**“Masque of the Red Death”**

**by Edgar Allan Poe**

**Before Reading**

**1)** **Vocabulary**: Look up the following words and write the definitions using the student-friendly patterns below.

Noun

(a/an) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_is (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_that/who (is, has, does)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Critical features

Noun + modifiers

Vocab word

Adjective

Something or someone that/who is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is/has/does\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Critical features

Vocab word



a. pestilence (n.)

A pestilence is a disease that is deadly and contagious.



b. sagacious (adj.)

Someone who is sagacious is wise in a clever or shrewd way.



c. brazier (n.)

A brazier is a metal container that holds hot coals for a fire.



d. revelers (n.)

Revelers are people who celebrate with noise and dancing.



e. dominion (n.)

Dominion is power that governs a large territory or authority.



**2)** **Poe’s Life Connection…Building Background Knowledge**:

Who in Poe’s life was afflicted by tuberculosis?

-Poe’s mother, foster mother, and wife

How does the disease sometimes manifest itself?

-Tuberculosis attaches the lungs and causes extreme coughing. Sometimes victims cough up blood.

**3)** **Literary Term Review**: write brief definitions in your own words



setting

time, place, and surrounding circumstances of a narrative



personification

an object or non human form given the characteristics of something human



simile

a comparison of two unlike items using *like* or *as*



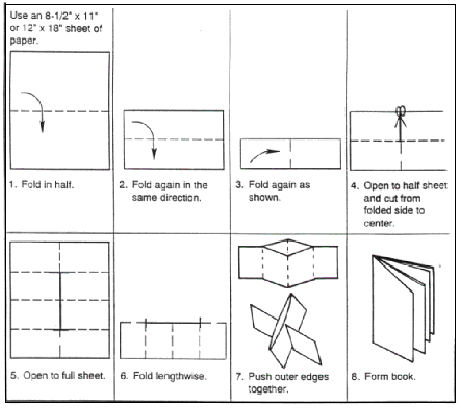
symbol

an object that has a meaning unto itself as well as another implied meaning



**4) Fold Stapleless Book**

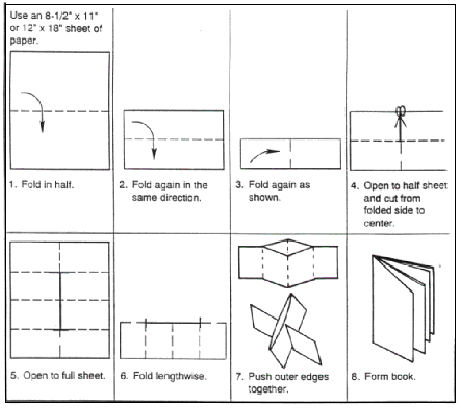
a. Fold a regular 8.5 x 11 piece of blank paper hot dog style.

b. Fold it hamburger style.

c. Fold in hamburger style again.

d. Unfold it completely. You should have 8 rectangles (4 on top, 4 on the bottom)

e. Fold it hamburger style.

f. Starting at the folded edge, make one cut on the center crease, stopping at the next fold mark. Do not cut to the end.

g. Unfold the paper and fold it hotdog style.

h. Push from the ends to make a diamond. Then flatten it and fold it into a book. (See diagram.)

i. On the front of your book, write the title and author of the story. Underneath that, write “illustrated by” and your name.

**During Reading-** Pause each time your teacher stops reading or at each star in the text to sketch a picture. You will have only one minute for each sketch.

**After Reading-**

**1)** With a partner, retell the story using your stapleless book. Alternate telling about each page.

**2)** In the column on the left, sequence the following events in the correct narrative order from 1 to 15. Use your text as needed to check for accuracy.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Narrative Order**  **1-15** | **Story Events** | **Letter of**  **Corresponding**  **Quote** |
| # 7 | Pauses occur in music and dancing. | o |
| # 13 | Prince Prospero dies. | f |
| # 4 | Six rooms are described. | l |
| # 15 | The clock stops. | b |
| # 2 | Prince Prospero and friends seclude themselves. | j |
| # 10 | Mystery Guest is described. | m |
| # 12 | Intruder moves through rooms. | k |
| # 3 | Prospero holds masked ball. | g |
| # 14 | Intruder is unmasked. | h |
| # 8 | The clock strikes midnight. | a |
| # 1 | Red death devastates country. | c |
| # 11 | Prince Prospero is enraged. | d |
| # 5 | Seventh room is described. | n |
| # 9 | Mystery guest is noticed. | i |
| # 6 | Clock is described. | e |

**3)** In the column on the right, write the letter of the quotation from the story on the next page that corresponds with the event.

a. “And the revel went whirling on, until at length there commenced the sounding of midnight upon the clock…But now there were twelve strokes to be sounded by the bell of the clock; and thus it happened, perhaps, that more of thought crept, with more time, into the medications of the thoughtful among those who reveled.”

b. “And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.”

c. “The ‘Red Death’ has long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its Avatar and its seal—the redness and the horror of blood.”

d. “When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image, he was seen to be convulsed, in the first moment with a strong shudder of terror or distaste; but, in the next, his brow reddened with rage.”

e. “It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall, a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang…”

f. “There was a sharp cry—and the dagger dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterward, fell prostrate in death the Prince Prospero.”

g. “It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence.”

h. “Then summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revelers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave cerements and corpse-like mask, which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form.

i. “And thus too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before.”

j. “But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and lighthearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys.”

k. “…but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first, through the blue chamber to the purple—through the purple to the green—through the green to the orange—through this again to the white—and even thence to the violet, ere a decided movement had been made to arrest him.”

l. “That at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue—and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted with orange—the fifth with white—the sixth with violet.”

m. “The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat…But the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbled in blood—and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror.”

n. “The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But in this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet—a deep blood color.”

o. “…and when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hours was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions…”

**4)** Using complete sentences, answer the following questions regarding Poe’s use of literary terms.

* What is the setting and how does it contribute to the overall mood of the story?

The setting is Prince Prospero’s “castellated abbey” during a time when disease had overtaken the country. Poe, however, never specifies a real country or specific time. This contributes to the overall mystery of the story by allowing the events to occur anywhere or at any time.

* What does the clock symbolize? What do the revelers stop their music and dancing when the clock chimes?

The clock symbolizes the time left to live. Each time the clock strikes, the revelers are reminded that their own time is running out. When the clock goes out at the end of the story, everyone has died.

* Why is Red Death always capitalized? How does this relate to one of the literary terms discussed in class? Why do you think Poe chooses to treat the Red Death as a character?

Poe personifies the Red Death; thus it is capitalized and treated as a character. It seems at first to be a person attending the party, but at the end it is clear that the mummer represents the disease itself. Poe may have chosen to represent the tuberculosis that killed so many of his loved ones as a character because he had no control over the disease.

* In the last paragraph, Poe uses a simile. What is the simile? What does it mean? How does the use of this literary technique impact the reader’s interpretation of the story?

The simile is “He had come like a thief in the night.” It means that the disease came without being noticed and took everything—including their lives. This short comparison amidst Poe’s longer, complex sentence really stands out.

**5)** Complete your ticket out the door to reflect upon what reading strategies used with this stories you could transfer to other works.