



Programme 1 Worksheet 1

What reason or motive did the narrator have for murdering the old man? Listen and look again, as a police officer might, at the narrator's explanation:

'It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain, but, once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this!'

Make notes in the box below, explaining whether you can accept each particular statement as a fact. Listen carefully to *how* the words are spoken.

<p>It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain...</p> <p>Object there was none.</p> <p>Passion there was none. I loved the old man.</p> <p>He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult.</p> <p>For his gold I had no desire.</p> <p>I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this!</p>	
---	--

Why did the narrator not *begin* by saying: 'It was his eye!'?

What difference is there between:

It was his eye! Yes, it was this! and *I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this!*

After listening to what the narrator has to say and how he speaks, what conclusions do you reach about him?



Programme 1 Worksheet 2

Try one of the following:

1. Summarise the story in your own words.
2. In a paragraph, describe the character of the narrator.
3. Imagine you were one of the police officers mentioned in the story. Describe your experience on the night that you visited the narrator.
4. Explain what you think should happen to the narrator after the story's end. Consider why such treatment would be appropriate.
5. Write an article or report about the murder and the murderer, such as might have appeared in a newspaper in 1843.
6. Write down some questions that you might ask the narrator in an interview. Beneath each question write the kind of answer you think the narrator would give.
7. Imagine you are the author of 'The Tell-Tale Heart', and explain why you chose that title for your story.
8. Imagine you are either a psychiatrist or a lawyer in the courtroom. Can you identify and describe some of the narrator's problems?
9. Does the title of the story suggest the theme, or central idea?





Programme 1 Worksheet 3

'...with what caution – with what foresight, with what dissimulation, I went to work!'

The narrator tries to convince us that he was fully aware of everything he did. He argues that he was very methodical. In the extract below, underline or highlight anything that suggests he may be insane.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded – with what caution – with what foresight, with what dissimulation, I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night about midnight I turned the latch of his door and opened it oh, so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern all closed, closed so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly, very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! would a madman have been so wise as this? And then when my head was well in the room I undid the lantern cautiously – oh, so cautiously – cautiously (for the hinges creaked), I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights, every night just at midnight, but I found the eye always closed, and so it was impossible to do the work, for it was not the old man who vexed me but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers, of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was opening the door little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea, and perhaps he heard me, for he moved on the bed suddenly as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back – but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened through fear of robbers), and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in the bed, crying out, 'Who's there?'

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed, listening; just as I have done night after night hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Comments



Compare your work with others in your class. What do you conclude?



Programme 1 Worksheet 4

1. Try one of the following:

A

Sketch a picture that represents the story for you.

Then take a look at this pictorial interpretation of 'The Tell-Tale Heart' on the Web:

<http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/zone/h/a/haldane2/p7.jpg.html>

Discuss your picture and that on the Web with others in your class.

B

Rewrite the story as a short poem.

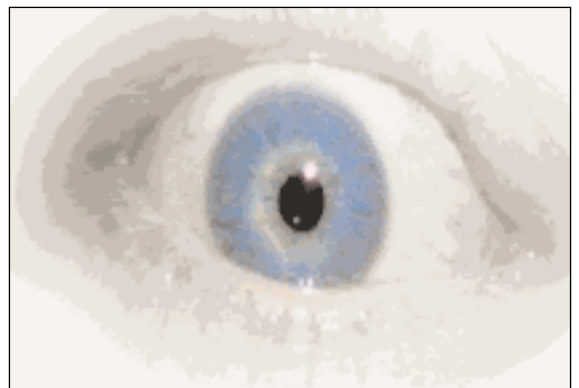
Read your poem aloud. Try to convey the attitude of the narrator implied in the short story.

2. Why is the story not entitled
'The Eye'?

What causes you to distrust the narrator?

Read and discuss what others have said about this story:

<http://las.alfred.edu/~egl/grove/fall98/egl292/poe5.html>





Programme 1 Worksheet 5

Check where the narrator is when he informs us that he heard the beating of the old man's heart:

'And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses? Now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.'

Discuss whether we should accept the his insistence that it was 'the beating of the old man's heart'. Was this a case of 'over-acuteness' of the sense of hearing?

The watch simile is repeated just before the end of the story (see below). Does your response to the above passage influence your response to this passage?

The officers were satisfied. My *manner* had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears; but still they sat, and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definitiveness – until, at length, I found that the noise was *not* within my ears.

No doubt I now grew very pale; but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased – and what could I do? It was a *low, dull, quick sound – much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton*. I gasped for breath, and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly, more vehemently but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why *would* they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men, but the noise steadily increased. O God! what *could* I do? I foamed – I raved – I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder – louder – louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! – no, no? They heard! – they suspected! – they *knew!* – they were making a mockery of my horror! – this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! – and now – again – hark! louder! louder! louder! Louder! – 'Villains!' I shrieked, 'dissemble no more! I admit the deed! – tear up the planks! – here, here! – it is the beating of his hideous heart!'

Note the underlined words in the extract.

Why does the narrator (or the author) keep repeating particular words and phrases? What effect does this produce?

What do these repetitions suggest to you?

Whose was the 'tell-tale heart'?

Where else in the story were sounds mentioned or suggested?

Did they have a similar or a different effect?



Programme 1 Worksheet 6

Write either a short horror story or a review of one you have read.

Think about: • who • what • where • when • why

You can read some example film reviews at: <http://www.fuzzydog.com/films.htm>



Programme 1 Worksheet 7

Find quotations from the story to do with *time* and copy them into the space below.

How many references to time do you think there are in 'The Tell-Tale Heart'?

At what point in the story did the narrator stop measuring events carefully in units of time? Why?



Programme 1 Worksheet 8

Read aloud the following extract from the story. Consider what tone of voice to use, what pace to read at, and which words to emphasise.

'True! nervous, very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses, not destroyed, not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How then am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily, how calmly, I can tell you the whole story.'

Now listen to the extract as it was read in the programme.

Now read aloud the extract below, which comes from later in the story. Has the writer provided any clues to suggest the narrator's tone and pace here?

'O God! what could I do? I foamed – I raved – I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder – louder – louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! – no, no? They heard! – they suspected! – they knew! – they were making a mockery of my horror! – this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!'

Now listen to the extract as it was read in the programme.

How do these extracts differ in the way they are written and read?



Programme 2 Worksheet 1

'Paula lived across from Jimmy Lane on Somerset Terrace, and nobody on our block really liked her because she was bossy and stuck-up, with pale skin and long red pigtails and watery blue eyes.'

Sylvia Plath had a talent for vividly summing up a character in a few words. Note down a few of her character descriptions:



Now consider the author (and narrator) herself. In the left-hand column below, note down what was 'make-believe' for Plath about life at home, at school and at play. Then in the right-hand column, note down what Plath learned about people in the real world.

make-believe	real

What do you think Plath's purpose was in writing this story? What was her theme?

'That was the year the war began, and the real world, and the difference.'



Programme 2 Worksheet 2

Try one of the following:

1. Write a page describing your response to any of the characters.
2. Imagine you are the author. Explain why you chose the title of your story.
3. List ten words from the story that you find interesting, and for each word explain why.
4. Describe an experience you have had that was similar to the experience of the narrator.
5. Design a book cover or poster for the story.



Programme 2 Worksheet 3

Visit the following website, which discusses various writings by Sylvia Plath:

<http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Cafe/8648/johnnyuk2.html>

Find and study its summary of 'Superman and Paula Brown's New Snowsuit'. Does it tell the story? Does it do anything else? Do you find the summary satisfactory, or not? Why?

When studying a story it is important to consider not only the plot but how the story is written and why. What points were emphasised in the television adaptation that the summary on the above website does not mention?

Write a description or review of the story for publication on the Web, in a magazine, or on the back cover of the book. Include short quotations from the story to illustrate your piece.



Programme 2 Worksheet 4

In the story, Sylvia Plath describes the pleasure of 'drifting off to sleep, making up dreams inside my head the way they should go. My flying dreams were believable as a landscape by Dali...'

Visit the following website to see an unusual landscape by Salvador Dali:

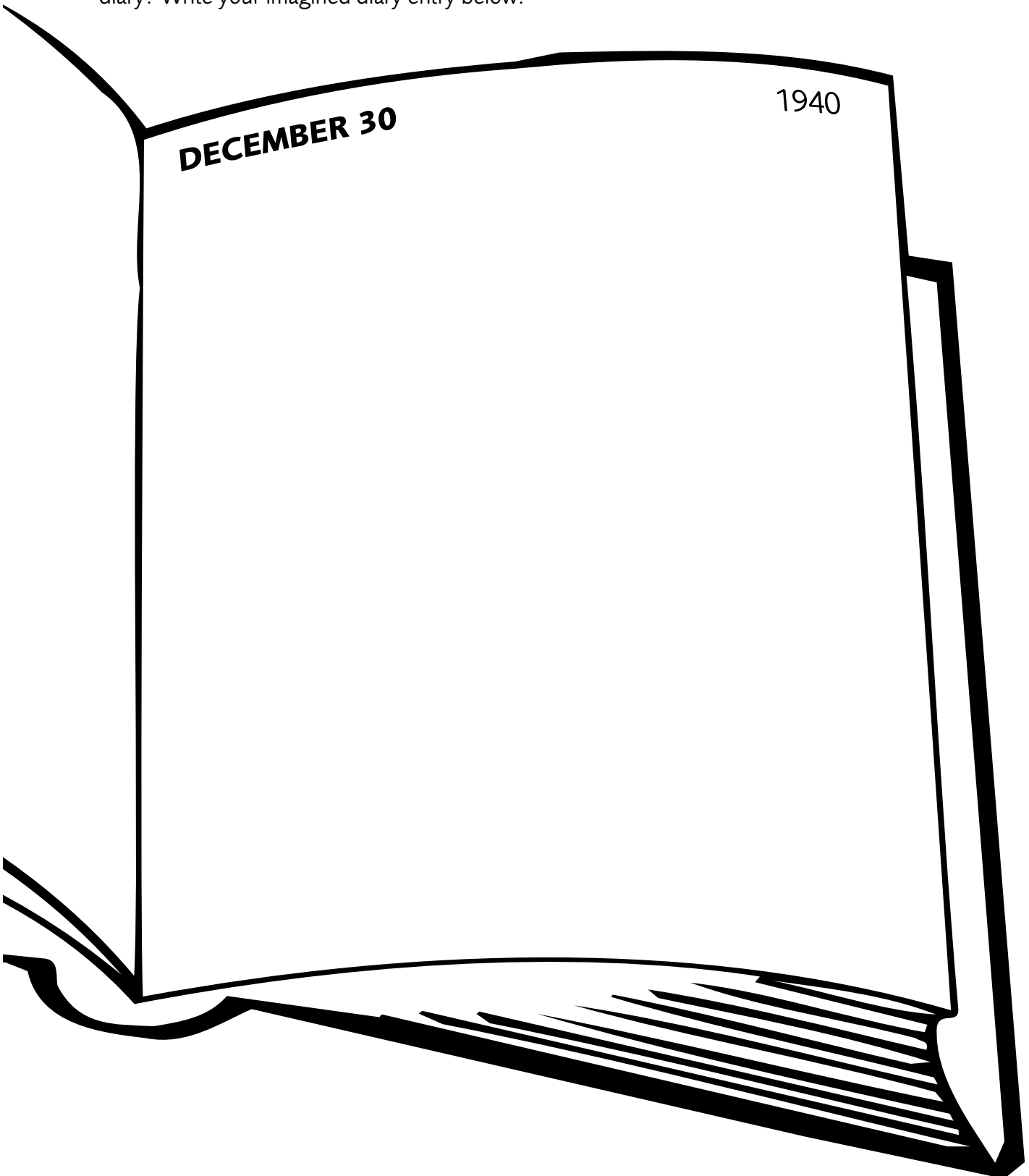
<http://www.salvadoralimuseum.org/spring.html>

Make up a story involving some of the characters in Dali's painting. Use his landscape as the setting.



Programme 2 Worksheet 5

After Uncle Frank left at the end of the story, what might Plath have written that night in her private diary? Write your imagined diary entry below.





Programme 2 Worksheet 6

When writing about a story that you have read, there are several significant aspects you should consider. Look at the list below. Tick those you consider most important.

- characters
- settings
- the ending
- the attitude of the author
- how the plot develops
- significant quotations
- themes
- the story
- the introduction
- the title

Give your reasons.



Programme 3 Worksheet 1

Despite the dramatic change in her life, the mother is apparently as ignorant at the end of the story as she was before.

1. Try one of the following:

A Write a short story (for a magazine or radio) about a parent whose child has run away, *beginning* with the final paragraph of 'Your Shoes'...

I love you I love you so much oh yes oh yes.

and *ending* with the opening paragraph of 'Your Shoes'...

I thought I knew you as well as I know this house. No secret places, no hidey-holes, nothing in you I couldn't see. Now I realise how you kept yourself from me, how I didn't really know you at all.

B Write a monologue spoken by a father reacting to a daughter or son running away from home. Imagine that your story is to be published in a family magazine whose readers are interested in family relationships.

2. Write the protest letter that the daughter in 'Your Shoes' might have written to her mother before she ran away. Perhaps she isn't the sort of person that her mother says she is. She will explain her point of view, but perhaps she also thinks about how her parents feel.





Programme 3 Worksheet 2

Study what the mother says about the shoes and how she treats them.

Using the examples on this page, discuss how the author has used this central image to reveal the character of the mother and her relationship with her daughter.

Someone half-mad, with grief that is, might pick up a shoe from the rug and hold it like a baby. Someone like me might do that. As if the shoe might still be warm or give a clue to where you've gone. One shoe pointed in fact towards the bedroom window, the view of the front garden, and the other pointed towards the door. They wanted to get out, to get away, just like you did. I made them neat again. I stowed them in the wardrobe. Just in case. I locked the wardrobe door on those rebellious shoes. They could be like me and grieve in the darkness. For a bit. Then I let them out. I'm not cruel. But they've got to learn, haven't they.

I'm better off here, looking at the locked wardrobe door. Your shoes are standing outside it now, side by side. The right shoe on the right-hand side and the left shoe on the left. In their proper places, no fuss, like a husband and wife. I'd like you to get married one day, I'd like you to have a normal life, of course I would. I've tied the shoes' laces together so they won't get separated or lost. White laces, that I washed and ironed.

Oh, I say: she'll be back soon, I'm sure of it, why, she hasn't even taken her new shoes!

At first I kept the shoes in the box I made them pack them in at the shop, tenderly wrapped in tissue-paper. Delicate white sheets, rustling, uncreased. Then I tried them in the wardrobe, then side by side on the rug. They're best in here with me I think, safe and warm in bed. Tucked up tight.

For a couple of years now I've been able to buy your shoes without having to drag you round the shops. Moan whine, after ten minutes in Marks you'd threaten you were going to faint and I had to get you out into the fresh air. They're lovely, these shoes I bought you. White trainers, you see I know what you like. I thought you'd love them. I'm looking after them for you. I've got them under the duvet with me now. I'm keeping an eye on them, oh yes. They are perfect because they're new, they've never been worn.

After my mother died I had to clear out her clothes and pack them up for jumble. Her shoes hurt me so much. Rows of high-heels, all of them too small for her, she was so vain, all of them moulded to the shape of her poor feet. You could see how her toes were all bent over, misshapen. Bulges where she'd had bunions, corn-plasters. Who'd have wanted them? I threw them all in the dustbin. Then on the way home I stopped the car and bought you a pair of new shoes as a surprise, really beautiful ones, the best I could afford.

My darling girl whom I love so much. I hold you to my breast and rock you like my mother never rocked me. You're so small and pale. Let me hold you while you cry.

Laces like strings of white liquorice. They taste sweet.



Programme 3 Worksheet 3



Imagine you are walking down the street of your town when someone (probably homeless) approaches you for money to buy a coffee, a meal, or a bus ticket to a town where 'there are relatives who will help'.

Discuss, with others, how you would respond.

Look at the following web page and compare your responses with those presented in it.

<http://www.earthsystems.org/ways/5.html>



Programme 3 Worksheet 4

At times, it can be difficult for parents to help their children become adults. It is not easy to make appropriate choices and to decide what rules to enforce. Some parents fear that their children may make wrong and dangerous decisions. On the other hand, children may feel that the only way they can grow up is to leave home.

Write half a dozen rules or pieces of advice that parents could follow to help prevent their children from running away.

Compare your list with this one:

http://www.covenanthouse.org/kid/kid_run/kid_run_04.htm



Programme 3 Worksheet 5

On a copy of the text, write your notes, questions and comments. Highlight key passages and phrases in the story.

Explain some of your discoveries in the space below.



Programme 3 Worksheet 6

Look at the following website:

<http://www.cswnet.com/~erin/fiction.htm>

Listed below are five major aspects of a short story. Decide what you think is a good approach to each of these when writing about the text. Select from the options listed.

Plot

- a retell details of story
- b give basic outline of events
- c ignore all action in story

Character

- a describe appearance
- b identify if major or minor role
- c explain type of person

Setting

- a consider how place affects the plot
- b consider how place appears on book cover
- c ignore

Theme

- a discuss title of story
- b discuss purpose of story
- c discuss music of film version

Style

- a consider when story was written
- b consider how story was written
- c consider how author dresses