

The Tell-Tale Heart

By Edgar Allen Poe



Learning Intentions

Gathering:

- To identify different types of short story.
- To identify and describe narrative structure.
- To identify and describe key features of a short text.

Processing:

- To explain and provide evidence for each point of the narrative structure.
- To explain and provide evidence for key features of a short text.

Applying:

- To analyse the narrative structure and evaluate its effectiveness.
- To analyse key features of a short text and evaluate their impact.

Success Criteria

Processing

- To demonstrate knowledge of different types of short story through class discussion.
- To demonstrate knowledge of narrative structure by labeling the studied text.

Applying

- To demonstrate knowledge of the key features of a short text in a detailed analytical essay.

Author Background

Edgar Allan Poe (born Edgar Poe; January 19, 1809 – October 7, 1849) was an American author, poet, editor, and literary critic, considered part of the American Romantic Movement. Best known for his tales of mystery and the macabre, Poe was one of the earliest American practitioners of the short story and is generally considered the inventor of the detective fiction genre. He is further credited with contributing to the emerging genre of science fiction. He was the first well-known American writer to try to earn a living through writing alone, resulting in a financially difficult life and career.

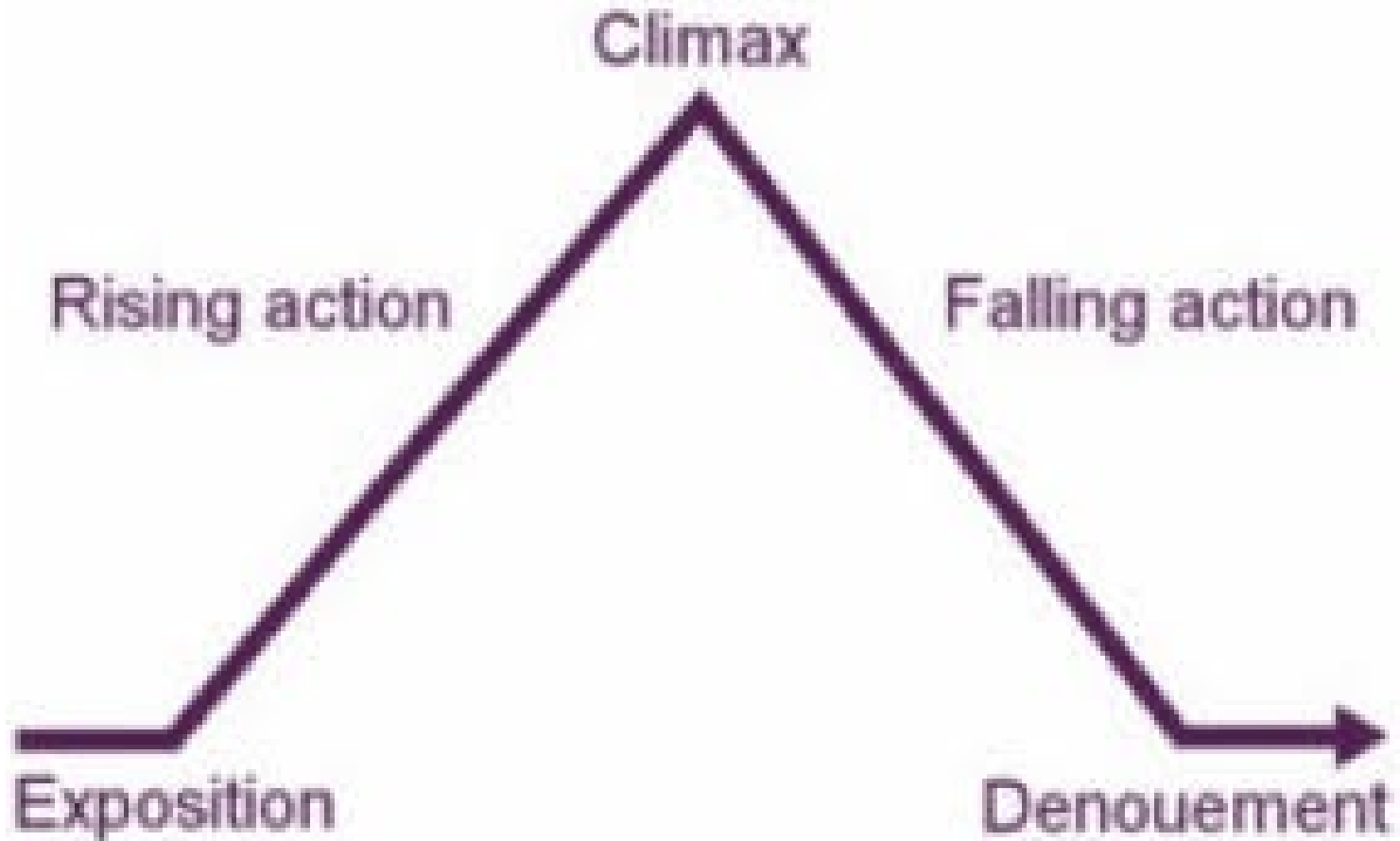
Animated version of the story

<http://youtu.be/wDLLHTdVSgU>

Types of short story

- **Classical plot story**: conflict – action -solution
- **Formula/magazine story**: formulaic. Action centered, fast paced, move rapidly to climax.
- **Slice of life**: psychology, inner life focus, can be plotless, suggestions and implications.
- **Expressionistic/surrealistic**: deep symbolic meaning,
- Identify the type of short story that The Tell-Tale Heart is.

Narrative Structure



Narrative Structure

- **Exposition:** Setting the scene of the story and introducing the main characters and a problem they face.
- **Rising Action:** The development of the problem and the building of tension.
- **Climax:** The problem comes to a head and a solution has to be found.
- **Falling Action:** The problem becomes less intense and solutions are looked for.
- **Denouement:** The solution to the problem is found.

Thinking
Using language, text and
symbols
Managing self
Participating and
contributing

Narrative Structure

1. Plot the main points of the story on a plot structure graph.
2. Explain what you learn in the exposition or introduction of the story.
3. List the events that are included in the rising action of the story.
4. Identify the conflict in this story.
5. Describe the climax of the story.
6. List the events that are included in the falling action of the story.
7. Explain how the conflict is resolved.
8. Describe how the writer uses suspense in developing the plot of this story.

Thinking
Relating to others
Managing self
Participating and contributing

Context

- Imagine what may have happened before this event.
- Predict what may happen next in the story.
- Discuss ideas as a class.

Thinking
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Narrative Viewpoint

Narrative voice is the use of 1st, 2nd or 3rd person.

- **1st person** = I
 - **2nd person** = you
 - **3rd person** = he, she, they or the character's name.
1. Identify the narrative viewpoint of the story.
 2. Is the story written in past or present tense?

Narrative Viewpoint: Purpose

- **1st person** is good because you get all that character's thoughts and motivations. The drawbacks are that you only get that person's perspective.
- **2nd person** is weird and not often used. It places the reader firmly in the story and it is as if you are the main character and are doing everything.
- **3rd person** is good because you get every characters' thoughts and motivations. The drawback is that going through every characters' thoughts can slow the pace of the story. Often authors don't want to do this so we don't get to know every character as well as we would the character in a first person narration.

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Setting

1. Identify the main setting.
2. Create a brainstorm of adjectives to describe it.
3. Locate at least 3 quotes to support your descriptions.
4. Evaluate whether this setting is realistic or not. Explain why with reference to the story.

Essay

Thinking
Using language, text and
symbols
Managing self

1. *“The setting that is most accessible and relevant to the reader is the one that is grounded in realism.”*

To what extent do you agree with this statement? Respond to this question with close reference to one or more text(s) you have studied.

2. *“While the conclusion of a text is important, what really matters is the foundation of a good opening.”*

To what extent do you agree with this statement? Respond to this question with close reference to one or more text(s) you have studied.

Change in a character

Thinking
Using language, text
and symbols
Managing self

Choose a character
and...

1. Describe the character at the beginning of the story.
2. Include quotes to support your description.

1. Identify and describe the event or person that influenced a change in the character.
2. Explain how the character changed.
3. Include quotes.

1. Explain the outcome of this change. What did the character learn from this?
2. What does the author want us as readers to learn from this change?
3. Include quotes.

Themes

Thinking
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Participating and contributing

Work in pairs to -

1. Identify an important theme in the story.
2. Identify and describe 3 examples of the theme being shown in the story. Which characters are linked to this theme?
3. Explain the theme's relevance to today's world. Record examples of which are seen in real life.
4. Describe the author's intention in relation to this message. What did Edgar Allen Poe want the viewer to learn or think about?
5. Identify and describe the social issues that are represented in the story.
6. Explain what lessons we can learn about human behaviour.

Style

- The style of language used (poetic techniques)
- The narrative viewpoint of the text
- Symbols and motifs
- Allusions
- Imagery

Essay

1. *“Major characters can find themselves in collision with forces beyond their control, and in many cases their responses to the collision can be described as morally questionable.”*

To what extent do you agree with this statement? Respond to this question with close reference to one or more text(s) you have studied.

2. *“Forget the big players in the world; it is the people in the margins of our society whose stories are most compelling.”*

To what extent do you agree with this statement? Respond to this question with close reference to one or more text(s) you have studied.

Thinking
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Language questions

1. Explain what type of language the author uses. Is it formal or informal? Include examples.
2. Describe how time is handled in the story. Is it chronological? Are there flashbacks?
3. Record an example of something that the narrator says. What do we learn about her personality from what she says?
4. Describe the tone of the story. Is it positive, negative, menacing, scary etc? Explain why you think this. Include an example.

Language chart

Technique

Example

Effectiveness

Repetition

Jargon

Alliteration

Assonance

Onomatopoeia

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Symbols & Motifs

- Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colours used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.
- Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

Symbols & Motifs

Choose 3 symbols or motifs and complete the chart.

Symbol/Motif & where it appears	Theme associated	Significance

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Relating to others
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References

- <http://www.sfgateway.com/authors/s/saxton-josephine/>
- http://web.cn.edu/Kwheeler/lit_terms_1.html
- Ideas from my colleague, Phil Mitchinson and Christine Wells.