A man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit and a light-colored tie, is holding a human skull with both hands. He is looking down at the skull with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

# STUDY GUIDE PURE POE: THREE TALES OF THE MACABRE

BY EDGAR ALLEN POE  
ADAPTED BY MAGGIE  
MANCINELLI-CAHILL

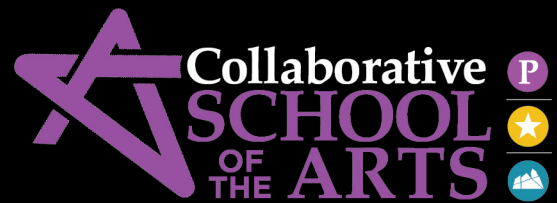
2022-2023 SEASON

WYNN HARMON

at the REP ★

WELCOME

the REP ★



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# table CONTENTS

03 | Attending a Performance

04 | A Letter from our Education  
Department

05 | About Us

06 | A Brief Synopsis of Pure Poe

07 | Edgar Allan Poe Biography

09 | Historical Context

13 | Literary Context

- Poe Things to know
- Vocabulary
- Adaptation

18 | The Production: Who's Who...

20 | Ideas for Curriculum Integrations

23 | Suggested Resources for  
Teachers

24 | Teacher Evaluation

25 | theRep's Mission in Action!

## 41<sup>ST</sup> MAINSTAGE SEASON CAPITAL REPERTORY THEATRE | 2022-2023

### ***Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors***

by Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen  
September 30-October 23, 2022

### ***The Wizard of Oz***

by L. Frank Baum with music and lyrics  
by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harbury,  
Background music by Herbert Stothart  
November 18-December 24, 2022

### WORLD PREMIERE

#### ***Secret Hour*** by Jenny Stafford

January 27-February 19, 2023

### ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***

by William Shakespeare  
April 14-May 7, 2023

### ***Honky Tonk Angels*** by Patsy Cline

Book by Ted Swindley,  
Music by Country's Greatest Song Writers  
July 14-August 20, 2023

### ON-THE-GO! IN-SCHOOL TOURS

#### ***Pure Poe: Tales of the Macabre***

by Edgar Allan Poe,  
Adapted by Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill  
October 11-November 5, 2022

### ***Harriet Tells It Like It Is!***

by Karen Jones Meadows  
February 27-March 25, 2023

### OTHER

#### ***Next Act! New Play Summit 12***

June 2023

#### ***Summer Stage Young Acting Company Performances***

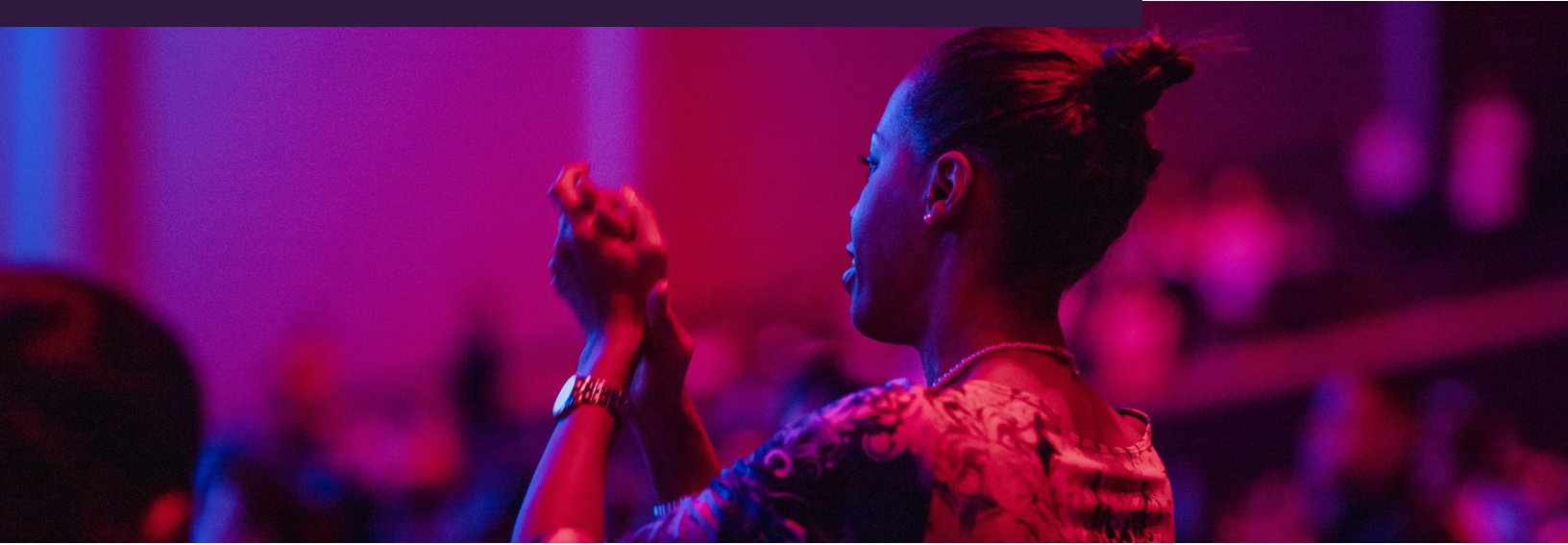
Summer 2023

*\*This guide is a replica of theRep's past study guides for Pure Poe tours.*

*\*\*This study guide has been constructed for educational purposes only,  
theRep does not sell or make any money from the guide.*



# ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE



Being a member of an audience is an important job. Live theatre couldn't exist without you! That job carries with it some responsibilities. Follow these simple suggestions to have the best theatre experience possible!

## BRING WITH YOU

Ideas, imagination, an open mind, observation skills and a sense of wonder

## LEAVE BEHIND

Cell phones, pagers, pen lights, food and drink and anything else that might distract you, the performers or other members of the audience

## THINGS TO DO BEFORE A PERFORMANCE

Learn about the show you are going to see, arrive on time, find your seat and visit the restroom

## DURING A PERFORMANCE

### • PLEASE DO

Applaud, laugh, pay attention to big and little details, think about questions that arise for you and stay seated until intermission/end of the show

### • PLEASE DON'T

Talk, sleep, eat or drink, distract others, use a cell phone or exit the theatre during the performance unless it's an emergency





## Dear Educator:

Welcome to Capital Repertory Theatre – and our brand-new home at 251 North Pearl St.!

We are thrilled that you have brought in our in-school touring production of *Pure Poe: Tales of the Macabre* (and/or are attending one of the school day/public performances of the show), and hope that you will find this guide to be a useful tool in your classroom!

You have permission to reproduce materials within this guide for use in your classroom. It is designed to introduce the cultural and historical context of the play as well as provide resources and ideas for incorporating the theatre experience into your curriculum. These productions by theREP are likely to generate questions, thoughts and opinions amongst your students.

The arts provide young imaginations with stimulation, points of reference, and intellectual resources for the mind and spirit. It is theREP's goal to make live theatre attendance possible for all students in the Capital Region. Tens of thousands of Capital Region students have attended student matinees and On-The-Go! performances throughout our history, and we hope to continue to grow and serve the needs of the Capital Region education community for decades to come.

Your success stories help us to keep the program funded, so please let us know how you are using theatre in the classroom. We love to receive copies of lesson plans, student work related to our productions and your letters. These are important testimonials of the value of the arts in education.

And finally, we hope you will fill out the **TEACHER EVALUATION** at the back of this guide. Completing the evaluation form will help us to continue to provide programs that serve the needs of Capital Region students.

We look forward to hearing from you!

With deepest gratitude,



**Margaret E. Hall**  
Associate Artistic Director  
mhall@capitalrep.org



**Shai Davenport**  
Education Programs Manager  
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# ABOUT US

## theREP★

Capital Repertory Theatre (theREP) is a non-profit professional-producing theatre. In its decades-long history, theREP has produced more than 8,000 performances for the people of the Capital Region.



A member of LORT (League of Resident Theatres), theREP strives to bring quality work that explores the essence of the human condition through the stories of people, events and phenomena that shape our contemporary lives. Theatre, at its best, entertains, cajoles and inspires by engaging the heart and mind through its most powerful ally – the imagination.

There are two basic types of theatre companies: producing and presenting. theREP is a producing theatre. The theatre hires a director and designers for the set, costumes, lights and sound. The theatre's artistic director and the director select appropriate actors for all the roles in the play. Then, they all come to Albany, where the play is built and rehearsed. The resident staff of the theatre works with visiting artists to put the production together.

In addition to the main theatre space, theREP has a studio theatre that acts as a rehearsal hall and secondary venue for performances (such as Black Theatre Troupe of Upstate NY's productions of *Dead and Breathing* and *The Light* which took place in the fall and winter of 2021-2022), a costume shop where costumes are constructed and cared for, a prop shop where props are made, offices where the administrative staff works and housing facilities for out-of-town actors. theREP's sets are constructed in a scene shop that is also a part of the Proctors Collaborative.

In contrast to a producing theatre, presenting theatres (sometimes called "roadhouses") – like Proctors in Schenectady (also a part of the Proctors Collaborative) – host shows that have been designed, built and rehearsed elsewhere. Productions that tour are booked into presenting theatres. Shows that are booked into presenting houses will tour regionally, nationally or even internationally over an extended period of time. What you will see at theREP or with our On-The-Go! tours are unique to theREP where it was built. No one from anywhere else will see this production just as you see it!



**STUDENT MATINEES** | Performance at theREP @10:30am

**PRICE** | \$12 per student

**CHAPERONES** | For every 15 students, one complimentary adult ticket is provided

**LOCATION** | 251 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207

**RESERVATIONS** | Contact Group Sales at 518.382.3884 x 139 |

groupsales@proctors.org

**SCHOLARSHIPS** | Visit [www.capitalrep.org](http://www.capitalrep.org) for more information and applications

**ON-THE-GO!** | For more information and to book a tour contact [onthego@proctors.org](mailto:onthego@proctors.org) | [school.proctors.org](mailto:school.proctors.org)

*Capital Repertory Theatre is one of the organizations within the Proctors Collaborative, which also includes: Proctors, Universal Preservation Hall (UPH), the Collaborative School of the Arts and the Collaborative Scene Shop.*



# A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF

## PURE POE: THREE TALES OF THE MACABRE

Lost loves, mad murderers and a prosperous prince attempting to defy death and doom! Poe's characters propel the plot, and Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill combines the power of theatre and literature to explore the idea of remembrance, embrace the power of words and celebrate the storyteller. The ghost of Edgar Allan Poe returns to retell his famous poem, *The Raven*, and stories *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Masque of the Red Death* as he muses and laments the inspirations from his own life.

### ***The Raven***

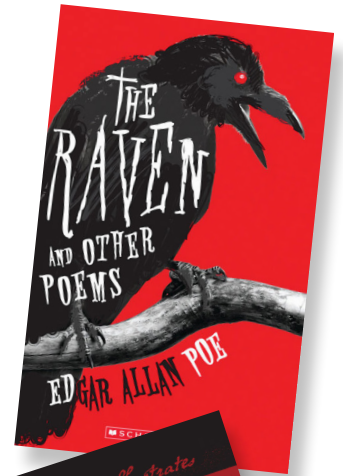
A grieving student is visited by a raven that can only say one word, "Nevermore." The student asks the raven many questions including one about his lost love, knowing that the raven's answer will always be a dismal, "Nevermore."

### ***The Tell-Tale Heart***

The narrator forms a careful plan to murder the old man under his care because he believes the old man has an evil eye. For seven nights, the narrator peeks his head into the room of the old man to find him asleep with his eyes closed. On the eighth night, the man awakens. The open eye and the unbearable volume of the man's beating heart cause the narrator to leap into the room and kill the man. The narrator dismembers the body and hides it under the floorboards, leaving no evidence of his fatal deed. After complaints from the neighbors about a scream in the night, the police arrive and search the house. Finding nothing, they engage in chitchat with the narrator, who again believes he hears the man's beating heart. This sound, unheard by the others, drives the narrator to tear up the floorboards, exposing his evil deed.

### ***The Masque of the Red Death***

The worst plague ever ravages a kingdom, killing half the population. Prince Prospero takes his courtiers to a magnificent castle, believing he is protecting them from the disease and leaving others outside the gates to die. The prince throws a masquerade ball in a series of seven rooms, each with its own color: blue, purple, green, orange, white, violet and black. The festivities continue until a masked guest, or the figure of one, arrives dripping with blood. The prince confronts the masked guest; there is a struggle, and the prince dies. Having witnessed the death, the other guests die - victims of the plague they thought that they had escaped.





# EDGAR ALLAN POE

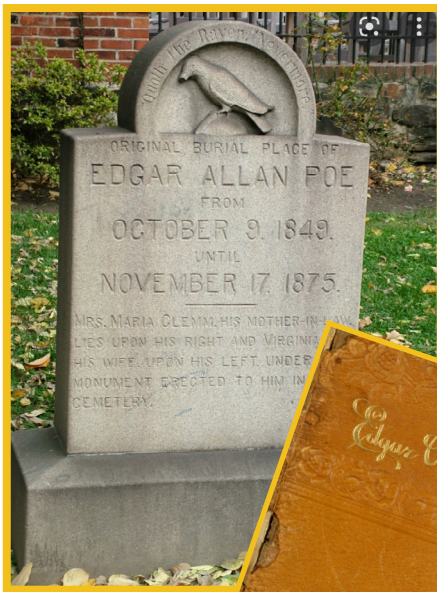
## A BIOGRAPHY

There are far more rumors about Edgar Allan Poe than known facts. Poe, himself, added to the mystery by lying about his birth date; at various times he claimed to have been born in either 1811 or 1813. In fact, Poe was born in 1809, the second son of Boston actors, David Poe Jr. and Elizabeth Arnold. His mother was a star while his father, usually intoxicated, was only a minor actor.



David Poe Jr. deserted his family a year after Poe was born. Frances Allan, a friend of Poe's mother, persuaded her husband, John, to adopt Poe. Although he agreed, John Allan never developed a close relationship with the boy. In 1815, the Allans moved to England where Poe excelled in school. Five years later, the Allans moved back to the US. In 1826, Poe started classes at the University of Virginia but left before the end of the year. After a quarrel with Mr. Allan, Poe left for Boston where he joined the Army and published his first collection of poetry. Frances Allan, his adoptive mother, died in 1829.

Poe was accepted into West Point in 1830 but received an early dismissal the next year. From there, Poe traveled to the American literary centers of Philadelphia, Richmond, New York and Baltimore, where he lived with his aunt, Maria Poe Clemm, and her daughter, Virginia. Poe secretly married Virginia, his cousin, when she was thirteen (he was 27). During this time, Poe worked as an assistant editor for a few literary magazines and continued writing. He and the Clemms lived in poverty because Poe earned only \$540 a year (\$8,900 today). Poe began drinking heavily, a habit that would cause him failure and misfortune throughout his life. In 1842, his wife Virginia suffered a pulmonary hemorrhage – the burst blood vessel in her throat was a sign of tuberculosis. The publication of *The Raven* in 1844 increased Poe's popularity, but his drinking cast a shadow over his success. In 1847, Virginia died.



Poe was ill during the last two years of his life and took only part-time jobs working as an editor. The rumors and secrets surrounding Poe did not end with his death, which remains a mystery today. It is known that Poe was found in Baltimore on October 3rd, 1849, senseless, alone and dressed haphazardly. Poe went in and out of consciousness until he died in the morning hours of October 7th, but apparently never achieved sufficient coherence to be able to tell anyone what had happened. It seems that every biographer cites a different circumstance for Poe's death, among their ideas of beating, epilepsy, alcohol, dipsomania, heart attack, delirium, rabies, carbon monoxide poisoning and even murder.

Even the site of Poe's burial is a mystery; questions remain concerning every component of his burial, from his original resting places to the body which was removed and relocated to his final place. Whether Poe is indeed buried under the stone in Baltimore that bears his name remains uncertain.

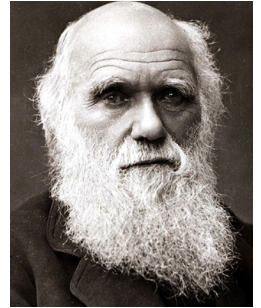
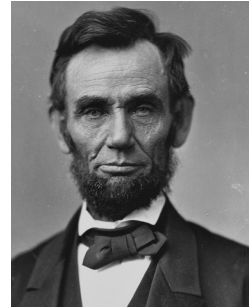


# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## EDGAR ALLEN POE

*Below is a chronological list of events that occurred during Edgar Allan Poe's life. Historical events are included to provide a perspective of the period in which Poe lived.\**

**1809-1849**



**1809**

- Edgar Allan Poe is born on January 19, in Boston.
- Thomas Jefferson is President of the United States.
- **Abraham Lincoln is born on February 12, in Kentucky.**
- **Charles Darwin is born on February 12, in England.**

- Poe's parents separate.
- Elizabeth Poe takes the children.

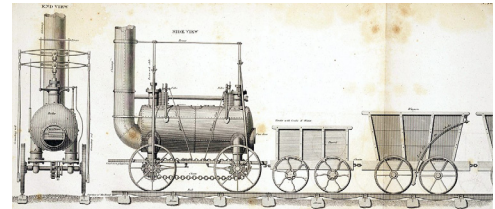
**1810**

**1811**

- Poe's mother, Elizabeth, dies
- Mr. and Mrs. John Allan adopt Edgar Poe.

- The War of 1812 begins.
- Charles Dickens is born on February 7, in England.

**1812**



**1813**

- British forces burn Washington D.C. during the war of 1812.
- **George Stephenson designs the first flanged-wheel locomotive.**

- Edgar Allan Poe goes to school in England.
- Pirates help defeat the British at the Battle of New Orleans.
- Napoleon is defeated at Waterloo.

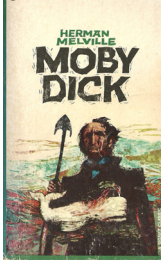
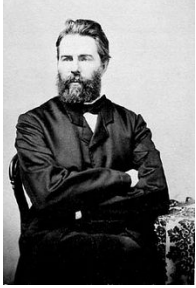
**1815**

**1816**

The Year Without a Summer (also known as the Poverty Year and/or Eighteen Hundred and Froze-to-Death)



# HISTORICAL CONTENT



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## 1817

- Henry David Thoreau is born on July 12, in Massachusetts.
- Mississippi becomes the 20th State of the United States of America on December 10.



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## 1818

Mary Shelley, 21, publishes “Frankenstein”.

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## 1819

- John Polidori, 24, publishes “The Vampyre”
- **Herman Melville is born in NYC; he later writes “Moby Dick” in 1851.**
- Walt Whitman is born on May 31, on Long Island.
- Spain gives the territory of Florida to the United States of America.

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## 1820

- Poe returns to the United States and continues his schooling.
- Florence Nightingale is born on May 12, in Italy.

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## 1821

- Charles Baudelaire is born on April 9, in Paris, France.
- Fyodor Dostoevsky is born on November 11 in Moscow, in the Russian Empire (now just called Russia).

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Louis Pasteur is born on December 27, France.

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## 1822

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## 1823

Poe attends the academy of William Burke and succeeds in athletics.

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## 1824

The House of Representatives elected Secretary of State John Quincy Adams as President – following an inconclusive Electoral College result, the House performed the constitutionally prescribed role of deciding the election.

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## 1825

- John Allan inherits a fortune when his uncle dies.
- John Quincy Adams is officially the 6th President of the United States.

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## 1826

- Poe drops out of school because John Allan won't give him any money.
- Poe writes and prints his first book, “Tamerlane and Other Poems”.
- Poe can't support himself, so he joins the United States Army.



# HISTORICAL CONTENT

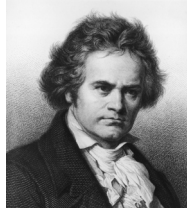


- Edgar Allan Poe joins the army and attains the rank of sergeant major.
- Jules Verne is born on February 8, in France.
- Leo Tolstoy is born on September 9, in the Russian Empire.
- **Construction of the first United States railroad, the B&O, begins**

Emily Dickinson is born on December 10, in Massachusetts.

Poe deliberately gets kicked out of West Point

- Poe sends a desperate letter to John Allan asking for help and is ignored.
- Slavery is banned in Great Britain.



Ludwig Van Beethoven dies.



1826

1828

1829

- Mrs. Allan dies and Edgar returns home.
- Poe and John Allan temporarily reconcile their differences.
- **Poe applies to West Point; John Allan sponsors him**
- **Andrew Jackson becomes the 7th President of the United States**

1830

1831



"Monet Family in Their Garden at Argenteuil" by Manet

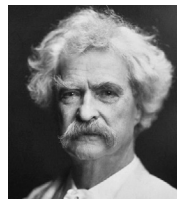
1832

1833

- **Édouard Manet is born on January 23, in France.**
- Poe submits several stories to magazines; they are rejected.

1834

- John Allan dies and leaves Edgar nothing in his will.
- The Spanish Inquisition ends.
- The Postage Stamp is invented in Great Britain.

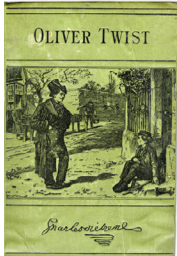


1835

- Poe wins a contest for "The Manuscript Found in a Bottle".
- Because of the contest, Poe finally gets a job.
- **Mark Twain is born on November 30 in Missouri .**



# HISTORICAL CONTENT



- Nathaniel Hawthorne, 33, publishes "Twice-Told Tales".
- **Charles Dickens, 25, begins writing "Oliver Twist".**

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## 1837

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## 1838

Poe writes "Ligeia"



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## 1839

- Poe writes "The Fall of the House of Usher".
- "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," Poe's first volume of short stories, is published; he receives no money from the publisher.
- **Louis Daguerre invents the daguerreotype and photography is born.**

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## 1840

- French sculpture, Auguste Rodin is born on November 12, in Paris, France.
- French painter, Claude Monet is born on November 14, in Paris, France.

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## 1841

Poe writes "The Murders in the Rue Morgue".

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## 1842

Virginia Poe breaks a blood vessel (a sign of tuberculosis) while playing the piano.

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## 1843

Poe wins a one-hundred-dollar prize for "The Gold-Bug".



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## 1836

- Poe marries his cousin Virginia in May; she is 13 years old at the time.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, 33, publishes his first book, "Nature".
- **Battle of the Alamo occurs,**



# HISTORICAL CONTENT

- Poe moves back to New York City.
- Thousands were deceived by Poe's story, "The Balloon Hoax".
- Poe writes "The Purloined Letter".

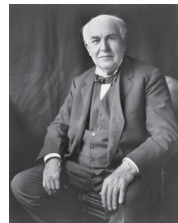
## 1844

## 1845

- Poe writes "The Raven"
- Poe was working 14-hour days, but still couldn't make a living.
- Florida becomes the 27th State of the United States on March 3.

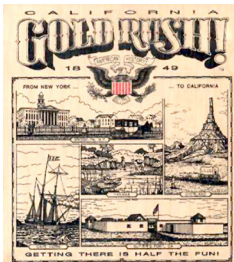
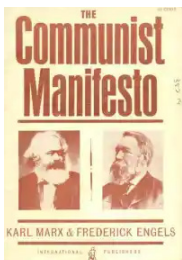
- Poe writes "The Philosophy of Composition".
- Poe sues another paper for libel and wins; the suit is settled for \$225.00.

## 1846



## 1847

- Poe's wife, Virginia, dies from tuberculosis on January 30.
- **Thomas Edison is born on February 11, in Ohio.**



- Poe writes "The Poetic Principle".
- **Karl Marx writes "The Communist Manifesto".**
- **The California Gold Rush begins.**

## 1848

## 1849

- Poe leaves NYC and visits John Sartain in Philadelphia on June 30.
- Poe goes to Richmond and stays at the Swan Tavern Hotel on July 13.
- Poe joins the "Sons of Temperance" in an effort to stop drinking.
- Poe lectures on "The Poetic Principle".
- On September 27, Poe leaves Richmond and goes back to Philadelphia where he gets on the wrong train and winds up in Baltimore.
- Poe is found half-conscious and is taken to a hospital on October 3.
- On October 7, 1849, Edgar Allan Poe dies.



# LITERARY CONTEXT

## POE - THINGS TO KNOW

**The Raven and Pallas:** Poe found a powerful metaphor in a raven, a symbol of death and the unknown, dominating and obscuring Pallas, a symbol of wisdom and knowledge. The power of the unknown and its ability to overcome reason and knowledge is the theme Poe explored in much of his work.

**Detective Story:** It is believed that “The Murders of the Rue Morgue” was the first detective story and antecedent to Sherlock Holmes. Poe is credited with being the first American poet to create a genre of literature. ***Could you write a detective story?***

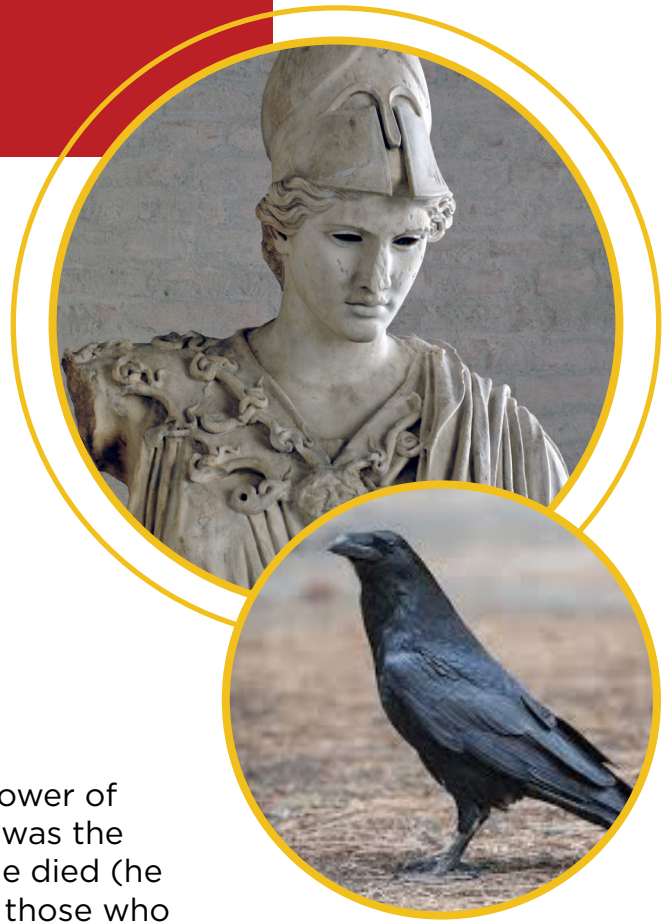
**Never-Ending Remembrance:** Poe believed in the power of remembrance. One of Poe’s motivations for writing was the knowledge that his work would be read long after he died (he would not be forgotten) and more importantly that those who inspired his writing, including his beloved wife Virginia, would be remembered forever. In *Pure Poe*, the character of Poe says he wanted to believe in ghosts because if ghosts exist, loved ones never really leave us.

**Poetry, Beauty, and Death:** Poe believed that the function of poetry was to explore beauty and that beauty is, “the pure elevation of the soul ... that which invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears.” Therefore “the death of a beautiful woman was the most poetic topic in the world.”

**Only Poems and Short Stories:** In his “Philosophy of Composition,” Poe explains that he believes a piece of literature should be short enough to read in one sitting so that the affairs of the world would not interfere and influence the reader’s response to the literature.

**Fame:** Poe broke literary conventions; he never used fantastic monsters like the horror authors who preceded him. His devils were credible and familiar to us all – death, loss, the subconscious mind. The use of Latin, French, expansive vocabulary and unconventional punctuation in his works are also credited with helping Poe make an indelible impression on his audience. Poetry was Poe’s passion, and it was poetry that made him famous. “The Raven” is the work that earned him international fame.

**Narrative Voice:** Poe was a master of narrative. As he says in the “Philosophy of Composition,” creating “a novel effect... a vivid effect” is what is important. He creates such an effect by controlling, through the narration, the information available to the reader, as well as the immediacy and credibility of that information.





# LITERARY CONTEXT

## POE - THINGS TO KNOW

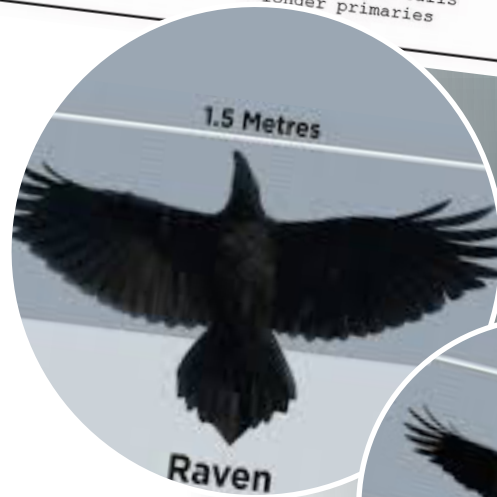
### Crow vs. Raven

Crows and ravens may look similar, and both are highly intelligent birds, but they are very different in their behaviors and habitats. They even have different physical characteristics that clearly distinguish them from one another. Ravens are larger than crows, they are longer, weigh more and have a larger wingspan. When in flight, their necks appear longer than a crow's and their bills are larger than a crow's as well. Their tails are also quite different, a distinction that can be clearly seen when the birds are in flight. A raven has pointed wings and a wedge-shaped tail whereas a crow has blunt, splayed wings and a fan-shaped tail.

### The Evil Eye

The Evil Eye is not the neurotic obsessing Poe chose for the killer in "The Tell-Tale Heart." Legend has it that the Evil Eye is an eye that is capable of inflicting harm just by looking at someone. The belief in the evil eye has a long history that dates to ancient Greece, Rome and even preliterate societies. It is part of the belief system of many cultures and religions including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, and is especially strong in those cultures surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. In the Middle East, it is believed that people with blue eyes possessed this curse. The Evil Eye is sometimes believed to be involuntary, meaning those who possess it cannot control

it. Each culture has its own means of protection against the Evil Eye. In many cultures, people wear special jewelry to protect themselves. In others, the only way to get rid of an Evil Eye is to kill the person to whom it belongs.



Check out this  
YouTube video on  
the difference between  
ravens and crows:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guBwMUAWAJI&t=11s>





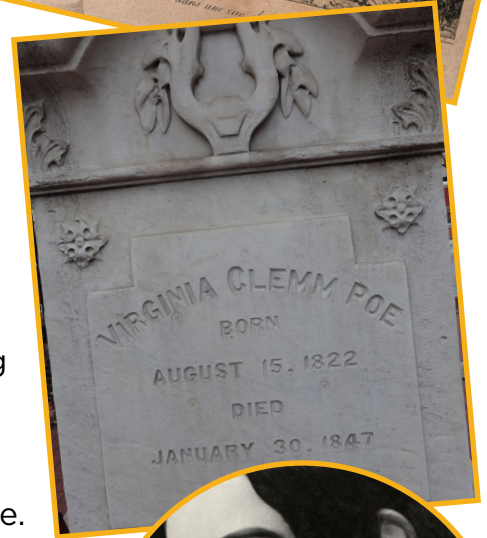
## LITERARY CONTEXT

### POE - THINGS TO KNOW

#### The Red Death

In “The Masque of the Red Death,” Poe presents a fictional plague, but there is every reason to believe that he was inspired by the epidemics that plagued his time. One such epidemic is yellow fever which killed as many as 150,000 in the United States between 1693 and 1905 with a huge outbreak in 1841 (the year before “The Masque of the Red Death” was written). To cure yellow fever, doctors used a method called bloodletting, or bleedings (taking blood out of the sick person). This usually did not work, and we now know that the bloodletting contributed to the death toll. However, Poe’s fictional plague was deadlier. Like the fictional Prince Prospero, people quarantined themselves to save themselves from infection. President Washington was not the only one to flee Philadelphia during the city’s epidemic in 1793! The reality is that yellow fever is contracted and spread by mosquitoes, not through human contact. Just like the prince, those who tried to escape yellow fever by avoiding people could not outrun the disease.

It can be assumed that the Red Death was also inspired by tuberculosis, the disease that killed Virginia Poe, and the cholera epidemic, a plague with which Poe had proximity.



*Pictured: Yellow Fever Outbreak, Virginia Poe's portrait (who died of tuberculosis) and her gravestone.*



# VOCABULARY

## *PURE POE: THREE TALES OF THE MACABRE*

Many students reading classic literature find it difficult because of the archaic (old) language that is used. Poe believed that literature should be short enough to be read in one sitting. Therefore, every word had to have a precise meaning to tell the story briefly. Luckily (or maybe unfortunately for his readers) Poe grew up reading the literature of the ancient world, exposing himself to many different languages in many time periods and a broad vocabulary. Some of the words he used would not have been recognized in his own time!

- **Adieu** – an old word meaning farewell, good-bye
- **Aidenn** – an ungrateful person
- **Amplly provisioned** – having a generous or adequate amount of supplies
- **Anon** – an old word meaning immediately; at once
- **Arabesque** – a complex and elaborate decorative design of intertwined lines
- **August** – majestic dignity or grandeur
- **Avatar** – embodiment, form; an archetype
- **Balm in Gilead** – a soothing ointment made in Gilead, a mountainous region of Palestine, near the Jordan River
- **Beguiling** – charming, getting what one wants in a deceptive way
- **Buffoons and improvisatori** – fools and actors
- **Candid** – honest and sincere
- **Castellated** – supported
- **Censer** – incense burner, sometimes used in religious ceremonies
- **Countenance** – facial expression
- **Courtiers** – one in attendance at a royal court
- **Dastardly** – despicably mean or cowardly
- **Decora** – decorate
- **Decorum** – polite behavior
- **Derision** – something that is ridiculed or scorned
- **Dirges** – solemn songs or hymns of grief and lamentation, songs at a funeral
- **Eccentric** – odd, unconventional, out of the ordinary
- **Egress** – to exit
- **Embellishment** – exaggeration
- **Entreat** – to plead, to persuade
- **Fete** – festival, entertainment outside
- **Gaieties** – festive activities
- **Gesticulations** – gestures, to “talk” with one’s hands and arms
- **Ingrate** – an ungrateful person
- **Ingress** – to enter
- **Mockery** – ridicule, make fun of
- **Nepenthe** – a potion used in ancient times believed to cause forgetfulness to ease pain or sorrow
- **Obeisance** – a gesture of respect
- **Pallas** – another name for the Greek goddess, Athena, goddess of wisdom
- **Pallid** – lacking in sparkle or liveliness
- **Perforce** – necessary
- **Pestilence** – a contagious or infectious epidemic disease that is devastating, a plague
- **Placid** – calm, without disturbance
- **Plume** – a feather
- **Plutonian** – a reference to Pluto, the God of the Underworld
- **Prosper** – to flourish, to become successful, rich or powerful
- **“Quaint and curious volumes of forgotten lore”** – strikingly old-fashioned literature that only scholars read today
- **Respite** – a usually short interval of rest or relief
- **Revelers** – people at a party, people celebrating
- **Reverie** – dream, daydream
- **Rogue** – a mischievous, worthless, or dishonest person
- **Sagacity** – keen senses
- **Sedate** – to calm, relax, put to sleep
- **Seraphim** – an order or category of angels
- **Suavity** – smooth performance
- **Surcease** – cease, to come to an end
- **Scoundrel** – a mean, worthless person
- **Tattoo** – a beat as on a drum
- **Tinkled** – to have made a tinkling sound
- **Trifles** – something of little value or importance
- **Tuberculosis** – a contagious lung disease
- **Tufted** – to bunch
- **Ungainly** – clumsy, awkward appearance
- **Vehemently** – emotionally, angrily
- **Vesture** – clothing
- **Visage** – the face, facial expression
- **Wanton** – badly behaved, senseless
- **Writhe** – twist, turn, contort; to suffer distress



# ADAPTATION

BY MAGGIE MANCINELLI-CAHILL



Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill

To bring this work to life on stage, Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill, the REP's Producing Artistic Director, began by researching the author's works and life. "The author's words are the most important part of any adaptation," says Cahill, "and are the real stars of "Pure Poe." But when I realized that the author would be the one to introduce his work, it became essential to create a personality for Poe himself. But who was Edgar Allan Poe? What kind of person wrote those stories and what would he be like if we met him today? Creating the "Poe" who weavers together the three stories required reading several biographies about the man himself, many of his poems and stories, and several critiques of his work."

Maggie is no stranger to creating stage adaptations with several other credits to her name. "I love literature," says Cahill, "but even more, I love to harness the power of literature and theatre to turn young people on to reading more - and of course, coming to the theatre!"

Why did she want to present the stories of Edgar Allan Poe for the On-The-Go! in-school touring program? "I think Poe was one of America's finest storytellers. He was well-known for his concise writing - and dramatic prose. Just read the first paragraph of many of his stories and you will find yourself already in the middle of great suspense. In four pages of "The Masque of the Red Death," Poe spins a devastating morality tale about what happens when a person with power believes that he is above nature - and can control evil - something usually reserved for God. This is what the Greeks would call hubris, and Poe often showed the futility of authority against the greater forces of the universe.

**"Poe understood that writing - and remembering those that came before us - is one way to creating eternity on earth. I think that's an idea worthy of thought - and fertile ground for a bit of drama."**

**- MAGGIE MANCINELLI-CAHILL**

"I was drawn to Poe because he wrote so much about the philosophical concepts surrounding life and death. His work gives us a chance to think about our lives and what we believe happens after we

die - and he does this by giving us a chill down our spine! Is there such a thing as a ghost? Does "evil" really exist - or does man create evil by doing terrible deeds? Do we control everything in our own lives? What do we control and what can't we change? These themes are the stuff of great writers - and Poe touches on them within a few stanzas of poetry or a few pages of prose.



# THE PRODUCTION

## WHO'S WHO ...

### THE DIRECTOR:

Margaret E. Hall has worked internationally as a director, stage manager and drama teacher. As the REP's Associate Artistic Director, Margaret spearheads the Neighbors for Neighbors Community Bridge Building Program, coordinates the annual Next Act! New Play Summit, directs on the mainstage, produces the On-The-Go! in-school touring program, and oversees the Young Playwright Contest and Summer Stage Young Acting Company—frequently directing the Summer Stage productions. She made her mainstage debut at the REP with the 2017 production of “An Illiad” and has also directed the World Premiere of “Red Maple” (for which she won the 2019 Broadway World Berkshire’s Award for Best Director of a Play), and the 2019 production of “Live from WVL Radio Theatre: It’s a Wonderful Life.” Margaret has been directing the company’s On-The-Go! Productions for the past ten years, reaching thousands of students from the Capital Region and beyond with stories that focus on NY State History and classical literature. She has most recently directed the 2019-2020 season tours of “Cinderella” And “Petticoats of Steel.” Other directorial credits include: “Circus Olympus,” “Into the Woods Jr.,” “Disney’s The Aristocats Kids,” “Peter Pan and Wendy,” “The Wizard of Oz” and “The Just So Stories.” Her skills and training have taken her to Bali, Scotland, Austria, Russia, England, Romania and to several U.S. States. Margaret is a proud member of Actors’ Equity, holds a BA in Theatre Arts from SUNY New Paltz and an MFA in Theatre Directing from the University of Essex in London.



### THE PRODUCTION TEAM

While the production team has not yet been hired for this production, it will consist of a set, costume and sound designer, who will work in collaboration with the director to create the world of the play. Additionally, the production team includes the stage manager (who is responsible for ensuring that the show maintains its integrity throughout the tour) and the assistant stage manager (who is also the road manager and crew member while on tour).\*



# THE PRODUCTION

## WHO'S WHO ...

### THE ACTOR: WYNN HARMON\*

Capital Rep: "The True," "Race," "The Taming of the Shrew," "Dr. Faustus," "Pure Poe. On Broadway, he played The Detective in "Porgy and Bess" (also telecast "Live from Lincoln Center" on PBS). Off-Broadway appearances include "The Lucky One" (Mint Theater Company), "As You Like It" (The Pearl Theater Company) and "The New Yorkers" (Musical Theater Works). International credits include Voltaire/Dr. Pangloss in "Candide," at both the Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse, and Opéra National de Bordeaux; and Charlie Cowell in "The Music Man" at Royal Opera House Muscat, Oman. Regional credits include "Lost in the Stars," "Showboat," and "Candide" at The Kennedy Center; and shows or seasons with Arena Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, Hartford Stage, The Alley Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, The Studio Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Huntington Theatre Company, Westport Country Playhouse, Cincinnati Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, Baltimore Center Stage, Syracuse Stage, American Repertory Theatre, Westport Country Playhouse, Resident Ensemble Players, La Jolla Playhouse, White Heron Theatre Company, The Glimmerglass Festival, Des Moines Metro Opera, multiple Shakespeare festivals; and The Constant Wife plus ten Shakespeare productions at The Old Globe in San Diego. On television, he played The Chaplain on Madam Secretary, Trevor Babcock on All My Children and Mayor Robert Van Wyck on The Knick. Film credits include Paper Cranes. Training: BFA from Boston University, MFA from American Conservatory Theatre. He is a proud recipient of a Helen Hayes Award nomination and The Edwin E. Stein Award for Excellence in the Arts.



WYNN HARMON







# IDEAS FOR CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

## ENGLISH | WRITING

1. **Write A Review:** Ask students to write a review of the REP's production of "Pure Poe."

### Things to consider when writing the review:

- What was the most compelling or intriguing aspect of the production?
  - How did the set, lights, costumes and props add (or take away) from the production?
  - What did you think of the music and stage movement?
  - What did you think of the direction of the piece?
  - What questions arose for you, about the production, was anything confusing?
  - Would you recommend this production to others?
  - Can you make any connections between this play and other plays that you have seen?
    - Can you make any connections from the play to your own life?
2. **Vocabulary Fun!:** Poe had an extensive vocabulary and liked to use words that would have seemed complex even for audiences of his time. Learn some of the words in the vocabulary sections of this study guide and, in true Poe fashion, use them with your friends and family in regular conversation.
  3. **Secrets and Confessions:** The narrator in "The Tell-Tale Heart" harbors a murderous secret that he cannot keep from confessing. What secrets have you kept in your life? What secrets have you had to confess? Work with a partner and write a scene in which one of you has a secret. Will the secret be told?
  4. **Plague Diaries:** Imagine you are a member of Prince Prospero's kingdom and you have been invited to come within the castle walls to escape the plague. Write a diary talking about your time there.
  5. **Extra, Extra!:** Imagine yourself as a reporter during the time of one of Poe's stories. Write a news article about the events that take place. Be sure to include quotes from eyewitnesses, descriptions of the scene and even illustrations.
  6. **Symbols:** Poe uses symbols in his work. Think about these symbols, such as the seven rooms in Prospero's palace, the clock, the bust of Pallas, etc. How do these symbols contribute to the stories?
  7. **"Allegory is an inferior literary form!":** Poe disliked allegory, yet many consider "The Masque of the Red Death" to be allegorical. What is allegory? Do you think this short story is an example?



# IDEAS FOR CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

## ENGLISH | READING

- “The Time Machine” by H.G. Wells
- “The Haunting of Hill House” by Shirley Jackson
- “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” by Washington Irving
- “The Great God Pan” by Arthur Machen
- “The Colour Out of Space” by H.P. Lovecraft
- Poetry by John Keats or Robert Frost

## THEATRE/PERFORMANCE/ VISUAL ARTS

1. **Designing a Show:** Congratulations! You’ve been hired as one of the designers for a non-touring production of “Pure Poe.”
  - **Set Designer.** It is your job to create a set that will transform the theatre into the appropriate time period and location. When does this story take place? What scenic elements and props will you use?
  - **Sound Designer.** It is your job to create a soundscape that supports the time period and location the play takes place. What sound effects will you use to enhance the action of the play?
  - **Lighting Designer.** It is your job to light the set and actors. What lighting will help set the mood?
  - **Costume Designer.** It is your job to costume the actor. What will you do to evoke all the characters portrayed within the production, without forcing the actor to make full costume changes?

Students are tasked with taking on one of the design roles for a production of “Pure Poe.” They are to create a PowerPoint presentation with their design choices. Images and drawings should support the time period, location, and specific needs of the production.

2. **The meaning of colors:** Prince Prospero elaborately decorates the rooms of his castle in different colors. Throughout time,

different colors have had great meaning to people. Choose a color and research what kinds of meanings are associated with it. Create a collage to represent the meaning of that color and what it means to you.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

1. **Timeline:** What was going on in the world during the time that Poe lived? Some events are listed on the timeline in this guide. Create a timeline of your own and find more events from history from 1809 to 1849. Consider whether events influenced Poe’s writing and how.
2. **“The Tell-Tale Heart”:** Modern crime-fighters have lots of advanced techniques for solving mysteries and catching criminals. The police in “The Tell-Tale Heart” don’t have fancy equipment at their disposal. Find out what methods police used to solve crimes in the early part of the nineteenth century. How would that investigation be different from the way such a crime would be solved today?
3. **Cultural Colors:** Poe makes associations with colors such as black to represent death and red to represent blood. Is this true for the whole world? If someone from another culture were to watch this play, would they necessarily associate black with death? Find out what colors mean to other cultures.
4. **Who’s Telling the Story:** Poe uses several narration techniques. Compare “The Tell-Tale Heart” with “The Masque of the Red Death” and analyze Poe’s use of narration.
5. **Early Physiology:** The narrator in “The Tell-Tale Heart” says he is not mad but that it is his acute senses that drive him to do evil things. Poe lived before much was known about psychology. What was considered “insane” during Poe’s life?



# IDEAS FOR CURRICULUM INTEGRATION



## SCIENCE

1. **The Physiology of Fear:** Fear is a powerful emotion. It drives people to act in unexpected ways. In “The Tell-Tale Heart,” why does the narrator’s blood “run cold” when the evil eye falls upon him? Research what changes happen in the body when a person becomes afraid.
2. **Ornithology:** “The Raven”. Poe chose to write a poem about a raven instead of any of the other birds he might have chosen. Research ravens and find out how they live and what kind of birds they are. Why do you think Poe chose this particular bird for his poem?
3. **Plagues throughout History:** In “The Masque of the Red Death,” Poe writes about a horrible plague that spreads throughout Prince Prospero’s kingdom. The prince’s subjects try all sorts of remedies to protect themselves. What are these remedies and what does science say about these remedies today? Is it possible that bloodletting does cure some diseases? Research the plagues that have affected mankind throughout history. How were they spread? What did people do to protect themselves? What connections can you make from the story to today (to the COVID-19 Pandemic we have all just lived through)?
4. **Tuberculosis:** Virginia Clemm Poe died of tuberculosis. What were the symptoms of this disease? Does this disease still exist today?
5. **Evil Eye:** The eye of the old man in “The Tell-Tale Heart” is described as a “pale blue with a film.” What physical conditions would cause an eye to appear that way? Research optical illnesses and form a hypothesis about the old man’s eye.

## MATH

1. **Writing for a Living:** Edgar Allan Poe supported his wife (and cousin) Virginia and her mother on \$540 a year (he was paid only ten dollars for “The Raven!”). Find out how much that would be worth today and how much it would buy. Was the Poe family rich? What kinds of things could they afford?



# SUGGESTED RESOURCES\*

## FOR TEACHERS

### WEBSITES ABOUT EDGAR ALLAN POE

**The Edgar Allan Poe Museum:**  
[www.poemuseum.org](http://www.poemuseum.org)

**The Poe Decoder:**  
[www.poedecoder.com](http://www.poedecoder.com)

**The Poe Project:**  
[poeproject.org](http://poeproject.org)

**An exploration of the “Evil Eye”:**  
[www.thefreedictionary.com/evil+eye](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/evil+eye)

**The Edgar Allan Poe Society  
of Baltimore.**  
[www.eapoe.org](http://www.eapoe.org)

### BOOKS ABOUT EDGAR ALLAN POE

**Baym, Nina.** *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. WW Norton and Company. 1998.

**Conklin, Grof.** *Ten Great Mysteries by Edgar Allan Poe*. Scholastic.Inc. 1989.  
Poe, E.A. “The Philosophy of Composition.” *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. WW Norton and Company. 1998.

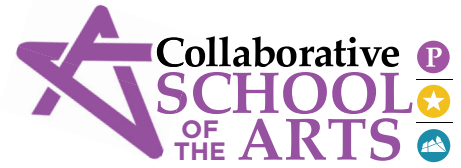
**Mabbott, Thomas Olive.** *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe. Volume 1 Poems*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1969, pg.364-374.

*\*Please note theREP is not affiliated with any of these sites, they are merely suggestions.*



# TEACHER EVALUATION:

*PURE POE: THREE TALES OF THE MACABRE*



Your feedback is vital to the growth and continued success of the REP's educational programming. It helps us to constantly improve and to attract additional underwriting. **Please take a moment to fill out this form.**

**We encourage you to make multiple copies so that all the teachers in your group may respond.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How you heard about the production: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**How would you rate the quality of today's performance?**

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

**Did attending the performance assist you in addressing classroom curriculum?**

Very Much

Somewhat

Not At All

N/A

**Were the online study materials useful in preparing students and deepening their experience?**

Very Much

Somewhat

Not At All

N/A

**Please check all that apply:**

\_\_\_\_ Today's performance price was affordable for my school.

\_\_\_\_ My school required a subsidy to afford today's performance.

\_\_\_\_ My school would provide performances for more students, more often, if additional funds were available.

**Any additional information / comments welcome, please attach them to this evaluation.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The completed form may be submitted by email to:  
sdavenport@proctors.org or by mail to: Shai Davenport,  
Education Programs Manager, 432 State St., Schenectady, NY 12305



### *CREATING AN AUTHENTIC LINK TO THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE...*

**EDUCATION AND OUTREACH** are key components of theREP's mission, "to create an authentic link to the community we serve." Through a wide range of programs, theREP strives "to provide the Capital Region with theatre programming which inspires a greater understanding of the human condition" and helps "to develop future audiences by instilling the notion that theatre is a vital part of the cultural life of all vibrant cities."

### PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

**Student Matinees (Classics on Stage):** Performances of most of the theatre's professional productions are scheduled during the school day with dramatically discounted prices for area students to allow for greater accessibility. Each season, at least one play is designated as "Classics on Stage," for its direct connections with curriculum.

**On-The-Go! In-School Tour (OTG):** Specially adapted professional productions designed to play to students on-site in schools. theREP's OTG program reaches close to 10,000+ students every year.

**Young Playwright Contest:** Providing students, ages 13-19, with the opportunity to submit their work to be produced on theREP's stage. In addition, the winning playwrights are given a mentorship – prior to the production of the play – with a theatre professional playwright and/or director.

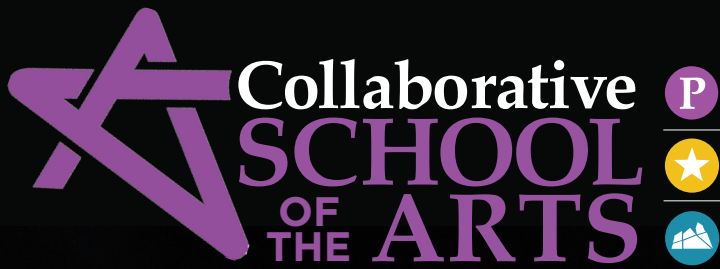
**Summer Stage Young Acting Company:** Providing young actors the opportunity to work together, with leading professionals in the field, on a production that will take place on theREP's stage. Company members hone their acting skills while rehearsing and then perform the Young Playwright Contest-winning plays.

**CAST (Cultivating Arts & Students Together):** Providing students with the opportunity to volunteer at the theatre and earn community service credits at the same time. Teens get an in-depth learning experience that satisfies their passion while fulfilling their needs.

**Artists in Residency Programs:** theREP works in conjunction with school educators to bring highly trained teaching artists to work in extended residency within the classroom. Opportunities to embed the theatrical experience into the curriculum are available for teachers and students for every work in our education season.

**Career Development:** theREP is dedicated to helping build the next generation of theatre professionals with programs like the Professional Apprenticeship Program which provides year-long or summer-long paid apprenticeships (as an assistant stage manager and or crew member), and the Internship Program that provides college students internships in many disciplines of theatre. These programs are specifically for young people beginning a career in the performing arts and arts education.





DOUG LIEBIG

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