

## 9.2.1

## Lesson 5

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read paragraphs 8–13 of “The Tell-Tale Heart” (“When I had waited a long time, very patiently” through “A tub had caught all—ha! ha!”) and analyze the text through an evidence-based discussion. In this excerpt, the tension builds as the narrator finally murders the old man, and buries the body in the floor.

Through paired discussion and focused annotation, students will consider how Poe’s structural choices develop and refine the text’s central ideas. For homework, students will revisit their initial annotation of the text made during Lessons 2–5, adding to and revising those annotations. This will allow them to consider their own learning from the previous lessons’ close reading, including questions answered/remaining, repetition of ideas, connections between parts of the text, and defined vocabulary. Additionally, students will preview the following lesson’s text by annotating paragraphs 14–18.

## Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.9-10.5	Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
Addressed Standard(s)	
CCRA.R.6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
W.9-10.9.a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).</li> </ul>

## Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>The learning in this lesson will be captured through a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students will answer the following prompt based on the evidence-based discussion completed in the lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do Poe’s structural choices contribute to the development and refinement of a central idea?</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poe uses repetition to slow down the story’s action. This helps develop the idea of obsession in the story, by further revealing the narrator’s obsessive tendencies. For example, when the narrator is preparing to shine the lantern’s ray on the old man’s eye, he uses repetition to describe how slowly he is moving: “I resolved to open a little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern.” This repetition shows his determination to see the old man’s eye and reveals his obsession with it.</li> <li>• Poe speeds the pacing up as the narrator describes the beating of the heart, even though there is little action: “It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant.” The effect of this acceleration and halted movement is a sense of urgency for the narrator to rid himself of the old man’s heart and his eye, which reveals his obsessive nature.</li> <li>• Poe uses punctuation to show the narrator’s growing anxiety about the old man’s beating heart. Poe shows how the narrator is disturbed by the beating heart growing “quicker” and “louder” revealing his madness.</li> </ul>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scantlings (n.) – rafters or timbers that compose a house frame</li> <li>• planks (n.) – a long, flat piece of timber</li> <li>• cease (v.) – to stop</li> </ul>
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stealthily (adj.) – slowly, deliberately, secretly</li> </ul>

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p><b>Standards &amp; Text</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards: RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.5, CCRA.R.6, W.9-10.9.a</li> <li>• Text: “The Tell-Tale Heart,” paragraphs 8–13</li> </ul>	

Learning Sequence	
1. Introduction to Lesson Agenda	1. 5%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 10%
3. Paragraphs 8–13 Reading and Discussion	3. 70%
4. Quick Write	4. 10%
5. Closing	5. 5%

## Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Checklist and Rubric (refer to 9.2.1 Lesson 1)
- The homework for this lesson asks students to revisit their initial annotations from Lessons 2–5. For accountability purposes, students may need a different colored writing utensil.

## Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	<b>Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.</b>
	Plain text (no symbol) indicates teacher action.
	<b>Bold text (no symbol) indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<i>Italicized text (no symbol) indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

### Activity 1: Introduction to Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the lesson agenda. Explain that students will continue working with RL.9-10.2 and RL.9-10.5, the assessed standards for this lesson. Explain to students that they will be closely reading paragraphs 8–13 in “The Tell-Tale Heart” and participating in an evidence-based discussion to consider how Poe’s structural choices contribute to the development and refinement of a central idea.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

## Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they can apply their focus standard, RL.9-10.4 to their text. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson's Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard (RL.9-10.4) to their AIR text from the previous lesson's homework.

Instruct students to do a Turn-and-Talk in pairs about paragraphs 8–13 annotation.

- ▶ Students discuss their annotation for paragraphs 8–13.
- ▶ Annotation may include the following:

(Paragraph 8)

- Box around the word *crevice*.
- Star near the repetition of the word “very” – This repetition shows that Poe wants to draw attention to the narrator's methodical actions.
- Star near the phrase, “stealthily, stealthily” – This shows again, how slow and meticulous the narrator describes his actions. Everything he does is calculated.
- Star the word “it” – noting the vulture eye, the narrator's obsession.

(Paragraph 9)

- Exclamation point near “furious” – The narrator is angry about the eye being open but he was searching for it for seven nights.
- Star near “but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person” – noting how the narrator only wants to see the eye; the old man himself does not matter.

(Paragraph 10)

- Star the repetition of the word “you” – The narrator continues to address the reader as if the reader will empathize with him.
- Exclamation point near “the beating of the old man's heart” – noting the narrator's transition from the eye to the old man's heart, further revealing his obsessive tendencies.

(Paragraph 11)

- Star near the repetition of the word “louder” – The beating of the heart is getting louder.
- Exclamation point near the murder scene – For a man who had watched the old man so carefully for days, he quickly kills him by pulling a bed over him.
- Star near “His eye would trouble me no more.” – The narrator believes that all of his troubles will be over by simply killing the old man and ridding himself of the eye.
- Boxes around the words *shrieked, gaily, ceased*.

- Exclamation point near “I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done” – noting how the narrator smiles after killing the old man.

(Paragraph 12)

- Star near the line “wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body” – It is evident the narrator is taking great care in hiding the body.
- Box around the word *dismembered*.
- Exclamation mark near *dismembered* – The narrator is chopping the body up like a serial killer; this further reveals the narrator’s insanity.

(Paragraph 13)

- Star near the phrase, “no human eye—not even his” – Even though the man is dead, the narrator remains obsessed with the old man’s eye.
- Star near the phrase, “There was nothing to wash out—no stain of any kind—no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all” – Again, the narrator is careful, skilled at his crime.
- Boxes around the words *deposited*, *scantlings*.

### Activity 3: Paragraphs 8–13 Reading and Discussion

70%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment (How do Poe’s structural choices contribute to the development and refinement of a central idea?). Explain to students that this is the lesson assessment and the focus for today’s reading.

- ▶ Students examine the Quick Write assessment and listen.

① Display the Quick Write assessment for students to see.

Instruct students to keep this assessment in mind as they analyze the text in the evidence-based discussion. Inform students that they will be annotating specifically for Poe’s structural choices and the development of central idea as they discuss the text.

Instruct students to take out their annotated copy of “The Tell-Tale Heart” and turn to paragraph 8 (“When I had waited a long time, very patiently” through “shot out from the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye”). Instruct students to reread this paragraph in pairs.

Ask students the following questions:

① Consider having student pairs discuss the questions before asking them in a whole-class setting.

**How does the narrator describe his movements in this paragraph?**

- 🗨️ He is moving very slowly and carefully: “I resolved to open a little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern” and “stealthily.”

**Why does the narrator move in these ways?**

- He is trying to see the “vulture eye.”

**What is the effect of Poe’s use of repetition in this excerpt?**

- The repetition shows how slowly and carefully the narrator is moving and builds tension and suspense.

Remind students this question is addressing text structure and is an example of RL.9-10.5. Instruct students to annotate their text to mark this evidence, using the code SC.

---

Instruct students to do a Turn-and-Talk in pairs about the following question:

**What do you notice about the development of central idea in this excerpt?**

- ▶ Students do a Turn-and-Talk in pairs about the development of central idea in the excerpt.

Lead a share out of pair responses. Instruct students to annotate the text for central idea during the share out.

- Student responses may include:
    - The narrator is still revealing his madness and obsession by showing how patient and slow he is willing to move to get a glimpse of the old man’s eye: “So I opened it—you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily.”
- 

Instruct students to reread in pairs paragraphs 9 and 10 (“It was open—wide, wide open—and I grew furious” through “as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage”).

Instruct students to continue to annotate the text for evidence of Poe’s structural choices. Remind students that as they annotate, they are identifying textual evidence to be used in the lesson assessment as well as the Mid-Unit and End-of-Unit Assessments. This focused annotation supports students’ engagement with W.9-10.a, which focuses on the use of textual evidence in writing.

Ask students the following questions:

- ① Consider having students discuss the questions in pairs before sharing out with the whole class.

**How does the old man’s eye affect the narrator?**

- He grows angry at it, but it also frightens him: “with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones.”

**What does the narrator mean when he states that he had directed the ray of light “as if by instinct”?**

- The narrator is so obsessed with the eye and has been in the old man’s room for so many nights, that he naturally shines the light exactly upon the eye: “for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon that damned spot.”

**Where has the narrator previously discussed his *acute* senses? Why does he remind the reader of this in paragraph 10?**

- In the first paragraph the narrator tells the reader his hearing is heightened: “The disease had sharpened my senses.” He reminds the reader because he is beginning to hear the old man’s beating heart and wants to remind the reader that he is not mad, his hearing is just heightened: “And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the sense?”

**What action is happening in paragraphs 8, 9, and 10?**

- The narrator is opening a “little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern” and shining the light on the old man’s “vulture eye.”

**What is the effect of Poe’s use of time in paragraphs 8, 9, and 10?**

- Student responses may include the following:
  - The story’s pacing is slow and halting in paragraphs 9 and 10.
  - Poe stops the action to show the narrator’s intense reaction to the eye and his new attention on the heart, which creates suspense.

Instruct students to do a Turn-and-Talk in pairs about the following question:

**What do you notice about the development of central idea in this excerpt?**

- ▶ Student pairs discuss the development of central idea in the excerpt.

Lead a share out of responses. Instruct students to annotate the text for central idea during the share out.

- Responses may include:
  - The narrator mentions again how he is not mad, and that he simply has heightened hearing: “And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the sense?” He is now hearing the old man’s beating heart, which actually shows that the narrator is mad.
  - The narrator finally sees his obsession, the eye. He talks about how it makes him “furious” but also frightens him: “chilled the very marrow in my bones.”

- The narrator also mentions that he cannot see the “old man’s face or person” showing how he only wants to see the eye, because he is obsessed with the eye alone.

---

Instruct students to reread in pairs the first part of paragraph 11 (“But even yet I refrained and kept still” through “so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror”).

Ask students the following questions:

① Consider having students discuss the questions in pairs before sharing out with the whole class.

### Why does the narrator hold the lantern motionless?

- The narrator is obsessed with the eye, and he wants to keep the light on his place of obsession: “I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye.”

### What explanation does the narrator give for his “uncontrollable terror”?

- According to the narrator, the old man’s beating heart is growing “quicker” and “louder,” and it is a strange noise that is causing him “uncontrollable terror.”

---

Instruct students to reread in pairs the second part of paragraph 11 (“Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still” through “His eye would trouble me no more”).

### What does the narrator mean when he says the “old man’s hour had come!”?

- He is going to kill the old man.

### Why would the old man’s eye no longer “trouble” the narrator?

- Because the narrator has made sure the narrator is “stone, stone dead.” The narrator even places his hand on the old man’s heart to ensure there is no “pulsation.”

① Consider noting how the narrator uses the word *vex* to describe the beating heart. In paragraph 3, he used *vex* to describe the old man’s eye.

### Consider the story’s pacing in paragraphs 8–10. How does Poe use text structure and time in paragraph 11?

- Student responses may include the following:
  - At the beginning of paragraph 11, the narrator says, “But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless.” Poe has stalled the story’s action here, but the pace feels quick because of the short and precise sentences. This structural choice slows

- down the action in the story, but the pace quickens. It also builds tension as the narrator waits, listening as the beating heart grows “louder and louder every instant.”
- Poe’s use of repetition and punctuation, such as exclaiming about the heart as “It grew louder, I say, louder every moment!” and “But the beating grew louder, louder!” increases the tension in the story. These passages are also interrupted by the narrator’s exclaiming “do you mark me well I have told you that I am nervous: so I am.” These exclamations increase the frenzied tone of the narrator and make the pace of the story seem quicker as compared to the narrator’s extremely slow movements up to this point.
  - The action leading to the murder was slow and careful, and Poe used lengthy description. Poe describes the murder in only a few sentences.

Instruct students to do a Turn-and-Talk in pairs about the following question:

**What do you notice about the development of central idea in this excerpt?**

- ▶ Student pairs do a Turn-and-Talk about the development of central idea in the excerpt.

Lead a share out of responses. Instruct students to annotate for central idea on their text during the share out.

- ▶ Students share out their responses and annotate for central idea.
- Responses may include:
  - The narrator is saying that he can hear the old man’s heart beat growing louder and quicker, although it is not possible that he actually heard the old man’s heart: “It grew louder, I say, louder every moment.” This shows his madness.
  - The narrator ensures the old man is dead by placing his “hand upon the heart.” This shows how obsessed he is with making sure the old man is dead so that “his eye would trouble [him] no more.”

---

Instruct students to reread in pairs paragraphs 12 and 13 (“If still you think me mad” through “A tub had caught all—ha! ha!”).

- ▶ Students reread paragraphs 12 and 13 in pairs.

Ask the following questions:

- ① Consider having the students discuss the questions in pairs before sharing out with the whole class.

**What are the “wise precautions” the narrator takes?**

☞ Student responses should include the following: He dismembers the old man and puts him under the floorboards of the room: “First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.”

① Consider providing the definition of the words *scantlings* (rafters or timbers that compose a house frame) and *planks* (a long, flat piece of timber).

### Why does he refer to the “precautions” as “wise”?

☞ Because they are carefully executed and he believes no one is going to detect anything: “I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even his—could have detected any thing wrong.” The narrator believes that he will not seem mad because he behaves so wisely.

Facilitate a discussion about Poe’s structural choices throughout paragraphs 8–13.

### What structural choices is Poe making throughout these paragraphs?

☞ Student responses may include:

- In paragraph 8, the narrator’s actions are moving slowly as exhibited by the repetition Poe uses.
- In paragraph 9 and 10, Poe stops the action of the story. The narrator is focused on the old man’s eye and hearing the old man’s beating heart.
- In paragraph 11, the story’s action is still moving slowly as the narrator fixates on the old man’s eye but continues to hear the beating heart grow “louder” and “quicker.” Poe uses punctuation to show the narrator’s growing excitement about the beating heart. This increases the suspense of the story, as the narrator grows more upset.
- In paragraphs 12 and 13, the story’s action resumes as the narrator calmly explains his plans for concealing the body.

① Remind students to think about the choices an author can make including using time, order of events, or text structure (RL.9-10.5).

## Activity 5: Quick Write

**10%**

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

### How do Poe’s structural choices contribute to the development and refinement of a central idea?

Remind students to use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide their written responses.

① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
- 🗨 See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

## Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. Instruct students to revisit their initial annotation of the text made during Lessons 2–5 by adding to or revising the annotation. The revised annotation will show the learning from the previous lessons' close reading including questions remaining/answered, repetition of ideas, connections between parts of the text, and defined vocabulary.

Instruct students to preview the following lesson's text by annotating paragraphs 14–18.

- ▶ Students follow along.

## Homework

Revisit your initial annotation of the text made during Lessons 2–5 by adding to/revising annotation. The revised annotation will demonstrate your learning from the previous lessons' close reading, specifically questions remaining/answered, repetition of ideas, connections between parts of the text, and defined vocabulary.

Preview the following lesson's text by annotating paragraphs 14–18.