

"The Tell-Tale Heart"

by Edgar Allan Poe

Essay Question:

How does Edgar Allan Poe keep the reader in suspense in "The Tell-Tale Heart"?

Task:

- In your own words, explain what happens in the story.
- In a paragraph, describe the character telling the story.
- Re-read the story and underline all the words that suggest fear and horror.

Task:

Edgar Allan Poe uses language and literary devices to make the reader feel tense during the story.

1. How does the first sentence create suspense?
2. Poe talks about TIME throughout the story:
 - Find three quotations to do with TIME going slowly in the story.
 - Find two quotations to do with TIME going fast within the story.
 - Write a paragraph about why Poe mentions TIME so much in the story, and why he changes the pace of the story from slow to fast.

3. Repetition:

Poe repeats words a great deal in the story i.e. "Very, very slowly". Write down 3 examples of repetition and explain why Poe repeats words and phrases.

4. Poe uses noises to create atmosphere in the story. The main character says "I heard many things in hell." Fill in this table:

Noise (Quote)	Effect on the reader	Reason why Poe chose the noise
e.g. "Hinges creaked"	Reminds the reader of horror films: they want to know who is behind the door!	Slow action, spooky noise, associated with old houses that have been neglected.

5. Descriptive Language: Poe describes everything in great detail so that the reader can imagine the story like a film. He uses lots of imagery.

- List some of the evil words that he uses: what effect do they have in the story and on the reader?
- How does he make the "eye" sound disgusting?
- How does he make the death sound disgusting?

6. The story is written in first person narrative by the main character.

- List 3 quotations where the main character directly refers to the reader. Why does Poe do this?
- Why does Poe have the murderer tell the story?

7. In your own words, explain why this story gripped your imagination.

8. Finally, draw a graph of the tension in this story.

Well Done! You're now ready to write the essay!!