


After You Read Response and Analysis


First Thoughts

1. Go back to your reading notes. Did **previewing** the story help you make accurate predictions? Why or why not? 

Thinking Critically

2. We feel a strong sense of **dramatic irony** in this story: The narrator keeps claiming to be sane, but we become more and more certain that he is insane. What details in the story indicate that the narrator is insane?
3. How does the opening paragraph **foreshadow**, or hint at, the events of the story?
4. What is your explanation for the “heartbeat” noise that drives the narrator to confess?
5. **Mood**, or atmosphere, is the overall feeling in a story. How would you describe the mood of this story? What details does Poe use to create that mood?
6. The final paragraph of the story builds to a kind of mad **climax**. How does the writer use words and punctuation to create tension—and even the rhythm of a heartbeat?
7. To whom could the narrator be telling this horrible story?
8. Why is the story called “The Tell-Tale Heart”? (Could the title have more than one meaning?)

Extending Interpretations

9. How is this story like other stories that scare people? Refer to your class survey of top-ten terrors for examples. 

Reading Check

Some of the information in Poe’s story is suspect because the only source is an unreliable **narrator**. Write down three questions you would like to ask a more reliable source. Explain how each question would help you better understand the **motivations** behind the murder.

SKILLS FOCUS

Literary Skills

Analyze the narrator; analyze irony.

Reading Skills

Preview the story.

Writing Skills

Evaluate style.

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WRITING

Evaluating Style

Poe wrote that every word in a story should help create a “single overwhelming impression.” How well has he done that in “The Tell-Tale Heart”? In a paragraph, describe the story’s impact on you. Mention at least three details from the story that help create this impression.