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"The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most well-known poems ever written. It brought its author worldwide fame and has frequently been analyzed, performed, and parodied. But what about this poem makes it so special? In this guide, we give you a complete overview of "The Raven," discussing everything from the sad stories behind its creation and what is actually going on between the narrator and the raven, to its themes and the poetic devices it uses so effectively. The Raven Poem: Full Text Below is the complete text of The Raven poem, written by Edgar Allan Poe and published in 1845. It consists of 18 stanzas and a total of 108 lines. 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, 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." Much I marvelled 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 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." 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, methought, 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! 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 Is "The Raven" About? "The Raven" is a poem about a man who is heartbroken over the recent death of his beloved Lenore. As he passes a lonely December night in his room, a raven taps repeatedly on the door and then the window. The man first thinks the noise is caused by a late night visitor come to disturb him, and he is surprised to find the raven when he opens the window shutter. After being let in, the raven flies to and lands on a bust of Pallas (an ancient Greek goddess of wisdom). The man is amused by how serious the raven looks, and he begins talking to the raven; however, the bird can only reply by croaking "nevermore." The man reflects aloud that the bird will leave him soon as all the people he cared about have left him. When the raven replies "nevermore," the man takes it as the bird agreeing with him, although it's unclear if the raven actually understands what the man is saying or is just speaking the one word it knows. As the man continues to converse with the bird, he slowly loses his grip on reality. He moves his chair directly in front of the raven and asks it despairing questions, including whether he and Lenore will be reunited in heaven. Now, instead of being merely amused by the bird, he takes the raven's repeated "nevermore" response as a sign that all his dark thoughts are true. He eventually grows angry and shrieks at the raven, calling it a devil and a thing of evil. The poem ends with the raven still sitting on the bust of Pallas and the narrator, seemingly defeated by his grief and madness, declaring that his soul shall be lifted "nevermore." Background on "The Raven" Edgar Allan Poe wrote "The Raven" during a difficult period in his life. His wife, Virginia, was suffering from tuberculosis, Poe was struggling to make money as an unknown writer, and he began drinking heavily and picking fights with coworkers and other writers. It's easy to see how he could have conjured the dark and melancholy mood of "The Raven." It's not known how long Poe spent writing "The Raven," (guesses range from anywhere to a single day to over a decade) but it's thought most likely that he wrote the poem in the summer of 1844. In his essay, "The Philosophy of Composition," Poe stated that he chose to focus the poem on the death of a beautiful woman because it is "unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world." He hoped "The Raven" would make him famous, and, in the same essay, stated that he purposely wrote the poem to appeal to both "the popular and the critical taste." "The Raven" was published in the newspaper The New York Evening Mirror on January 29, 1845 (depending on the source, Poe was paid either $9 or $15 for it). "The Raven" brought Poe instant fame, although not the financial security he was looking for. Critical reception was mixed, with some famous writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Butler Yeats expressing their dislike for the poem. Despite those initial mixed reviews, The Raven poem has continued its popularity and is now one of the most well-known poems in the world. Countless parodies have been written, and the poem has been referenced in everything from The Simpsons to the NFL team the Baltimore Ravens (their mascot is even named "Poe"). Major Themes in "The Raven" From The Raven summary, we know it's definitely a melancholy poem, and most of its themes revolve around grim topics. Here are three of the most important themes. Theme 1: Grief Grief is the overwhelming emotion in "The Raven," and the narrator is absolutely consumed by his grief for his lost love, Lenore. At the beginning of the poem, he tries to distract himself from his sadness by reading a "volume of forgotten lore", but when the raven arrives, he immediately begins peppering it with questions about Lenore and becomes further lost in his grief at the raven's response of "nevermore." By the end of the poem, the narrator is seemingly broken, stating that his soul will never again be "lifted" due to his sadness. Poe stated that the raven itself was a symbol of grief, specifically, that it represented "mournful and never-ending remembrance." He purposely chose a raven over a parrot (a bird species better known for its ability to speak) because he thought a raven suited the dark tone of the poem better. Edgar Allan Poe had experienced a great deal of grief by the time he wrote "The Raven," and he had seen people close to him leave, fall gravely ill, or die. He would have been well aware of the consuming power that grief can have and how it has the ability to blot everything else out. Theme 2: Devotion It's the narrator's deep love for Lenore that causes him such grief, and later rage and madness. Even though Lenore has died, the narrator still loves her and appears unable to think of anything but her. In the poem, he speaks of Lenore in superlatives, calling her "sainted" and "radiant." In his mind, she is completely perfect, practically a saint. His love for this woman who is no longer here distracts him from everything in his current life. With this theme, Poe is showing the power of love and how it can continue to be powerful even after death. Theme 3: Rationality vs Irrationality At the beginning of the poem, the narrator is rational enough to understand that Lenore is dead and he will not see her again. When the raven first begins repeating "nevermore," he realizes that the answer is the bird's "only stock and store," and he won't get another response no matter what he asks. He seems to even find the bird vaguely amusing. However, as the poem continues, the narrator's irrationality increases as he asks the raven questions it couldn't possibly know and takes its repeated response of "nevermore" to be a truthful and logical answer. He then descends further into madness, cursing the bird as a "devil" and "thing of evil" and thinking he feels angels surrounding him before sinking into his grief. He has clearly come undone by the end of the poem. In "The Raven," Poe wanted to show the fine line between rational thought and madness and how strong emotions, such as grief, can push a person into irrationality, even during mundane interactions like the one the narrator had with the raven. The 7 Key Poetic Devices "The Raven" Uses Edgar Allan Poe makes use of many poetic devices in "The Raven" to create a memorable and moving piece of writing. Below we discuss seven of the most important of these devices and how they contribute to the poem. Alliteration Alliteration is the repetition of a sound or letter at the beginning of multiple words in a work, and it's perhaps the most obvious poetic device in "The Raven." The poem is full of alliteration, such as the phrases "weak and weary," "nearly napping," and "followed fast and followed faster." This poetic device helps give the poem its famous musicality and is one of the reasons people love to recite it. Allusion An allusion is an indirect reference to something, and Poe makes multiple allusions in "The Raven." Some key ones include: The bust of Pallas the raven sits on refers to Pallas Athena, the ancient Greek goddess of wisdom. Nepenthe is a drug mentioned in Homer's ancient epic The Odyssey, and it is purported to erase memories. The Balm of Gilead is a reference to a healing cream mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah in the Bible. Aidenn refers to the Garden of Eden, although the narrator likely uses it to mean "heaven" in general, as he wants to know if that's where he and Lenore will reunite. Ravens themselves are mentioned in many stories, including Norse mythology and Ovid's epic poem Metamorphoses. Many readers would be well-versed in the books and stories alluded to in the poem, and they would have understood the references without Poe having to explicitly explain where each was derived from. Doing so would have broken the tension and mood of the poem, so Poe is able to simply allude to them. Assonance Similar to alliteration, assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in one or more words found close together. It serves the same purpose as alliteration and appears beginning in the first line of the poem, where the long "e" sound is repeated in the words "dreary," "weak," and "weary." Meter The majority of "The Raven" follows trochaic octameter, which is when there are eight trochaic feet per line, and each foot has one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed syllable. However, Poe actually used several types of meter, and he is said to have based both the meter and rhyming pattern of "The Raven" off Elizabeth Barrett's poem " Lady Geraldine's Courtship." Meter is very prominent in "The Raven," and, along with other poetic devices, helps make it such a popular poem to recite. Repetition Many words are repeated in "The Raven" the most famous being the word "nevermore" repeated by the bird himself throughout the poem. Other commonly repeated words and phrases in the poem include "Lenore," "chamber door" and "nothing more." These all rhyme with "nevermore" and add to the feeling of despondency in the poem by emphasizing the raven's bleak answer to every question. Rhyme The rhyming pattern in "The Raven" follows the pattern ABCBBB. The "B" lines all rhyme with "nevermore" and place additional emphasis on the final syllable of the line. There is also quite a bit of internal rhyme within the poem, such as the line "But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token," where "unbroken" rhymes with "token." Internal rhyming occurs in the first line of each stanza. It also occurs in the third line and part of the fourth line of each stanza. In the example "Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!/Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!" "token" and "spoken" in the third line of the stanza rhyme with "unbroken" in the fourth line of the stanza. Onomatopoeia Onomatopoeia is when the name of a word is associated with the sound it makes, and it occurs throughout "The Raven," such as with the words "rapping," "tapping," "shrieked," and "whispered." It all helps add to the atmospheric quality of the poem and makes readers feel as though they are really in the room with the narrator and the raven. What's Next? "Ozymandias" by Percy Shelley is another famous and often-studied poem. Learn all about this poem and its famous line "look on my works, ye mighty, and despair" in our complete guide to Ozymandias. There are many more poetic devices than those included in "The Raven." Read our guide on the 20 poetic devices you need to know so you can become an expert. Taking AP Literature? We've got you covered! In our expert guide to the AP Literature exam, we've compiled all the information you need to know about the test and how to study for it to get a top score. The narrative poem “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe, originally published in 1845, is a renowned masterpiece of American Gothic literature.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 borrowFrom 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 curtainThrilled 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,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.”Much I marvelled 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 beingEver 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 onlyThat 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 storeCaught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful DisasterFollowed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden boreOf ‘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 linkingFancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yoreMeant in croaking “Nevermore.”This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressingTo the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclininingOn 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, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censerSwung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent theeRespite—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!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 sittingOn 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 floorShall be lifted—nevermore!The narrative poem “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe, originally published in 1845, is a renowned masterpiece of American Gothic literature. The poem’s evocative imagery, complex structure, and exploration of grief and the supernatural have cemented its enduring legacy. “The Raven” established Poe’s reputation as a master of the macabre and continues to resonate powerfully with readers today.VerseAnnotation1The narrator sets the scene by describing a dark, gloomy night during which he is feeling weak and tired.2He is surrounded by old and interesting books.3-4The narrator is half asleep when he hears a tapping sound on his chamber door.5-6He assumes it’s a visitor knocking at his door and comments that it’s nothing more than that.7-12The narrator reminisces about a lost love named Lenore and how much he misses her. He remembers her vividly and describes her as radiant and rare.13-18The narrator hears more tapping, and he becomes scared and imagines that it’s a visitor trying to enter his room.19-24The narrator summons the courage to investigate the noise and opens the door to find darkness and silence.25-30The narrator becomes frightened and wonders if he is alone or if something supernatural is happening.31-36He hears another noise, and this time, he thinks it’s coming from his window. He opens it and sees a Raven, which he describes in great detail.37-42The Raven enters the room and perches on a bust of Pallas. The narrator finds the bird’s presence eerie.43-48The Raven’s behavior intrigues the narrator, and he begins to question it, asking about its name and origins.49-54The Raven’s reply confuses the narrator, who wonders if the bird’s answer holds any significance.55-60The Raven only says, “Nevermore,” and the narrator grows more and more upset.61-66The narrator tries to rationalize the Raven’s words and believes it is only repeating what it has learned.67-72In an attempt to distract himself from the bird’s presence, the narrator tries to engage it in conversation, but the Raven only says “Nevermore.”67The Raven continues to fascinate the narrator and make him smile.68The narrator brings a cushioned seat in front of the bird, the bust, and the door.69The narrator sinks onto the cushion and starts to link his thoughts together, contemplating the meaning of the Raven’s visit.70The narrator wonders about the Raven’s significance, describing it as ominous and ghastly.71The narrator emphasizes the bird’s ominousness by using several adjectives to describe it.72The Raven’s repeated croak of “Nevermore” weighs heavily on the narrator’s mind.73The narrator guesses at the Raven’s meaning but doesn’t speak to it.74The Raven’s fiery eyes seem to burn into the narrator’s heart.75The narrator continues to contemplate the Raven and Lenore while relaxing on the cushion.76The cushion is described as being made of velvet, and the lamp’s light shines on it.77The narrator notes the color of the cushion’s lining and how it shines in the light.78The narrator declares that Lenore will never again sit on the cushion.79The air around the narrator seems to thicken, and he smells perfume.80The narrator imagines angels with a censer, causing the perfumed air.81The narrator cries out to the Raven, calling it a wretch but also acknowledging that it was sent by God.82The narrator begs for relief from the memories of Lenore.83The narrator asks the Raven to help him forget about Lenore by drinking nepenthe.84The Raven replies with its familiar “Nevermore.”85The narrator addresses the Raven as a prophet of evil, questioning whether it was sent by the devil or by a storm.86The narrator acknowledges the desolate surroundings and begs the Raven to answer his questions.87The narrator describes his surroundings as being haunted by horror.88The narrator implores the Raven to tell him if there is a cure for his sorrow.89The narrator specifically asks if there is balm in Gilead, a reference to a biblical passage.90The Raven replies again with “Nevermore.”91The narrator repeats his accusation that the Raven is a prophet of evil.92The narrator appeals to heaven and God for an answer to his question.93The narrator asks if he will be reunited with Lenore in heaven.94The narrator describes Lenore as a rare and radiant maiden named by the angels.95The Raven responds yet again with “Nevermore.”96The narrator accepts the Raven’s answer and declares that it’s time for the bird to leave.97The narrator orders the Raven to leave and never come back.98The narrator tells the Raven to leave no trace of its visit.99The narrator emphasizes his desire to be alone by telling the Raven to leave and not disrupt his loneliness.100The narrator demands that the Raven remove its beak from his heart and its form from his door.101The Raven responds with “Nevermore” once more.102The narrator screams at the Raven to leave and go back to the underworld103The Raven is still perched on top of the bust of Pallas, not moving from its spot.104The bust of Pallas, a symbol of wisdom and knowledge, is located just above the narrator’s chamber door.105The Raven’s eyes appear demonic, giving it an eerie and ominous quality. They seem to be in a dream-like state.106The light from the lamp casts a shadow of the Raven on the floor, emphasizing its haunting presence.107The narrator’s soul seems to be trapped in the shadow of the Raven on the floor, symbolizing his obsession and despair.108The poem ends with the narrator realizing that his soul will never be freed from the shadow of the Raven, and he will be trapped in his grief forever. The final word, “nevermore,” echoes the Raven’s repeated refrain throughout the poem.The poem begins with the narrator, who is sitting alone in his chamber, feeling weak and weary as he reads old books of forgotten lore.As he nods off, he hears a tapping at his chamber door and assumes it is just a visitor.The tapping continues, and he begins to feel anxious about who could be knocking on his door so late at night.He works up the courage to answer the door and finds only darkness outside.When he returns to his chamber, he hears a whisper of the name “Lenore” and assumes it is just his imagination.He tries to shake off his fear and convince himself that the tapping was just the wind.Suddenly, a raven appears in his room and perches above his chamber door.The narrator is surprised by the bird’s presence and begins to ask it questions.He observes the raven’s somber countenance and admires its regal appearance.He asks the bird its name, but it only replies “Nevermore.”The narrator becomes obsessed with the bird and continues to ask it questions, even though he knows it can only answer with the word “Nevermore.”He reflects on the sorrow he feels for the loss of Lenore and wonders if the raven was sent to him as a divine messenger.The narrator starts to feel hopeless and believes that he will never be able to escape his grief.He decides to ask the raven if there is any hope for him to find peace, but it only replies with the same word, “Nevermore.”The narrator realizes that the raven is a symbol of his despair and that he will never be able to escape his sorrow.The poem ends with the narrator being haunted by the raven’s presence and feeling trapped in his own grief.Literary DeviceVerseMeanings and FunctionsAlliteration1. Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and wearyThe repetition of initial consonant sounds creates a musical effect and emphasizes the mood of the poem.Allusion41. Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber doorReferring to the ancient Greek goddess of wisdom, Pallas Athena, alludes to the speaker’s own knowledge and education.Assonance3. While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tappingThe repetition of vowel sounds creates a musical effect and emphasizes the mood of the poem.Consonance4. As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber doorThe repetition of consonant sounds creates a musical effect and emphasizes the mood of the poem.Enjambment1-2. Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten loreThe continuation of a sentence beyond a line break creates a sense of momentum and tension in the poem.Hyperbole25. Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream beforeAn exaggeration to emphasize the intensity of the speaker’s experience.Imagery8. And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floorThe use of sensory details creates a vivid picture in the reader’s mind.Irony56. That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpourThe Raven’s simple repetition of “Nevermore” is ironic because it both answers and refuses to answer the speaker’s questions.Metaphor44. By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it woreThe comparison of the Raven’s appearance to that of a grave and stern person creates a dark and foreboding atmosphere.Onomatopoeia3. While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tappingThe use of words that imitate sounds creates a musical effect and emphasizes the mood of the poem.Personification37. In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yoreThe Raven is given human-like qualities to create a sense of mystery and foreboding.Refrain6, 18, 30, 42, 48, 60. Only this and nothing more.The repetition of a line at regular intervals creates a sense of structure and rhythm in the poem.Repetition5. “‘Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—The repetition of a phrase creates a musical effect and emphasizes the mood of the poem.Rhyme4-5. As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door. “‘Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—The repetition of vowel sounds at the end of lines creates a musical effect and emphasizes the mood of the poem.Simile46. Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shoreThe comparison of the Raven to a ghastly and grim creature emphasizes its mysterious and foreboding nature.Symbolism48. Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”The Raven’s repetition of “Nevermore” becomes a symbol of the speaker’s grief and inability to move on from his loss.Synecdoche11. For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angelsLiterary DeviceExamples/ReferenceMeanings and FunctionsAlliteration“Once upon a midnight dreary”The repetition of the initial sound of two or more words in a phrase. In “The Raven,” the alliteration creates a musical effect, making the poem easier to memorize, and it also adds a sense of eeriness to the setting of the poem.Assonance“Eagerly I wished the morrow”The repetition of the vowel sound in a phrase. In “The Raven,” assonance creates a musical effect that adds to the melancholy tone of the poem, and it also helps to create a sense of continuity and fluidity between the lines.Consonance“This it is and nothing more”The repetition of consonant sounds in a phrase. In “The Raven,” consonance adds a sense of repetition and rhythm to the poem, and it also creates a musical effect that contributes to the melancholy and eerie tone of the poem.End Rhyme“weak and weary”, “chamber door”The repetition of similar sounds at the end of lines of poetry. In “The Raven,” end rhyme creates a musical effect that makes the poem easier to memorize, and it also helps to create a sense of continuity and flow between the lines.Rhyme SchemeABCBBBThe pattern of end rhymes in a poem. In “The Raven,” the rhyme scheme contributes to the musical effect of the poem, and it also helps to create a sense of continuity and structure throughout the poem.Diction“quaint and curious volume”The choice and use of words and phrases in a poem. In “The Raven,” the diction contributes to the eerie and melancholy tone of the poem, and it also helps to create a sense of setting and atmosphere.Verse TypeTrochaic OctameterThe pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. In “The Raven,” the trochaic octameter creates a musical effect and contributes to the poem’s eerie tone.Stanza TypeEight-line stanzas with a rhyme scheme of ABCBBBThe pattern of lines and rhyme scheme in a group of lines that form a stanza. In “The Raven,” the eight-line stanzas help to create a sense of structure and continuity in the poem, and the rhyme scheme helps to create a musical effect.Poem TypeNarrative poemA poem that tells a story. In “The Raven,” Poe tells a story through the speaker’s interaction with the Raven, and he uses various literary devices to create a sense of melancholy and eerie atmosphere.Diction“placid bust”The choice and use of words and phrases in a poem. In “The Raven,” the diction contributes to the setting and atmosphere of the poem, and it also adds to the eerie tone by creating a sense of stillness and quietness.ToneMelancholy and EerieThe emotional quality or atmosphere of a poem. In “The Raven,” the tone is melancholy and eerie, and this is achieved through the use of various literary devices, such as diction, rhyme, and rhythm.Creating Atmosphere: Poe uses descriptive language and repetition to create a melancholic and ominous atmosphere throughout the poem. The opening lines set the scene with a sense of dread and unease, while the repeated tapping at the chamber door builds tension and suspense. The use of vivid imagery and sensory details, such as the “quaint and curious” volumes of forgotten lore and the “ghost” of dying embers, further contribute to the overall atmosphere of darkness and foreboding.Establishing Theme: The main theme of the poem is the narrator’s grief and despair over the loss of his beloved Lenore. Poe uses symbolism, such as the raven representing death and the bust of Pallas representing wisdom, to reinforce this theme. The repeated refrain of “Nevermore” serves as a haunting reminder of the narrator’s inability to escape his sorrow and the inevitability of death.Creating Tone: The use of rhyme and meter, as well as the repetition of certain phrases and sounds, contributes to the overall tone of the poem. The frequent use of internal rhyme and alliteration gives the poem a musical quality that contrasts with its dark subject matter. The raven’s monotonous repetition of “Nevermore” creates a sense of hopelessness and despair that pervades the poem.Developing Character: The narrator’s character is revealed through his thoughts, actions, and dialogue. His obsession with Lenore and his descent into madness are conveyed through his erratic behavior and his interactions with the raven. Poe also uses irony, such as the narrator’s attempts to reason with the bird, to create a sense of absurdity that adds to the overall tragicomic tone of the poem.Loss and Grief: One of the central themes of “The Raven” is loss and grief. The narrator is mourning the death of his beloved Lenore and is unable to find solace in anything. This is shown in the lines, “Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow/From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore” (lines 9-10). The Raven itself can also be seen as a symbol of grief, as it comes to represent the narrator’s inability to move on from his loss.Madness and Despair: Another major theme in “The Raven” is madness and despair. The narrator is clearly struggling with his mental state, as shown in lines like “Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,/Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before” (lines 25-26). As the Raven continues to haunt him, the narrator becomes increasingly unhinged and begins to question his own sanity.Death and Mortality: Death and mortality are also recurring themes in “The Raven”. The Raven itself is often associated with death, and the narrator repeatedly asks it about the afterlife. This is shown in the lines, “Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!” (line 47). The narrator is clearly preoccupied with the idea of death, both as it relates to his lost Lenore and to his own mortality.Isolation and Loneliness: The final major theme in “The Raven” is isolation and loneliness. The narrator is alone in his chamber with only his grief and his thoughts for company. This is shown in lines like, “Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing” (line 25). The arrival of the Raven, while at first seeming like a comfort, only serves to increase the narrator’s sense of isolation, as the bird refuses to offer any comfort or companionship.Literary TheoryKey ConceptsPotential Interpretation of “The Raven”Formalist/New CriticismClose reading, focus on literary devices (symbolism, metaphor, rhyme, etc.), ambiguityAnalyze the poem’s structure, sound patterns, and imagery to reveal the complex emotions of grief and despair.PsychoanalyticUnconscious desires, symbolism, dream analysisExamine the poem as an expression of the narrator’s repressed desires and unconscious fears. The Raven could symbolize a repressed aspect of the narrator’s psyche.Reader-ResponseRole of the reader in creating meaning, varying interpretationsExplore how different readers might respond emotionally to the poem and how their own experiences shape their understanding of the themes.Historical/BiographicalAuthor’s life, historical contextConsider how Poe’s own struggles with loss and his fascination with the macabre influenced the poem. Research the literary and cultural context of the 19th century.FeministPower dynamics, gender roles, representation of womenAnalyze the portrayal of Lenore and how the poem potentially reflects societal views on women in the 19th century.Question: How does Edgar Allan Poe use symbolism in “The Raven” to convey the narrator’s sense of loss and grief?Thesis Statement: Through the use of symbolism, Edgar Allan Poe masterfully conveys the narrator’s overwhelming sense of loss and grief in “The Raven.”Question: What is the true nature of the narrator’s mental state in “The Raven,” and how does Poe use language and tone to convey it?Thesis Statement: Edgar Allan Poe’s use of language and tone in “The Raven” suggests that the narrator is not only grieving, but also struggling with his own mental state, ultimately leading to his descent into madness.Question: How does Edgar Allan Poe use gothic elements in “The Raven” to create a haunting and eerie atmosphere?Thesis Statement: Edgar Allan Poe’s masterful use of gothic elements in “The Raven” contributes to the poem’s haunting and eerie atmosphere, immersing the reader in the narrator’s world of grief and despair.Question: What is the central theme of “The Raven,” and how does Poe use the raven as a symbol of death to explore this theme?Thesis Statement: In “The Raven,” Edgar Allan Poe explores the theme of death through the use of the raven as a powerful symbol, ultimately revealing the narrator’s acceptance of his own mortality.QuestionAnalysisWhat is the significance of the Raven’s repetition of the word “Nevermore”?The repetition of the word “Nevermore” by the Raven holds great significance in the poem. It serves as a reminder to the speaker of his lost love and his unending grief. Each time the Raven utters the word, it intensifies the speaker’s anguish and despair. Additionally, it emphasizes the theme of the poem, which is the finality of death and the inability to escape from its grip. The Raven’s relentless repetition of “Nevermore” is also significant because it creates a sense of inevitability and hopelessness, leaving the speaker with no hope for reconciliation with his lost love.What is the significance of the Raven’s perch on the bust of Pallas?The Raven’s perch on the bust of Pallas serves to heighten the eerie and ominous mood of the poem. The bust of Pallas represents wisdom and knowledge, and its presence in the room provides a stark contrast to the speaker’s irrational and despairing state. The Raven’s perch on the bust, therefore, symbolizes the bird’s domination over reason and knowledge, as it replaces the statue with its own presence. Furthermore, the Raven’s perch on the bust reinforces the idea that the speaker’s world has been turned upside down, with everything he once held as certain now uncertain.What is the significance of the speaker’s repeated questioning of the Raven?The speaker’s repeated questioning of the Raven is significant because it reveals his desperate attempt to find meaning and understanding in his loss. The speaker’s questions are an attempt to connect with the Raven and make sense of his sorrow. However, the Raven’s responses only serve to reinforce the speaker’s despair and lack of closure. The repeated questioning also highlights the futility of human existence and the struggle to find answers to life’s most significant questions.What is the significance of the speaker’s descent into madness?The speaker’s descent into madness is significant because it represents the destructive power of grief and the human struggle to come to terms with loss. The speaker’s obsession with his lost love and his inability to find closure lead him to a state of irrationality and despair. The speaker’s madness also represents the theme of the poem, which is the finality of death and the inability to escape its grip. As the speaker descends into madness, he becomes increasingly isolated and cut off from the outside world, emphasizing the idea that grief can be an isolating experience. Furthermore, the speaker’s descent into madness highlights the fragility of the human mind and the devastating impact that loss can have on it.“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge: This long narrative poem shares “The Raven”’s focus on the supernatural, a brooding atmosphere, and themes of guilt, despair, and isolation. Both poems explore the consequences of a single act and the psychological toll it can take.“Lenore” by