

Teacher Notes



Interpreting Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven*

Activity 1 Exploring *The Raven*

Activity Overview

Students will read *The Raven* and attempt to give a brief synopsis of the poem. This activity presents a classic American poem to students who have never read Poe's work and/or reacquaints students who have read it to gain a better understanding of Poe's use of alliteration, symbolism, and rhyme.

Tip

Get students involved early on by assigning one stanza to each from *The Raven*. (Note: There are 18 stanzas in the poem.) Allow 10 minutes for students to read the poem to themselves. Prior to beginning, teachers should let students know that they will be seeking a summary of what is read from any volunteers. Also direct students to write down words and expressions from the poem that they are not familiar with. Ask for these prior to the oral reading so that these words and expressions can be defined and the pronunciation perfected to prevent errors and encourage a smooth reading.

Activity at a Glance

- ◆ **Subject:** English
- ◆ **Subject Area:** English/Language Arts
- ◆ **Category:** Literary Genres
- ◆ **Topic:** Poetry
- ◆ **Grade Level:** 8 - 10
- ◆ **Prerequisites:** None
- ◆ **Total Teaching Time:** 60 minutes

Materials

- ◆ TI-83 Plus
- ◆ TI External Keyboard
- ◆ StudyCards™ app on each student's TI-83 Plus
- ◆ StudyCards™ Creator on the teacher's PC
- ◆ TI Connect and a TI Connectivity cable or TI-Navigator™ Classroom Network
- ◆ Student Work Sheet: *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe
- ◆ Resource File: **RAVENVOC.8xv**

Directions

Before the Activity Begins

Students should have their devices and keyboards ready for typing.

Since there are 18 stanzas in the poem, assign one stanza to each student in the class to read aloud. Give the students 10 minutes to read the entire poem, and then to reread the stanza assigned to them for oral presentation.

Tell the students to record any words or phrases that they encounter and are not sure of either the meaning or pronunciation. These should be recorded in a new NoteFolio™ file on the TI-83 Plus.

Note: To facilitate understanding of this poem, the teacher can assemble a StudyCards™ file containing words and phrases that may pose problems for students. A StudyCards™ file, **RAENVOC.8xv**, is available with this activity that contains some of the more commonly problematic words and phrases. You can use this as a starting point for your class and add or delete cards to suit your need. Each card in the file is titled with the number of the line where the word or phrase first is used in the poem. These numbers correspond to the numbers on the lines of the poem that is included at the end of this activity. (Many definitions are taken or derived from the *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd Edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983).)

During the Activity

When the students have read the poem, ask for words and phrases that they had trouble with. Explain the meaning of each word or phrase they mention and help with the pronunciation, if necessary.

Have the students read *The Raven* aloud. Students should read their assigned stanza in correct order.

After the students have finished reading the poem aloud, call on individual students and ask them to give a verbal summary of *The Raven*.

Have the students enter at least three questions that they have concerning "The Raven" into a new NoteFolio™ file on their TI-83 Plus handhelds.

When students are finished with this exercise, have each student share at least one question aloud with the class that will be addressed by the instructor and/or classmates. Allow 15- 25 minutes for this exercise.

Accessing the NoteFolio™ Application on the TI-83 Plus

The following procedure enables you to access the NoteFolio™ Application. It assumes that the software is already installed on the device.

Note: NoteFolio™ App is most efficiently used on the TI-83 Plus with the TI Keyboard.

1. Turn on the device and press **APPS** to display the list of installed applications. Select the **NoteFlio** Application by using **▲** **▼** to scroll to it in the list.



2. Press **ENTER**. Press any key to clear the NoteFolio™ App Introduction screen. A blank (new) NoteFolio™ App file is initially displayed.



3. Students should complete the assignment.

Note: If you are not using a TI Keyboard, remember to press the **ALPHA** key to type letters.

4. When the file is complete, press **MENU**. Students can save the file under a new name by selecting **Save As**.



5. When the new file name is entered, press **OK** (the **Y=** key).

To exit the application, press **MENU** and select **6: Exit**.



After the Activity

After students have a better of idea of what *The Raven* is about and have better grasped Poe's use of rhyme and alliteration, they should be prepared to think of ways that the poem would be written in contemporary English; how they would write *The Raven* in their own words.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, 25
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before; 26
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token, 27
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word "Lenore!" 28
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word "Lenore!" 29
Merely this and nothing more. 30

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning, 31
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before. 32
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice 33
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore-- 34
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; -- 35
"Tis the wind and nothing more!" 36

Open here I flung the shutter, When, with many a flirt and flutter 37
In there stepped a stately Raven of the Saintly days of yore. 38
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he; 39
But, with mein of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door-- 40
Perched upon my bust of Pallas just above my chamber door-- 41
Perched, and sat, and nothing more. 42

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling, 43
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore, 44
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven, 45
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore-- 46
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!" 47
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore." 48

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly, 49
Though its answer little meaning-- little relevancy bore; 50
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being 51
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door-- 52
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door, 53
With such name as "Nevermore." 54

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only 55
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour. 56
Nothing farther then he uttered--not a feather then he fluttered-- 57
Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before-- 58
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before." 59
Then the bird said "Nevermore." 60

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken, 61
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store 62
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster 63
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore-- 64
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore 65
Of 'Never--nevermore.'" 66

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling, 67
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door; 68
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking 69
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore-- 70
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore 71
Meant in croaking "Nevermore." 72

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing 73
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core; 74
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining 75
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er, 76
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er, 77
She shall press, ah, nevermore! 78

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer 79
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor. 80
"Wretch," I cried, "Thy God hath lent thee--by these angels he hath sent thee 81
Respite--respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore, 82
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!" 83
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore." 84

