Learning Objectives

The goal of this exemplar lesson is to provide students an opportunity to explore targeted passages of complex text. Through teacher Read Alouds, student independent reading and rereading, and scaffolded discussion of text-dependent questions, students will learn how an author’s use of descriptive language creates mood in a short story. Vocabulary is learned from context and writing fosters deeper understanding of text. The lesson culminates in an evidentiary writing activity. Teachers may need to further scaffold the activities to address individual students’ needs depending on the intent of the lesson and specific learners’ needs.

Rationale: This lesson focuses on verbal irony and the creation of suspense in “The Cask of Amontillado” by Poe. Particularly important is that students recognize the importance of comprehending what an author is saying in the text before they proceed to analysis of that text. The steps in this lesson help students build their reading skills in order to move from a summary level to an analytical and inferential understanding of the text.

Text Title(s): “The Cask of Amontillado” – Edgar Allan Poe
McDougal Littell Literature, pp. 342-351
Genre/Text Structure: Short story

Targeted Text Selection –Lines 1-12, Lines 108-114, Lines 133-143
Pages 344, 348-349

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
9-10.L.4, 9-10.RL.6, 9-10.SL.1
http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/reading-literature-6-12/grade-9-10/

Lesson Sequence

PERFORMANCE TASK /CULMINATING INDEPENDENT WRITING ASSESSMENT:

The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe Bob Marzano’s Power Thinking activities
http://www.classzone.com/cz/books/ml_lit_gr09_fl/resources/pdfs/power_thinking/9_cask.pdf

Poe Author Study
http://www.classzone.com/cz/books/ml_lit_gr08/secured/student/resources/applications/authoronline/Poe/Author_Pages/EA_Poe.htm

Activity 1:
GUIDING QUESTION(S):
1. To activate students’ background knowledge judiciously, and provide them with an initial framework to read closely and analyze the structure of the text, discuss the questions on page 342 in the McDougal Littell TE: “Is revenge ever justified?” and “What makes a great story?” To lead into the KEY IDEA, ask students how they would define conflicts. The following questions will also engage students before reading: 1) Has anyone ever done anything to you that made you want to get revenge? What did they do? 2) Have you ever gotten revenge on someone for something they did to you? What did you do to them in return? Why did you feel a need to get revenge? 3) Explain how the revenge made you feel? Did you get caught? If you had gotten caught, would that have changed the feeling the revenge gave you? Explain. 4) Do acts of revenge ever resolve conflicts?

2. Students read selected text independently. As they read, have them take time to paraphrase difficult passages on the PARAPHRASE (TE, P. 343) graphic organizer and also identify examples of the verbal irony using the Verbal Irony-Cask of Amontillado handout.

3. Students follow along with the text as the teacher reads the selected passage(s) out loud or plays the audio at www.classzone.com. Asking students to listen exposes them a second time to the content before they begin their own close reading of the text. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow the twists and turns in the story, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English. Rereading on day one is embedded in the text-dependent questions and discussion activities.

4. Students should discuss and write about the initial meaning they have made from reading “The Cask of Amontillado”. Begin the discussion with
the question, “Why is Montresor successful in first luring Fortunato into the vaults, and then in keeping Fortunato in pursuit of the cask? Use details, examples, and information from the text to support your answer.”

Activities 2, 3 and 4:
GUIDING QUESTION(S):
1. Returning to the text, the teacher asks students a small set of guiding questions about targeted passages on pages 76, 81, and 83. The targeted text should be in front of the students as they engage in their discussions.
2. Graphic organizers or Reader Response Journals serve as a means to organize thoughts: PARAPHRASE (TE, P. 343), MAKE INFERENCES ABOUT CHARACTER (TE, P. 353) and LITERARY ANALYSIS: MOOD (Resource Manager, Pg. 79-80).

3. Reading Fluency - Reading Dialogue: When you read a conversation orally, it helps to get into character. In other words, use your voice to make your character come alive. Ask students to choose a tone, pitch, volume, and pace that expresses the character’s personality, feelings, and motives. With a partner, monitor as they each read the lines from “The Cask of Amontillado” in which Montresor and Fortunato first meet (See Reading Fluency: Reading Dialogue handout). Students will choose roles and highlight their part, leaving out the narrator’s words, and then read the passage quietly. They should also take notes to describe how they will read their lines. Lastly, students will read the passage with their partner.

4. Respond in Writing: What do you think goes through Fortunato’s mind after he realizes what has happened to him? Why doesn’t he try to reason with Montresor? Use what you know about Fortunato to write a three-to-five-paragraph monologue, retelling the last part of the story from his point of view.

5. To help students explore the KEY IDEA for Media Study on page 356 in the McDougal Littell TE, ask them what the word sinister means. Invite them to share moments from film or TV that felt sinister. Have them describe elements of the lighting, music, and setting that created the sinister mood. For example, perhaps the lighting was shadowy, the music was ominous, or the setting included sinister places, such as dark attics. Ask how these elements contributed to the sinister mood.

6. Communication, Information and Media connections:
Media Study: Compare Film and Written Versions (TE, P. 359) Poe was a master at using words to create eerie and frightening story settings. In your opinion, does the film adaptation of “The Cask of Amontillado” effectively portray the story’s sinister setting?

Media Study: Create a Production Design Board (TE, P. 359) Imagine that you’re part of a production team assigned to design sets for an adaptation of “The Cask of Amontillado.” You’ll use a production design board to present ideas for creating a sinister setting. A production design board visually represents different elements of a set, such as scenery, costumes, and props. The board displays small parts or drawings of these elements.

Activity 5:
GUIDING QUESTION(S):
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<tr>
<th>Targeted Text Selection</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Teacher Activities and Techniques</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 344, Lines 1-12</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Q1] Paraphrase the opening paragraph. Why does the narrator vow revenge? What does he consider a successful revenge? Possible answer: I had put up with Fortunato’s abuse as well as I could, but when he insulted me, I was determined to get even. However, I did not threaten him or give him any reason to worry. I would get my revenge, all right, but in due time and without risk to myself. Getting even is not worth it if the person getting even is punished for what he had done. It is also not worth it unless the target of the revenge understands that he has wronged is paying him back for what he did. The narrator vows revenge because Fortunato has insulted him. He considers revenge to be successful if the “avenger” escapes punishment and it the victim knows that he has been paid back for a wrong he committed. If students need help…Encourage students to reread the paragraph. Then have them paraphrase it one or two sentences at a time. <strong>Extend the Discussion</strong> What might the “thousand injuries” (line 1) refer to?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Page 348, Lines 108-114</td>
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<td>[Q2] In lines 108–114, note the sensory details and imagery that help you visualize the setting. What mood do they create? Possible answer: Poe’s use of sensory details—“walls of piled bones,” “inmost recesses of the catacombs,” “hangs like moss,” “drops of moisture trickle among the bones”—helps the reader visualize the setting and creates a dark and sinister mood. <strong>Extend the Discussion</strong> What irony may there be in the narrator’s suggestion to Fortunato that the “go back ere it is too late” (line 114)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pages 348-349, Lines 133-143</td>
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<td>[Q3] Examine Poe’s use of formal language in this passage, including sentence structure (syntax) and sentence types. Possible answer: Poe’s use of formal language gives an air of seriousness to the story—for example, “Then you are not of the brotherhood” (line 122). This formal style is appropriate for the manner in which Montresor and Fortunato interact. Have students write a one-paragraph response to this</td>
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### Vocabulary

- **immolation** - n. death or destruction
- **impunity** - n. freedom from penalty or harm
- **precluded** - v. to make impossible, especially by taking action in advance
- **puncheons** - large storage containers for wine

### Teacher Activities and Techniques

- **Text-Dependent Questions**
  - **MOOD**
  - **Dependent Questions**

### Targeted Text Selection

- The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitively settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong. It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my goodwill. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

- The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. We are below the river’s bed. Its walls had been lined with casks and puncheons, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

- The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

- “The niter!” I said; “see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river’s bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—”
human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size.

**Question:** If Montresor and Fortunato were truly close friends, would formal language be as effective in the telling of the story? Why or why not?

**Possible answer:** Responses may vary but should include a basis for their opinions.

### Formative Assessment/ Rubrics, if applicable

Bob Marzano’s Activity 1: Investigation and Activity 2: Abstraction activities serve as formative assessments.

**Activity 1: Abstraction**

Fifty years after the fact, Montresor recounts his plan for revenge in vivid detail.

- Is the memory of his intricate trap bitter or sweet? What does this story reveal about the ultimate effects of his actions?
- If you were creating a postscript to “The Cask of Amontillado” in the form of a graphic novel, how would you depict Montresor? Sketch out a frame or two to represent the story’s epilogue.
- How might the art elements of line, shape, color, and texture be used to convey the eerie mood of the tale?

**Activity 2: Investigation**

- The legend about “The Cask of Amontillado” is that it is loosely based on an actual revenge killing. However, it has been theorized that Poe himself might have had a chip on his shoulder and crafted the tale as an act of revenge upon an enemy of his own.
- Take a trip to the library or use the Internet to research what was happening in Poe’s life at the time he crafted and published the tale.
- Present your findings in an oral report.

### Summative Assessment/ Culminating Independent Writing Task

**Writing Situation**

What do you think goes through Fortunato’s mind after he realizes what has happened to him? Why doesn’t he try to reason with Montresor?

**Writing Directions**

Use what you know about Fortunato to write a three-to-five-paragraph monologue, retelling the last part of the story from his point of view.

### Extension Activities/Further Resources

**Technology:**

"The Cask Of Amontillado," the first part of the short story by Edgar Allan Poe

"The Cask of Amontillado" - Rap Song


Verbal Irony

[http://attachmentManagerFiles.dadeschools.net/getFile.ashx?id=tQ3B1ahT2cIrtSSzwe1Bns/8ki7vQlam5NsFkQVV1dkiAIPoa92Qtxx1NcMNM2&app=AttachmentManager](http://attachmentManagerFiles.dadeschools.net/getFile.ashx?id=tQ3B1ahT2cIrtSSzwe1Bns/8ki7vQlam5NsFkQVV1dkiAIPoa92Qtxx1NcMNM2&app=AttachmentManager)


**Literary Analysis: Mood**


**Reading Strategy: Paraphrase**

### Cross Genre Connections:

Students create a Production Design Board to design sets for an adaptation of “The Cask of Amontillado.” (p. 359)

**Media – Media Smart DVD:**

**Compare Film and Written Versions (p. 356)** - Poe was a master at using words to create eerie and frightening story settings. In your opinion, does the film adaptation of “The Cask of Amontillado” effectively portray the story’s sinister setting? To compare the film and written versions, note the following:

- Poe’s description of the catacombs versus the visual presentation
- the sequence of events in the catacombs
- the film techniques used to enhance the scenes, including sound, lighting, and camera shots

**Compare “The Cask of Amontillado” to Poe’s “The Raven”** (p. 138) in terms of how Poe uses language to create mood.

**Informational Text Connection:** Make connections to the book excerpt *The Story behind “The Cask of Amontillado”* by Edward Rowe Snow (p. 352): analyze and evaluate how the texts differ.

### English Language Learner (ELL) Resources and Strategies

#### Key Academic Vocabulary

Have students use McDougal Littell Best Practices Toolkit Word Questioning Transparency E9 or New Word Analysis Transparency E24 to study this academic vocabulary from the selection: 

- *wont* (line 14)
- *intermingling* (line 111)
- *cloak* (line 134)
- *range* (line 136)
- *crypt* (line 138)
- *foulness* (line 138)
- *flambeaux* (line 139)

These graphic organizers can be found at [www.classzone.com](http://www.classzone.com) or McDougal Littell EASY Planner.

#### Multiple Meaning Words

Remind students to use context clues to figure out the meaning of words used in an unfamiliar way. Make sure they understand how these words are used in the story:

- **resolved** ("...but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved...") - Often used to mean a solution to a problem, here it refers to making a decision.
- **promiscuously** ("...lay promiscuously upon the earth...") - Usually refers to lacking selectivity, here it refers to laying loosely on the ground.

#### Language: Conversational Patterns

Help students understand the formal and antiquated language used in the story by explaining the following sentences:

- “*The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge.*” (Montresor had endured Fortunato’s humiliations, but now that he had insulted him, he swore revenge.)
- “*You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however,*
that I gave utterance to a threat. At length, I would be avenged;” (Montresor never said a threat to Fortunato; however, he would finally get justice or revenge from him.)

- “A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser.” (The wrong cannot be fixed if the person doing the revenge gets caught in the act.)
- “It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will.” (Montresor had never given Fortunato any reason to be suspicious of him.)
- “I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.” (Montresor grabbed Fortunato by the arm after they stopped in the catacombs.)
- “Its walls had been lined with human remains piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris.” (The catacombs were full of dead people [corpses and bones], that were placed into the walls, one on top of the other, just like in the catacombs in Paris.)

Explain Poe’s use of sensory details that help the reader visualize the setting and that create the sinister mood in the selection.

- “walls of piled bones”
- “inmost recesses of the catacombs”
- “hangs like moss”
- “drops of moisture trickle among the bones”

Use McDougal Littell Best Practices Toolkit “Analysis Frames: Setting” Copy Master D32-33 and “Analyzing Characters, Plot, and Setting” Transparency D61-62 to help students analyze how the setting creates the story’s mood. This copy master can be found at www.classzone.com or McDougal Littell EASY Planner.

Refer to Mc Dougal Littell textbook p. 355, For Less-Proficient Writers to assist students in creating a monologue from Fortunato’s point of view. Encourage students to imagine themselves in Fortunato’s situation (buried alive), and have pairs or small groups of students share their thoughts and feelings orally before committing them to paper.

Have students use McDougal Littell Best Practices Toolkit “Character Map” Transparency D55 and/or “Comparing myself to a Character” Transparency D57 and/or “Character Traits Web” Transparency D54 for additional student support and guidance in writing the character monologue. This graphic organizer can be found at www.classzone.com or McDougal Littell EASY Planner.
The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitively settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

Return to the text, and ask students a small set of guiding questions about the targeted section.

(Q1) Paraphrase the opening paragraph. Why does the narrator vow revenge? What does he consider a successful revenge?

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MOOD

(Q2) In lines 108–114, note the sensory details and imagery that help you visualize the setting. What mood do they create?
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<td>(Q3) Examine Poe's use of formal language in this passage, including sentence structure (syntax) and sentence types.</td>
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“Be it so,” I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size.

Write a SUMMARIZATION:

For further information regarding this document contact the Division of Language Arts/Reading, Secondary District Instructional Supervisors, Dr. Erin Cuartas, Ms. Laurie Kaplan or Dr. Sharon Scruggs-Williams, 305-995-3122; for ELL questions, contact the Division of Bilingual Education and World Languages District Supervisor, Ms. Caridad Perez, 305-995-1962.