date: _____

A Tale of the Ragged Mountains

Resume Writing

Objective: Interpreting details from the text

Activity

Mr. Augustus Bedloe is seeking a new job. You need to overlook his eventual death at the end of the story and write a resume for him. Your first task will be to think up a career for a person of Bedloe's experience to pursue. Identifying that will allow you to write the resume so that it is targeted to a specific job. Attached is a sample resume for Bedloe's physician, Dr Templeton on the following page. Notice that the resume includes career objectives, prior work experience, skills, personal interests, and references.

A blank resume is attached, but feel free to use a computer if you have one available.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Lenore**"I am" Poem**

Objectives: Synthesizing character traits
Interpreting details from the text

Activity

Write an "I am" poem for Lenore. Draw your information from the character's words and actions. You may choose to use direct quotations where appropriate.

- Line 1: Being with the words "I am."
 Line 2: Write three nouns about which Lenore has strong feelings.
 Line 3: Write a complete sentence about two things Lenore likes.
 Line 4: Begin with three nouns that describe qualities Lenore appreciates in other people. End the sentence with the words "are important to me."
 Line 5: Write a sentence explaining something positive Lenore likes about herself.
 Lines 6 and 7: Begin a sentence in line 6 in which you show something negative Lenore sees in herself or in others; finish the sentence in line 7 by showing that out of something bad can come good. Use the word "but" or "however" to link the two ideas.
 Lines 8-10: Write three short sentences explaining things about which Lenore has strong feelings. These can be likes or dislikes. They do not have to relate to each other or to the previous lines you have written.
 Line 11: End the poem with the words, "I am _____." Fill in Lenore's name.

Example:

- 1 I am
 2 Rain, Forests, and Sunsets.
 3 I like long walks and quiet times
 4 Honesty, Humor, and Peace are important to me.
 5 I find satisfaction in a job well done.
 6 I can be fearsome when my ideas are challenged,
 7 But I thrive on intelligent conversation.
 8 I love nature and animals
 9 I can be counted on to help.
 10 I have strong feelings when a life is threatened.
 11 I am _____.