



A Multimodal Approach to Edgar Allan Poe

Using Drawing to Understand an Author's Style



K20 Center, LEAH ESKER

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Grade Level	8th Grade	Time Frame	150 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	3-4 class periods
Course	American Literature		

Essential Question

How does an author convey mood? How does understanding an author's style contribute to your understanding of a story?

Summary

In this lesson, students use drawing to help them understand key events and analyze the mood and style of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart."

Snapshot

Engage

Students enter the classroom that is lowly lit, and there is a heartbeat sound playing in the background, establishing a "mood" that is similar to the story. On the board, students complete a collaborative I Notice/I Wonder activity about the mood that was generated in the class and also about what they expect to see in stories that are "scary" or "mysterious."

Explore

Students listen to an audio version of "The Tell-Tale Heart." While they listen, they complete a drawing activity.

Explain

Next, students write to explain their drawings and share with a partner. Then, the whole class comes together to define style, mood, imagery, simile, and metaphor.

Extend

Students are now ready for a close reading to explore Poe's use of literary elements to create his unique style. On a handout, students gather evidence for Poe's use of each element as they listen to the story a second time. Students write connections about how their examples illuminate Poe's style.

Evaluate

Students go on a Gallery Walk of other students' drawings and leave sticky note comments, reflecting on

the artist's rendering of Poe's style. Then, they each write a reflection to analyze their own drawing and make connections to how an author/illustrator conveys a mood, giving examples from Poe as well as their own work.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.2.R.1: Summarize alphabetic and/or multimodal texts about similar topics to demonstrate comprehension within and between texts.

8.7.R: Determine the intended purposes of techniques used for rhetorical effects in a variety of alphabetic, aural, visual, spatial, and/or gestural content from various perspectives.

8.7.W: Create engaging multimodal content (i.e., alphabetic, aural, visual, gestural and/or spatial) that intentionally addresses an audience and accomplishes a purpose.

Attachments

- [Lesson Slides—A Multimodal Approach to Edgar Allan Poe.pptx](#)
- [Literary Terms Chart—A Multimodal Approach to Edgar Allan Poe - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Literary Terms Chart—A Multimodal Approach to Edgar Allan Poe - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Literary Terms Chart—A Multimodal Approach to Edgar Allan Poe.docx](#)
- [Literary Terms Chart—A Multimodal Approach to Edgar Allan Poe.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Literary Terms Chart (attached)
- A copy of "The Tell-Tale Heart" text for each student
- Heartbeat sound effect from YouTube
- "The Tell-Tale Heart" audio recording from YouTube
- Plain white paper
- Markers/colored pencils/crayons
- Sticky notes
- Whiteboard/document camera

Engage

Teacher's Note

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to provide a visual aid for students as you proceed through the lesson.

Prepare class ahead of time by having heartbeat sound playing. A YouTube video containing a heartbeat noise is embedded below, but you can use anything that gives off a realistic heartbeat sound. Turn off the lights and have electric candles/low lamps/holiday lights on. Put a sticky note on each desk, as well as blank paper and markers, or have students come get them as they enter the room.

After the bell rings, ask students to write about the changes they notice in the room. Encourage them to be specific, recording their answers on a sticky note. On a second sticky note, they can ask a question about what is going on. Instructions for the activity are on **slide 4**.

After 2 minutes, have them bring their sticky notes to an [I Notice/I Wonder](#) chart that has been drawn on a whiteboard/chalk board/anchor chart. The first stickies should be placed under "I Notice" and their second stickies, the question, should be placed under "I Wonder."

Go over answers with the class and talk about the mood that was created in the room. Lead them to a discussion about what they expect to see in stories that match the mood of the classroom and what they would call stories like that. (They will probably talk about stories that are "scary" or "mysterious.")

Segue into next activity by telling students that, much like the mood was established in the room by the low lighting and sound effects, an author has to create mood with words only.

Embedded video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyzuWGDvkkQ>

Explore

Move to **slide 5** and tell students that they will be listening to an audio performance of "The Tell-Tale Heart."

Before playing audio of the story, instruct students to only use images to draw what comes to mind as they listen. They are to focus on only their own page . . . the story is short, so they don't have time yet to comment on each other's work.

Play audio and walk the room as students draw.

Embedded video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnHFMAxACnM>

Teacher's Note

As you walk around the room observing students, mention abstract vs. concrete. Some students will naturally draw the sequence of events in the story as they happen, like a comic book. Others will focus on specific imagery of concrete words they hear repeated, like spider webs, clocks, the old man's eye, etc. Yet others will capture more abstractly the feelings or tone of the literature. Mention that each type of response is valid.

After listening and completing their drawings, students write a paragraph summarizing what they think the story was about on the back of their drawing, a paragraph describing what they drew and why, and choose from a list of theme statements which one fits their drawing best and why (instructions are on **slide 6**). In a [Think-Pair-Share](#), students share their drawings and responses with another student.

Have the whole class come together. Ask student volunteers to show their drawings on a document camera or by holding them up. Have volunteers explain their drawings and their understandings of the story. Then, review the plot of the story, clearing up any misconceptions. Present the concepts of theme, plot, and mood/tone.

Teacher's Note

This lesson does not serve as an in-depth introduction to these literary terms, so if students are unfamiliar with these elements, then a more thorough review may be necessary.

Explain

The next class period, students revisit their drawings and will write an explanation of their drawing on the back. This step is necessary because sometimes what a student intends to draw doesn't always come out clearly to the observer.

Students share with an [Elbow Partner](#). Once they have had adequate time, ask for a few volunteers to share with the whole class.

Teacher's Note

Often, you will have the entire class wanting to share at this point. Tell students that at the very end of the lesson, there will be a Gallery Walk and that, at that point, they will have the opportunity to look at all of the responses.

Then, help students define mood, style, imagery, repetition, simile, and metaphor (**slides 7-12** give examples of the terms). Give students the attached **Literary Terms Chart** to record their notes. Be sure to help them understand that imagery, repetition, simile, and metaphor are used to help create mood and style.

Extend

Replay the audiobook and give students a [full text](#) of "The Tell-Tale Heart" to read. Present **slide 13** and instruct students to listen carefully for examples that highlight each of the literary terms on the chart. Stop the audio often to point out examples, ask clarifying questions about the plot, etc. This may take a while! Plan on finishing this class period and extending into a third day.

Highlight the importance of the final column, noting how the examples of imagery, repetition, simile, and metaphor help Poe establish mood and how they are used to convey his unique style.

After the close reading is finished, have a discussion where you make connections between the specific elements authors use to invoke a mood and portray their style.

Have students look at their drawings one last time. Ask for how they portrayed a certain mood and style that mimicked Poe's.

Evaluate

Place student drawings in random order around the room. Students will then participate in a [Gallery Walk](#) to look at each other's work (**slide 14** gives instructions on this activity).

As a final reflection writing, ask students to write about the essential questions. How does an author convey mood? How does understanding an author's style contribute to your understanding of a story? They are to cite examples from their own drawings as well as Poe's story. Instructions for this reflection activity are on **slide 15**.

Resources

- cysknife007. (2015, October 2). Show soothing heartbeat sound (1 hour of ASMR) [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyzuWGDvkkQ>
- Horror Readings by G.M. Danielson. (2017, January 13). "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe (dramatic reading) | G.M. Danielson [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnHFMAxACnM>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/cc07ea2d6099763c2dbc9d05b00c4b4>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk / carousel. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505a54d>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I notice, I wonder. strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f507d1a7>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-pair-share. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5064b49>
- Poe, E. A. (1843). The tell-tale heart. POE Museum. <https://www.poemuseum.org/the-tell-tale-heart>