

**Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: K-12 Close Reading Task**

| <b>Text grade band placement:</b><br>9-10  |  |
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| <b>Text</b>  | <b>Text Complexity Analysis</b>  |
| <p><b>Title:</b> “The Cask of Amontillado”</p> <p><b>Author:</b> Edgar Allan Poe</p> <p><b>Citation/Publication info:</b><br/>Poe, Edgar Allan. “The Cask of Amontillado.” Prentice Hall Literature. New York: Pearson, 2012. Print.</p> <p><b>Link:</b><br/><a href="http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/POE/cask.html">http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/POE/cask.html</a></p>   | <p><b>Quantitative:</b><br/>Lexile: 700L</p> <hr/> <p><b>Qualitative:</b><br/> <b>Meaning:</b> Theme is implicit and subtle and revealed over the entirety of the text.<br/> <b>Text Structure:</b> No shifts in point of view or time; story is chronological<br/> <b>Language Features:</b> Complex sentence structure; some use of unfamiliar, archaic language; complex, abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language<br/> <b>Knowledge Demands:</b> Some references or allusions to cultural elements; few experiences portrayed are common to many typical 9-10 readers</p> <hr/> <p><b>Reader and Task:</b><br/>           While students should have relatively little difficulty following the plot and the two characters in the story, there are several elements that may require some scaffolding for students. Teachers may need to preview or address several Tier 2 words during the reading. Students may need to reread parts of the story to be fully aware of the extensive use of irony (situational, verbal, and dramatic). Most students at this grade level have read one or more stories by Edgar Allan Poe and are usually eager to read another one of his works.<br/>           Though the Lexile level is below the 9-10 grade band, the content is more appropriate for the high school level. Class discussions will deal with the idea of impunity and the ethics of revenge. Alcohol use is also an element in the story.</p> |
| <b>ELA Common Core Standards addressed by task</b>   |  |
| <p>CCSS.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).</p> <p>CCSS.RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.</p> <p>CCSS.RL.9-10.9 Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).</p> |  |

CCSS.ELA-L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**What key insights should students take from this text?**

- Evidence-based predictions (foreshadowing)
- Effect of setting on plot, tone, mood, and theme
- Elements of suspenseful plot

**Text-Dependent Questions**

**Prior Knowledge:**

What do you know about Carnival?

**Vocabulary:**

Identify unfamiliar vocabulary. Determine word meanings using context, word parts, or a resource.

**Comprehension:**

How does Montessor get his revenge?

**Interpretation:**

How do Montessor and Fortunato know each other? How do you know?

**Significance:**

Choose a significant sentence or passage that gives the reader insight about the narrator. Describe what the passage reveals.

**Interpretation/Methods:**

List several words that describe the catacombs. How do these words affect the mood of the story?

**Interpretation/Methods:**

Find an example of each type of irony in the story.

**Analysis:**

What literary devices does Poe use to create suspense?

| <b>Writing Mode</b>     | <b>Writing Prompt</b>   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Informative/explanatory | How do literary elements help the author build suspense? In an informative essay, explore several literary elements that Poe uses in "The Cask of Amontillado" in order to create a thrilling short story. Be sure to use examples of literary elements that are present in the story and fully explain their use in order to answer the question. Remember to follow standard English rules for grammar and usage. |

**Scaffolding and support for special education students, English language learners, and struggling readers:**

The most important support structure for these groups would be a strategy for exploring unfamiliar vocabulary. Teachers can preview Tier 2 vocabulary words or provide "think alouds" in addressing unfamiliar words within a text. Additionally, sections of the story could be read aloud with the whole class, or students could be paired with stronger readers to partner read. Prior teaching on elements of a suspense story and types of

irony should help students recognize the important elements in "The Cask of Amontillado." Copies of notes should be given to students who may need extra help. Students could annotate text as they read the story marking examples of irony or the literary devices discussed in class.