

The Fall of the House of Usher

Edgar Allan Poe

How does Poe make the narrators emotional reaction seem to arise before he can explain it rationally?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Opening - first sight of the House of Usher

TEACHER SETUP

Open the work in the Enhanced Reader and cue the span using the START and END anchors below.

START	During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year,
END	I know not how it was - but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit.
PASSAGE ID	sec-usher-01

THE MOVE

Analyze how syntax and accumulated description create an emotional conclusion before an explanation

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Poe stacks visual details - season, clouds, country, house, windows, trees - before the narrator admits that the effect exceeds his ability to explain it. The long descriptive build makes dread feel produced by the setting even though the narrator cannot identify a single cause.

MARK

Underline the accumulated setting details. Circle words carrying emotional weight. Box the narrators admission that he cannot explain the effect.

NOTICE

- How long does Poe delay the narrators direct statement of emotion?
- Which ordinary details become disturbing because they are accumulated together?

- Why is "I know not how it was" important to the Gothic effect?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does Poe make the narrators emotional reaction seem to arise before he can explain it rationally? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response. Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.

STRONG ANSWER

Poe makes dread precede explanation by piling up bleak visual details before the narrator names his feeling. When the narrator finally admits he does not know why the building affects him so strongly, the setting seems to exercise a power that rational description cannot fully contain.

EVIDENCE

Use two details from the descriptive accumulation and the narrators statement that he cannot explain the effect.

WATCH FOR

Do not list gloomy adjectives only. Explain how the order and buildup of description produce the narrators response.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 11 · LESSON 319

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WORK	The Fall of the House of Usher
TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION	Opening - first sight of the House of Usher
PASSAGE ID	sec-usher-01

Your teacher will open or cue the work in the Enhanced Reader. Use the location and verbatim anchors below to confirm the assigned span.

START

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year,

END

I know not how it was - but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit.

READ / LISTEN TO THE ASSIGNED PASSAGE SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration and highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the assigned passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK Underline the accumulated setting details. Circle words carrying emotional weight. Box the narrators admission that he cannot explain the effect.
2. NOTICE How long does Poe delay the narrators direct statement of emotion? Which ordinary details become disturbing because they are accumulated together? Why is "I know not how it was" important to the Gothic effect?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: How does Poe make the narrators emotional reaction seem to arise before he can explain it rationally?
4. WRITE Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.
5. CLOSE Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.