

Name _____

R - _____

Date _____

"The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe

Suspense – A feeling created by a sense of _____, _____,
_____, or fear.

Pre-Reading

Activity 1 – In your group, describe 5 things you think should be included in a horror story.

Activity 2 – In your group, circle if you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please justify your answers.

Questions	Circle One	Justification
People who are insane always know they are insane.	Agree Disagree	
Sane people sometimes imagine that they hear things.	Agree Disagree	
If you commit a major crime, sooner or later you will be caught.	Agree Disagree	
When you've done something wrong, it's agony to wonder if you'll be caught.	Agree Disagree	
All people share the same fears (i.e., all people are frightened of the same things)	Agree Disagree	



Activity 3 – Vocabulary – In your group, define the following words from the story.

Word	Definition
Acute	
Audacity	
Conceive	
Crevice	
Derision	
Hypocritical	
Stealthily	
Stifled	
Vehemently	
Vexed	

Post Reading

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. In the first sentence of this horror story, the narrator asks a question: “but why will you say that I am mad?” How does the narrator try to convince you that he is sane?
2. What does the narrator claim is his motive for killing the old man? Does this seem a good reason if the man is sane? Explain.

3. The narrator tells how he opens the old man's door every night for seven nights. Why doesn't he kill the old man until the eighth night?
4. Find the passage in which the narrator first describes hearing the sound of the old man's heart (p. 81). How does the sound affect him? What type of figurative language is being used to describe the sound?
5. At first, the narrator is able to convince the three police officers that nothing is wrong. What do you think makes him reveal where the old man's body is hidden?
6. Sometimes Poe uses short, jerky sentences and dashes to create an effect of nervousness and tension. Look back at the passage on p. 135 beginning "No doubt, I not grew very pale..." Which details in this passage makes you feel the narrator's excitement and increasing nervousness? (Specific actions/feelings)

