

Name _____ Class _____

"THE RAVEN" BY EDGAR ALLEN POE

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of
forgotten lore—

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly
there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my
chamber door.
“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my
chamber door—
Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak
December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its
ghost upon the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had
sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow
for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each
purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors
never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I
stood repeating

“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my
chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my
chamber door;—
This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating
then no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness
I implore;

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently
you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at
my chamber door,

Name one example of alliteration from the first stanza?

What does *dreary* mean?

What does *rapping* mean in this context?

What does *bleak* mean in this context?

Who might Lenore be?

How does the speaker respond to the rapping at his door?

That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I
opened wide the door;—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood
there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever
dared to dream before;

But the silence was unbroken, and the
stillness gave no token,

And the only word there spoken was the
whispered word, "Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back
the word, "Lenore!"—

Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul
within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder
than before.

"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at
my window lattice;

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this
mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery
explore;—

'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with
many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly
days of yore;

Not the least **obeisance** made he; not a minute
stopped or stayed he;

But, with **mien** of lord or lady, perched above
my chamber door—

Perched upon a **bust of Pallas** just above my
chamber door—

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird **beguiling** my sad fancy
into smiling,

By the grave and stern decorum of the
countenance it wore, "Though thy crest be shorn
and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from
the Nightly shore—

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's
Plutonian shore!"

Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

What happens after the speaker closes the door
and returns inside?

What was outside the speaker's window?

What does *obeisance* mean?

What does *mien* mean?

Pallas: Pallas Athena, the Greek goddess of
wisdom

Bust of Pallas: statue of Athena

What does the fact that the raven has landed on
the bust of Pallas symbolize?

What does *beguiling* mean?

Much I marvel'd this ungainly fowl to hear
discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little
relevancy bore;

For we cannot help agreeing that no living
human being

Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above
his chamber door—

Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his
chamber door,

With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid
bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he
did outpour.

Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather
then he fluttered—

Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other
friends have flown before—

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes
have flown before.”

Then the bird said “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only
stock and store

Caught from some unhappy master whom
unmerciful Disaster

Followed fast and followed faster till his
songs one burden bore—

Till the **dirges** of his Hope that melancholy
burden bore

Of ‘Never—nevermore’.”

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into
smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of
bird, and bust and door;

Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook
myself to linking

Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous
bird of yore—

What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and
ominous bird of yore

Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

What happens that *marvels* and surprises the
speaker?

What vowel do you hear constantly repeated at
the end of each stanza? What effect does it
have?

What does the speaker conclude about the
Raven and its master?

Dirges: a mournful song or poem for the
dead

What does *ominous* mean?

What words or imagery does Poe use to
create a melancholy mood?

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable
expressing

To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into
my bosom's core;

This and more I sat divining, with my head at
ease reclining

On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-
light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-
light gloating o'er,

She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, me thought, the air grew denser,
perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by **Seraphim** whose foot-falls tinkled on
the tufted floor.

"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—
by these angels he hath sent thee

Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy
memories of Lenore;

Quaff, oh quaff this kind **nepenthe** and forget
this lost Lenore!"

Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still,
if bird or devil!—

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest
tossed thee here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land
enchanted—

On this home by Horror haunted—tell me
truly, I implore—

Is there—*is* there **balm in Gilead**?—tell me—
tell me, I implore!"

Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still,
if bird or devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us—by that
God we both adore—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the
distant **Aidenn**,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the
angels name Lenore—

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the
angels name Lenore."

Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!"
I shrieked, upstarting—

"Get thee back into the **tempest** and the Night's
Plutonian shore!

When the speaker glances at the velvet
cushion, what is he reminded of?

Seraphim: an angelic being associated with
purity, devotion, and light

Quaff: to drink something

Nepenthe: a potion used by the ancients to
suppress sorrow by ways of forgetfulness

How does this poem fit into the gothic literature
genre?

What does *desolate* mean?

Balm in Gilead: medicine with healing
powers

Aidenn: Eden

What does *tempest* mean?

Leave no black **plume** as a token of that lie thy
soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust
above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy
form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting,
still is sitting

On the **pallid** bust of Pallas just above my
chamber door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a
demon’s that is dreaming,

And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws
his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies
floating on the floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore!

What does *plume* mean?

What is the tone of the speaker as he yells at
the Raven?

Plutonian Shore, Balm in Gilead, Nepenthe,
Aidenn, and Bust of Pallas are all examples of
what literary device?

What effect does the repetition of the word
“Nevermore” have on the poem?

What is the theme of the poem?

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ANSWER KEY

1. Name one example of alliteration from the first stanza?

"While I pondered, weak and weary."

"While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping."

2. What does *dreary* mean?

Describes depressing and lifeless

3. What does *rapping* mean in this context?

To knock sharply

4. What does *bleak* mean in this context?

Describes the weather as cold and miserable

5. Who might Lenore be?

The narrator's love who he has lost; someone important to him

6. How does the speaker respond to the rapping at his door?

The narrator is afraid at first, but then realizes it's just a visitor at the door. He opens the door, but he finds no one is there.

7. What happens after the speaker closes the door and returns inside?

The speaker whispers "Lenore?" as if maybe the visitor was a ghost. Then he hears the tapping again, but even louder.

8. What was outside the speaker's window?

A raven

9. What does *obeisance* mean?

a respectful gesture

10. What does *mien* mean?

the way a person looks; their demeanor

11. What does the fact that the raven has landed on the bust of Pallas symbolize?

That somehow this bird will impact the speaker's ability to rationalize or use reason

12. What does *beguiling* mean?

To *beguile* is to charm someone or captivate someone's attention

13. What happens that *marvels* and surprises the speaker?

When the speaker asks the Raven its name, and it responds "Nevermore."

14. What vowel do you hear constantly repeated at the end of each stanza? What effect does it have?

The long "o" sound is repeated. Example: nothing more, evermore, chamber door, nevermore. This gives the poem a lyrical rhythm and unifies the poem. The repetition contributes to the speaker's tone of despair and anguish.

15. What does the speaker conclude about the Raven and its master?

The speaker concludes that "Nevermore" is the only word that the Raven knows and it must have learned it from its former master who was probably a negative person.

16. What does *ominous* mean?

Describes feeling like something sinister or unpleasant will happen

17. What words or imagery does Poe use to create a melancholy mood?

Sorrow, ghastly, grim, ungainly, lonely, ominous

Once upon a midnight dreary; I heard a tapping at my chamber door; the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain; with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door

18. When the speaker glances at the velvet cushion, what is he reminded of?

He is reminded of Lenore. He states "she shall pass, ah, nevermore!" And the reader is to assume the "she" is Lenore. She will never walk by or sit on the cushion again.

19. How does this poem fit into the gothic literature genre?

Firstly, Poe leaves the reader in suspense in the beginning the poem by delaying the entrance of the Raven and allowing the speaker to believe there might be a demon or a ghost in his presence. This poem also has a dark, ominous mood which revolves around the story of death. The speaker is isolated on a cold winter night, which is common in gothic literature, and he appears to be losing his mind as he is talking to the Raven. There may be supernatural elements to this story that is yet to be determined. The Raven appears to be a bad omen and has eyes like a demon.

20. What does *desolate* mean?

describes an empty place

21. What does *tempest* mean?

a windy storm

22. What does *plume* mean?

a long feather

23. What is the tone of the speaker as he yells at the Raven?

The speaker is desperate and frustrated as he continues to ask the Raven questions, but the Raven only replies "Nevermore." He refers to the Raven as a "thing of evil." He is desperate as he is asking a bird for profound advice, such as will he ever see his love Lenore again... to which the bird responds, "Nevermore." The speaker is grief-stricken and consumed by his emotions. He is desperate for his pain to be gone and somewhat angry that the Raven can't help him.

24. Plutonian Shore, Balm in Gilead, Nepenthe, Aidenn, and Bust of Pallas are all examples of what literary device?

allusions

25. What effect does the repetition of the word "Nevermore" have on the poem?

It gives the poem a sad and hopeless mood. It sets a negative tone that the speaker will NEVER see his love again and that the speaker will NEVER stop feeling depressed and alone. It adds to the idea that the speaker is being continually and repeatedly tortured by his grief.

26. What is the theme of the poem?

In the last stanza, the speaker accepts his fate and the fact that he cannot force the Raven to go away, much like his feelings of grief. This could send the message that death is inevitable and the pain of losing someone never leave us completely. Another theme is that people should try to let go of pain and suffering or they will go mad.