

The Tingle of Delighted Horror:

An October Unit

Joey Morrow

The University of Georgia

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Unit Rationale	3
Materials	9
Goals and Rubrics	10
Weekly Lesson Plans	18
Week I	18
Week II	21
Week III	23
Week IV	26
Week V	29
Week VI	32
Works Cited	34

Unit Rationale

My unit is, above all else, a unit about October. It is a unit about flickering shadows cast by a bonfire, dead leaves rustling on a deserted path, tendrils of mist clenched around your heart. The month ends on Halloween, a night esteemed for costumes and candy, certainly, but also something deeper. Halloween is an opportunity to feel a “shiver,” something that “shakes us free of security while leaving our security intact” (Jackson, Coats, and McGillis 11). The draw of the shiver explains not only our love of Halloween but also the preponderance of Gothic themes throughout children’s literature (see for example the *Harry Potter* books or *A Series of Unfortunate Events*). In reading these books, we can be scared without being in danger.

A quick survey of the Oxford English Dictionary reveals a myriad of meanings for the terms “Goth” and “Gothic.” “Goth” may refer to a number of late classical Germanic tribes (the Visigoths sacked Rome in 410_{ce}) or a genre of rock music and practitioners of a related youth culture, marked by wearing a lot of black. “Gothic” can pertain to the Germanic Goths or their language; it can mean (pejoratively at first) medieval, especially early Medieval or from the “Dark Ages;” it can refer to a High Medieval style of architecture; it could mean simply barbarous or savage, and it can refer to the Blackletter font (Microsoft Word calls it ‘Old English’) (“Goth” and “Gothic,” *OED Online*). An entry tacked onto “Gothic” in 2007 reads in part, “of or designating a genre of fiction characterized by suspenseful, sensational plots involving supernatural or macabre elements,” citing Horace Walpole’s 1765 text *The Castle of Otranto* as the first Gothic novel (“Gothic” *OED Online*). Gothic has been in constant evolution as both an adjective and a genre. The word is, more than anything else, fluid.

In *Teaching the Gothic* editors Anna Powell and Andrew Smith define it, “Gothic is a vibrant, flexible mode, mutating to fit changing cultural and ideological dynamics,” noting that there is no “monolithic generic paradigm” to delimit what can be Gothic (2). They call it a form that “embraces

contemporary cultural forms and concerns,” a nod to, among other things, current Gothic literature, the explosion of horror films, and today’s obsession with zombies in *everything* (Powell and Smith 2). From *Harry Potter* to *Twilight* to *World War Z*, Gothic themes pervade—no doubt contributing to Gothic Literature’s status as “a popular subject with students” (Powell and Smith 2). This popularity is one of the main reasons I’m turning our focus toward examining the Gothic; I want to use texts that will be engaging and enjoyable. I want to use texts that my students will want to read.

The texts I am using all evoke the Gothic atmosphere, eliciting shivers of fear and anticipation. This is the same ‘October-y’ mood that I will ask students to analyze and adapt into their own compositions by the end of the unit. Both Neil Gaiman and Edgar Allan Poe are masters of creating the eerie, spooky, “upsettling” Gothic feeling and transmitting it from page to soul (see Gaiman’s poem “The Hidden Chamber” for “upsettling”). If my class is going to be writing in this mode (and they are), they should first study those who have mastery of it. We will study what unsettles us across a variety of genres and use the knowledge gleaned from in-depth analysis to construct a creative text to be shared with the class (see Goals and Rubrics for a more complete description). An external motivator such as sharing a text with a larger community can lead to greater motivation and writing achievement (see Ensio and Boxeth, 2000), but my main focus is on enjoyment and the unique properties of the Gothic read aloud. Telling ghost stories is a time-honored oral tradition going back as far as we have recorded stories (see, for example, the Nekyia section of *The Odyssey*). Telling ghost stories is fun. In order to tell these stories, students must first study those who tell them well, and in order to analyze anything, students must first be willing enough and interested enough to actually read them. Hence, the Gothic, with its broad appeal and focus on atmosphere, will be our guide.

I am using only two authors in this unit: Edgar Allan Poe, who established Gothic Literature as a fixture in America, and Neil Gaiman, an acclaimed contemporary author who “does Gothic old-school”

(Coats 78). In the high school English classroom Poe is canonical and ubiquitous. He was “the first American writer profound and gifted enough to impress literary Europe” and, as Gaiman puts it, “the best of Poe doesn’t date...the stories still delight. I suspect they always will” (Weinstock and Magistrale 1; Gaiman “A Strangeness...”). Poe stands astride the intersection of critical approbation and reader invigoration. I would not be surprised to find that my students had already been exposed to Poe. Of the three Poe texts I am using, two of them, “The Raven” and “The Cask of Amontillado,” enjoy widespread use in middle and high school. I foresee little difficulty in using them. The third text is the poem “Ulalume,” which is less widely used. I suspect this neglect is largely due to the more difficult diction and allusions found within it and less discernible “official meaning” than poems like “The Raven.” I want to use “Ulalume” precisely because students will not have a preconceived notion of what the poem may or may not be trying to say. It invites a multiplicity of understandings. I’m going to use the poem early in the unit both to introduce elements of analysis and to encourage students to make their own meanings from what we read.

As an author Neil Gaiman resists definition and classification. He writes Gothic fiction and science fiction, fantasy and horror. He was first noticed as comic book writer but has notched countless awards for his novels and short stories (and a TV script). He writes picture books and screenplays and songs (Goodyear). *The Graveyard Book* is the main text from my unit, and it is Gaiman’s most decorated work. The book is his take on Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*, except here a boy is raised by the ghosts of a graveyard. It is the first book to have won both the Newbery and Carnegie medals, was listed as a “best book for young adults” by the American Library Association, won a Locus Award for best Young Adult Novel, and won a Hugo Award for best novel, period. It was also a New York Times #1 Best seller and had a top ten spot for 61 weeks (“Awards and Honors”). *The Graveyard Book* has a broad appeal. When writing for kids, Gaiman explains that his writing process is the same, just that “I leave out the boring bits” and that he set out “to write an adult book that kids could enjoy, too” (Interview with

the Scottish Book Trust). The result is emotionally compelling—I can only read it in one sitting—and literarily complex. It is a book that can be studied, from its episodic structure to the coming-of-age-theme to characterization to suspense. *The Graveyard Book* lends itself especially well to studying the October-y Gothic-y mood.

Gaiman describes his Locus Award-winning short story “October in the Chair” as “a sort of dry run” for *The Graveyard Book*, which is exactly how I plan to use it (*Fragile Things* xiii). The story is a frame narrative with its own interesting features, and will be a good way to scaffold students towards working with *The Graveyard Book*.

This unit has been designed for a ninth grade classroom; consequently, it adheres to a multitude of the 9th – 10th Grade English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards ([ELA CCGPS](#)), as referenced within the Weekly Lesson Plans section. The standards adhered to in this unit include but are not limited to ELACC9-10RL-1,2,3,4,5,7, and 10; ELACC9-10W-1,3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10; ELACC9-10SL-1,2,3,4,5,and 6; ELACC9-10L-1,2,4, and 5. Each day incorporates one or more state standard, ensuring a well-balanced curriculum by any measure of efficacy.

The greatest cause for concern in my unit is the content of some of Neil Gaiman’s other work. *American Gods*, for instance, has enough sex, cursing, and violence to qualify as objectionable for most parents of most ninth-graders. I do not think *American Gods*, as much as I have enjoyed reading it, is an appropriate book for most ninth-graders, either. In an interview Gaiman suggested (wisely) that there would be few thirteen year olds, but possibly some eighteen year olds who could enjoy *American Gods*, and offered *Neverwhere* and *Stardust* as appropriate follow-up books for teens interested in his work (interview with the Scottish Book Trust). Those are the titles I would suggest for further reading. *The Graveyard Book*, as the children’s and young adult literature awards attest, is age-appropriate, and Gaiman has written picture books for even younger children. *American Gods* and his other works aimed

at adults are not listed in the “Other Books by Neil Gaiman” after the title page of *The Graveyard Book*, eliminating the most likely avenue of discovery. The internet will always be problematic, but I can’t imagine that the worst thing a student could find on the internet is that Neil Gaiman also writes books for adults. “October in the Chair” is featured in both a collection of stories for all readers, *M is for Magic*, and one for adults, *Fragile Things: Short Fictions and Wonders*. I will use the text from *M is for Magic* to eliminate any potential concerns.

It will also be important to be considerate of members of gothic subculture when discussing Gothic literature. There may be students in the school—or even my classroom—who self-identify as goths, and I do not want to create a situation where they may become objects of ridicule. The best way to handle such considerations is to deal directly with them. When introducing the unit and the idea of the Gothic, I will certainly mention the subculture that has existed under the name goth since the 1980s, while also reminding students that putting down or ridiculing any person or group of people is bullying and completely unacceptable in my classroom. Apart from the name, the subculture has little to do with the literary genre and I do not anticipate encountering any real problems as we move through the unit. I am hopeful that by confronting potential problems before they develop, I can avoid a bad situation.

The Gothic has a timeless, cross-generational appeal. In his introduction to Barnes and Noble’s Poe Collection, Gaiman wrote:

I remember the tingle of delighted horror that prickled the back of my neck when I encountered the first words of “The Telltale Heart”, as the narrator assures us that he is not mad, and I knew that he was lying. (“A Strangeness...”)

The thrill of a good scare, and the creeping suspicion that you’re in for one, are the driving forces of this October unit. We will read, examine, and analyze a variety of texts across a variety of genres that have

at their core been imbued with the shades and shadows of the Gothic and elicit an atmosphere that is macabre and unsettling and oppressively October-y. Gothic is perfectly suited to students experiencing their second full month of high school. As Karen Coats concludes in her chapter on Gaiman and Gothic, “The forces that haunt the genre make is an ideal mode of expression for the emerging adolescent” (84).

Materials

The Graveyard Book, a novel of about 300 pages by Neil Gaiman. It is based loosely upon *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling, except the protagonist is an orphaned boy raised by the ghosts of an English graveyard.

“October in the Chair,” A short story by Neil Gaiman that he has described as a kind of dry-run for *The Graveyard Book*. Available in Gaiman’s short story collection *M is for Magic*.

Coraline, a stop-motion movie based on a novel by Neil Gaiman.

“The Cask of Amontillado,” a short story by Edgar Allan Poe.

“Ulalume” and “The Raven,” two poems by Edgar Allan Poe.

Goals and Rubrics

Group Poetry Project: "Ulalume" by Edgar Allan Poe

In groups, students will analyze a stanza of the poem "Ulalume" and present it to the rest of the class.

Group Poetry Project

In your groups, you will be assigned a stanza of "Ulalume" to present to the class. You will be required to read the stanza aloud and then analyze it for the class. You will have the rest of this class and the entire class tomorrow to work in your groups, and we will present on Wednesday. Your presentation should take 5-10 minutes.

Concentrate your analysis on:

- defining unfamiliar words
- explaining any allusions
- explaining the plot—what's happening during the stanza?
- identifying which words contribute to the mood or atmosphere
- using at least two pictures or other visual aids to help define terms and illustrate the mood

Rubric: "Ulalume" Presentations

A	B	C	D	F
Entire stanza read aloud	Entire Stanza read aloud	Most of the stanza read aloud	Some of the stanza read aloud	None of the stanza read aloud
All unfamiliar terms defined and explained in relation to the text	All unfamiliar terms defined, most explained in relation to the text	Most unfamiliar terms defined, some explained in relation to the text	Some unfamiliar terms defined, a few explained in relation to the text	No unfamiliar terms defined, none explained in relation to the text
Fully interprets the literal events of the stanza, fully supported by evidence from the poem	Fully interprets the literal events of the stanza, mostly supported by evidence from the poem	Somewhat interprets the literal events of the stanza, minimally supported by evidence from the poem	Does not interpret the literal events of the stanza, no support from evidence from the poem	Does not interpret the literal events of the stanza, no support from evidence from the poem
Fully interprets the mood of the stanza, fully supported by evidence from the poem	Fully interprets the mood of the stanza, mostly supported by evidence from the poem	Somewhat interprets the mood of the stanza, minimally supported by evidence from the poem	Does not interpret the mood of the stanza, no support from evidence from the poem	Does not interpret the mood of the stanza, no support from evidence from the poem
Two or more relevant images included	One or two relevant images included	One or two images included; may or may not be relevant	One image included; may or may not be relevant	No images included

Journal Assignment

Students will write in one journal that contains both in-class writing, which will serve as the foundations of the culminating creative writing project, and a take-home reading journal. Assuming I am providing the journals, both assignments and rubrics will be pasted into the covers of the journal.

Quote Journal

As you read the assigned reading, pick out one quote that scares, interests, confuses, excites, or otherwise inspires you. Copy your quote into your journal, along with the page number, and write a paragraph or two (150-300 words) about why you picked that quote.

Writing Journal

Write a response according to the prompt assigned in class. At the end of class, I will collect and respond to each entry.

Rubric: Quote Journals

A	B	C	D	F
Almost all entries are at least 150 words	Most entries are at least 150 words	Some entries are at least 150 words	A few entries are at least 150 words	No entries are at least 150 words
All entries include a quote, all include a page number	All entries include a quote, most include a page number	Almost all entries include a quote, some include a page number	Most entries include a quote, a few include a page number	None or almost no entries include a quote, none include a page number
All entries are relevant to selected quote	Almost all entries are relevant to selected quote	Most entries are relevant to selected quote	A few entries are relevant to selected quote	No entries are relevant to selected quote
All entries completed on-time	Most entries completed on-time	Most entries completed on-time	Some entries completed on-time	A few or less entries completed on-time

Rubric: Writing Journal

A	B	C	D	F
All entries are on-time	Most entries are on-time	Most entries are on-time	Some entries are on-time	A few or less entries are on-time
All entries meet length requirement	Most entries meet length requirement	Some entries meet length requirement	A few entries meet length requirement	No entries meet length requirement
All entries are relevant to the prompt	Most entries are relevant to the prompt	Some entries are relevant to the prompt	A few entries are relevant to the prompt	No entries are relevant to the prompt

Creative Project

Throughout this unit we've read a variety of texts written by Neil Gaiman and Edgar Allan Poe that frighten, terrify, confound, and amaze you. One of their common techniques we've looked at is the creation of a mysterious, spooky, or otherwise chill-inducing atmosphere and mood. For this project, you will compose a text to present in our storytelling showcase on [the last two days of the unit]. It can be any sort of text we've read or analyzed in the unit, or something completely unique.

Remember, we will be reading these out loud to the class, and they should all capture the October spirit.

You could write:

- A short story based on something that happened to you
- An episode about Bod to fit into *The Graveyard Book*
- A story or poem we've read, but as told from a different character's perspective
- A poem, in the style of Edgar Allan Poe
- A different sort of composition related to the themes of the unit (a painting, musical score, film clip, etc.) You must check with me before you can do this one, and each project will need an accompanying paragraph or two explaining how it fits into the themes we've covered.

Rubric: Creative Project

A	B	C	D	F
Meets length requirement	Meets length requirement	Almost meets length requirement	Over half of required length	Less than half of required length
Contains specific and relevant details	Contains specific or relevant details	Contains details, but lacks specificity and relevance	Contains few details, lacks specificity and relevance	Contains only vague, general details
Successfully conveys an October-y atmosphere/mood	Somewhat successfully attempts to convey an October-y atmosphere/mood	Attempts to convey an October-y atmosphere/mood	Makes no attempt to convey an October-y atmosphere/mood	Makes no attempt to convey an October-y atmosphere/mood
Presented at least one paragraph/stanza to the class	Presented at least one paragraph/stanza to the class	Did not present in class	Did not present in class	Did not present in class
Completed on-time	Completed on-time	Completed on-time	Completed on-time	Completed on-time
Any mistakes related to writing conventions do not interfere with understanding the composition	Most mistakes related to writing conventions do not interfere with understanding the composition	Mistakes related to writing conventions interfere with understanding the composition	Many mistakes related to writing conventions interfere with understanding the composition	Mistakes related to writing conventions render the composition incomprehensible

Poe-cabulary

Poe-cabulary is a Jeopardy!-style game adapted from [Strategy](#), developed by Peter Smagorinsky and Cindy O'Donnell-Allen.

An ongoing vocabulary game to be played when there is time left at the end of class, but not enough time to go on to the next day's activities. There are also at least two days during which we will definitely play.

There will be two rounds of five categories each. Each category will have four questions. In the first round, these are worth 100, 200, 300, and 400 point. In the second round, the point values double. There will also be a final round, where teams may wager as many points as they have.

Students will compete as a team with the small groups they have chosen for the unit against all the other small groups.

The first round will be Poe's Prose. The categories are "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Masque of the Red Death," "A Cask of Amontillado," "The Pit and the Pendulum," and "The Tell-Tale Heart." The second round will be Poe's Poetry: "Annabell Lee," "The Raven," "Ulalume," "The Bells," and "Fairyland." The final round will draw from Poe's essay on poetics, "The Poetic Principle."

At the beginning of the unit I will give students a handout of every possible word (in alphabetical order) from the first two rounds. They are allowed to write in definitions and use the sheet during the game.

To play, students select a category and point value, which corresponds to a vocabulary term. Each combination may only be selected once. For example, "The Cask of Amontillado" for 200 points could correspond to "preclude;" I would read the word and the sentence or phrase in which Poe uses it, and the team would then have ninety seconds to offer a correct definition. If they do so, they receive 200 points. If they fail to do so, they lose no points, but the other teams may all attempt, in writing, to provide a definition. If another team answers correctly, they receive the allotted points, but if their attempt is incorrect, they lose those points.

In the final round, each team submits a wager of up to as many points as they currently have. These points are at risk based on their answer to the final question.

Note: In order to expedite the process of reading Poe's sentences aloud, I suggest keeping a well-highlighted copy of Poe's works handy. Once a category has been chosen, use your judgment to select an appropriately difficult word. Ideally, the point values correspond to relative difficulty, i.e. A 300 point word is more difficult than a 200 point word but not as difficult as a 400 point word.

Round One

"The Fall of the House of Usher"

Melancholy, precipitous, lurid, malady, pestilent, phantasmagoric, trepidation, sulphureous

“The Masque of the Red Death”

Masque, blasphemous, decorum, gaunt, reverie, voluptuous, wanton, hideous, disapprobation

“A Cask of Amontillado”

Cask, vow, preclude, impunity, retribution, virtuoso, motley, abscond, gait, azure, gesticulation, grotesque

“The Pit and the Pendulum”

Pendulum, abyss, aperture, cessation, delirium, epoch, galvanic, gossamer, locution, sable

“The Tell-Tale Heart”

Foresight, vexed, dissimulation, waned, scantlings, suavity, audacity, derision

Round Two

“Annabell Lee”

Seraphs, sepulcher, dissever, highborn, covet, itinerant, brooding, labyrinth

“The Raven”

Lore, surcease, morrow, obeisance, beguile, craven, placid, ominous, pallid, scoriac

“Ulalume”

Sober, sere, dank, tarn, volcanic, sulphurous, boreal, palsied, senescent, nebulous, scruples, liquescent, lustre

“The Bells”

Sledges, crystalline, runic, ditty, brazen, expostulation, ghouls, knells, tintinnabulation

“Fairyland”

Vales, wax, tempest, filmy, extravagant, eminence, quivering, circumference, drapery, hamlets, drowsy, labyrinth

Final Round

“The Poetic Principle”

Epigrammaticism, pungent, imponderous, prolixity, inculcation

Weekly Lesson Plans

[[ELA CCGPS](#) Standards for each day are indicated in brackets. Each falls under the ELACC9-10 prefix]

Week I

Day 1: Monday [W-3; SL-1,4,6; L-1,2]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

Introductory Activity

10 Min: Students should get into groups of 4. These will be the groups they will sit in and work with for the entire unit, unless behavioral problems dictate otherwise.

Distribute 10 or so laminated Haunted House photos (culled from these online galleries: [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [Part 3](#) [Part 4](#)) to each group. The following instructions are printed on the back:

Much like snowflakes, no two people seem to react to a good scare the same way. Nightmares Fear Factory in Niagara Falls, Canada, illustrates this point by taking a picture of people at a particularly terrifying moment in their haunted house. It is unknown what exactly they're looking at - but it's obviously pretty scary.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/2300-504784_162-10014097.html>

Individually:

Choose one picture and write for five minutes about what might be scaring these people.

In your group:

Share your picture and what you've written with your group. Next, talk about what makes a haunted house scary. Could you make a haunted house by putting all of the images of your group in a line and having people look at them? Why or why not? Discuss in your small groups, and then be ready to talk with the whole class.

5 Min: Individual writing.

10 Min: Small Group Discussion.

25 Min: Full class discussion. Start with the haunted house discussion, eventually opening up into broader topics of created scary experiences, like horror movies, scary books (does *Goosebumps* give you goose bumps?), videogames, and more. Do horror movies scare you? (I can't watch them), how is a horror movies different from being scared of bees, or shots, or snakes, or spiders? Discussion can transition into a more general introduction of Gothic literature and the goals for the unit.

Day 2: Tuesday [RL-1,2; W-1; SL-1, 4,6]

5 min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

10 min: Recap/continuation of Monday's discussion; fully introduce the unit. Hand out **Creative Project** assignment and rubric.

Quote Journal

10 min: Distribute "October in the Chair." Have students read the first part—it's a frame story, so we will read up to the inner story, about 4 ½ pages. As you read, highlight a quote or two that really catches your attention.

15 min: I'll ask somebody to share their quote, and write it on the board along with its page number. From there we will have a short discussion about why or why not it's an interesting quote, and I'll take notes on the board, eventually turning it into a Quote Journal entry. Explain the Quote Journal assignment, which has been pasted along with its rubric into the front cover of their journals.

15 min: In your small groups, choose a different quote from the one we just analyzed and discuss it. Copy it into your Journals and write a response.

HW: Finish reading "October in the Chair;" Complete a Quote Journal Entry (#1)

Day 3: Wednesday [W-3,4,5; SL-1,6; L-1,2]

5 min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

5 min: Introduce **Writing Journal** (assignment and rubric will be pasted on the inside back cover of their journals) and hand out the first prompt:

Writing Journal #1: Personal Narrative

We just read "October in the Chair" which features, among other things, ghosts. Write about a time you were scared, or witness to something frightening. Be as specific as you can in describing the event and how it was scary. Try to write so that a reader will see what you saw and feel what you felt. Your entry should be at least two double-spaced pages.

5 Min: Read prompt and discuss potential ideas within your small groups.

25 Min: Write in journals on assigned prompt.

10 Min: Discuss what you've written with your small groups. What worked or didn't work from your initial ideas? What do you like about the compositions written by the other members of your group? Would you want to use this composition as the basis for the final project?

Collect journals as students exit the room.

Day 4: Thursday [RL-1,2,3; SL-1,4,6; L-1]

5 min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

10 min: Return Journals. Everybody will want to look at their grades, so it's probably best to allow time for that. Direct them to look over their Quote entry in preparation for class discussion.

40 min: Arrange room for a [Fishbowl](#) discussion on "October in the Chair," or at least starting there. If it's the first time we've done it, I'll explain how it works, and more actively manage the inflow of "fresh blood." Students should bring their copies of the story with them to the discussion. Rearrange room after discussion.

Day 5: Friday [SL-1,4,6; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

Writing Activity: Left Shoe Description. Adapted from Smagorinsky, P., Johannessen, L.R., Kahn, E.A., & McCann, T.M. *The dynamics of writing instruction: A structured process approach for middle and high school*. (2010). Portsmouth: Heinemann. P59.

15 Min: Write as detailed a description as possible of your left shoe, without peeking at it. Instead of your name, write your assigned number at the top of your paper. Include as many details as you can remember—somebody else in the class should be able to identify your shoe out of a whole pile of them based on your description.

2 Min: Arrange desks in a circle. Pass out small round stickers, having each student stick theirs to the sole of the toe of their left shoe. A pair of students collects and numbers the shoes, and piles them in the center of the circle.

10 Min: Pass out the compositions. Students must read the compositions and then try to find the shoe that has been described. In groups of four, students comb through the pile, returning to write down the number of the shoe that they think their composition describes.

5 Min: Ask for volunteers to read their composition and show off the shoe they identified, noting key identificatory details included in the composition.

18 Min: Sort out which shoe went to which composition, and discuss why or why not some readers were able to correctly identify their shoe. Emphasize the use of specific detail, especially as it pertains to their compositions.

Distribute "[Ulalume](#)" as students exit the room.

HW: Read "Ulalume"

Week II

Day 1: Monday [RL-1,2,4,5; W-7,8,9; SL-1,2,3,4,5,6; L-1,4,5,6]

Meet in the Computer Lab

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

5 Min: Briefly ask for impressions of the poem “Ulalume.” It is laden with obscure allusions and difficult vocabulary, so there is a good chance it has caused some confusion.

10 Min: Scaffold the Poetry Project. Project “Ulalume” on the main screen, so everybody can see it, and begin going through the first stanza, asking students to highlight any terms they had trouble with. For this stanza, likely suspects are “sere,” “immemorial,” “dank,” “tarn,” “Auber,” and “Weir.” Demonstrate how to use available internet resources—if the school subscribes to a database system, now would be an opportune moment to utilize it—to find definitions and possible explanations for these terms. Once the entire stanza has been glossed, ask students if they have any different ideas about the poem.

10 Min: Repeat the aforementioned process with the second stanza, this time assigning an unfamiliar term or two to each group.

2 Min: Introduce the Group Poetry Project and hand out the assignment and rubric:

Group Poetry Project

In your groups, you will be assigned a stanza of “Ulalume” to present to the class. You will be required to read the stanza aloud and then analyze it for the class. You will have the rest of this class and the entire class tomorrow to work in your groups, and we will present on Wednesday. Your presentation should take 5-10 minutes.

Concentrate your analysis on:

- defining unfamiliar words
- explaining any allusions
- explaining the plot—what’s happening during the stanza?
- identifying which words contribute to the mood or atmosphere
- using at least two pictures or other visual aids to help define terms and illustrate the mood

23 Min: Work in your groups on your assigned stanza.

Day 2: Tuesday [RL-1,2,4,5; W-7,8,9; SL-1,2,3,4,5,6; L-1,4,5,6]

Meet in the Computer Lab

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

50 Min: Work in your groups on your assigned stanza—presentations are tomorrow!

Day 3: Wednesday [RL-1,2,4,5; W-7,8,9; SL-1,2,3,4,5,6; L-1,4,5,6]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

40 Min: “Ulalume” Group Presentations.

10 Min: “Ulalume” debriefing, including any stanzas we didn’t get to. How have the presentations changed or not changed your interpretation of the poem?

Distribute “[The Raven](#)” as students exit the room.

HW: Read “The Raven;” Complete a Quote Journal Entry (#2)

Day 4: Thursday [W-5; SL-1,2,4,6; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

5-10 Min: Continue debriefing “Ulalume,” if necessary.

25 Min: [Chalk Talk](#): Poe’s Poetry. Briefly explain the activity, if it’s the first time it has been run this year, and then begin with “The Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe” as the central focus.

5-10 Min: Discuss the results of the Chalk Talk. What sort of themes and motifs have students identified with Poe’s poetic style?

Day 5: Friday [W-3,4,5; L-5]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

10 Min: Hand out the following prompt:

Writing Journal #2: A Poe-Style Poem

Write a poem in the style of Edgar Allan Poe. It can be on any topic suitable to his style, including the event you wrote about in last week’s writing journal entry. Be sure to include the elements we have identified as key to Poe’s poetic style and mood. Your entry should be at least 24 lines.

Read prompt and discuss potential ideas within your small groups.

30 Min: Write in journals on assigned prompt.

10 Min: Discuss what you've written with your small groups. What worked or didn't work from your initial ideas? What do you like about the compositions written by the other members of your group? Would you want to use this composition as the basis for the final project?

Collect journals as students exit the room.

Week III

Day 1: Monday [RL-1; W-1; SL-1,4,6; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping. Return journals.

Writing Activity: The Shell Game. Adapted from Smagorinsky, P., Johannessen, L.R., Kahn, E.A., & McCann, T.M. *The dynamics of writing instruction: A structured process approach for middle and high school*. (2010). Portsmouth: Heinemann. P60-2.

5 Min: Place a set of sixteen or so similar (yet unique) seashells, like conch shells, at the front of the classroom. Hold a different type of shell, like a scallop, and ask the class to describe it. Produce a second scallop shell, and test to see if the class' description would also describe the second shell. This is often the case. In order to distinguish two like objects, the details must be more specific. Offer some specific details a writer might focus on to distinguish one shell from the other.

20 Min: Give each group a numbered conch shell. Each group should produce a written composition describing their shell in such a way that another group will be able to identify it. Instruct students to discuss their shell and take notes on it before writing the final composition. Each group should write their assigned group number at the top of their description.

10 Min: Redistribute the compositions. The groups should read their new description and, two at a time, examine the shells at the front of the room, write down the number of the shell they think has been described, and return to their seats. Ask the groups who have finished how confident they are on their selections.

5 Min: Each group reads aloud the description they were given and identifies the shell they picked. The group who wrote it says whether or not this shell is correct.

10 Min: Assess the results. Asks groups that successfully identified their shell what qualities in the description helped them to do so. Before returning their descriptions, have each group underline the best specific detail, circle one part that was vague or confusing, and write one thing that could be done to improve the composition.

Distribute "[The Cask of Amontillado](#)" as students exit the room.

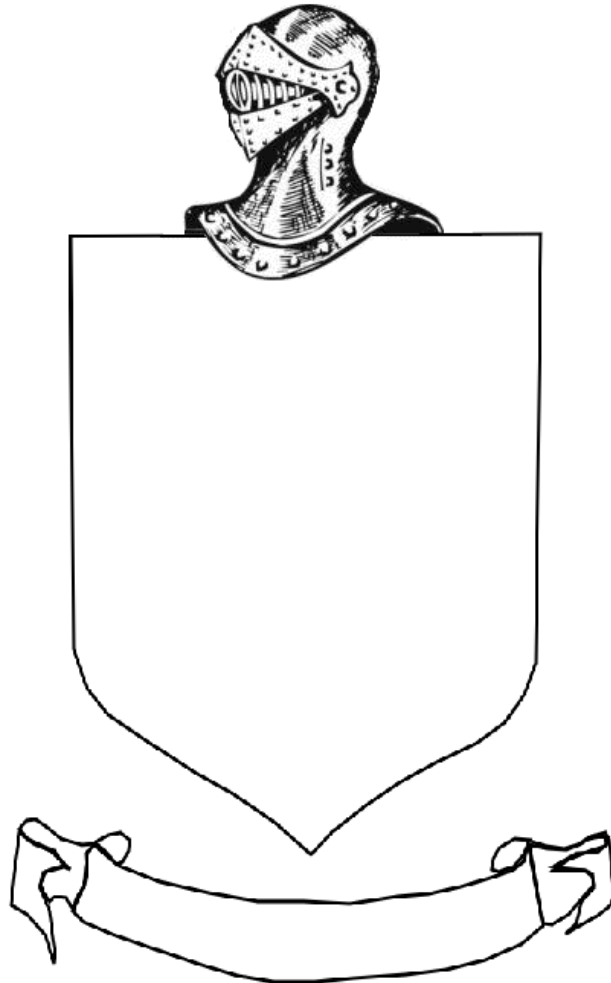
HW: Read "The Cask of Amontillado;" Complete a Quote Journal Entry (#3)

Day 2: Tuesday [RL-1,2,3; W-7; SL-1,3,4,6]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

10 Min: Introduce Coat of Arms activity, adapted from Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth: Heinemann. P37-38. Supplementary information via Wikipedia: [Coat of Arms](#).

The primary parts of a coat of arms are the shield, helm, mantling, crest, and motto. Supporters may also be present alongside the shield. Explain the symbolic function of each part, and then pass out a blank heraldry form to each student. (The form is a fusion of two pictures I found via Google Images).



10 Min: In groups, have students design a coat of arms for one of the characters from “The Cask of Amontillado,” either Fortunato or Montresor.

20 Min: Have students draw out their design on butcher paper, explaining that these will be hung up in the classroom. Each group should also complete a short written explanation of their choices for symbols (one per group).

10 Min: Each group presents its Coat of Arms to the class, explaining their choices for symbols.

Day 3: Wednesday [RL-1,2,3,5,9; W-4; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

5 Min: Finish up any remaining Coat of Arms presentations.

5 Min: Introduce Parody. Ask the class if anybody knows what it is, or might be.

15 Min: Weird Al Yankovich. The musician Weird Al has made a career out of parodying popular music in creative and incongruous ways. Offer the class a choice between “[Beat It](#)” and “[Bad](#)”—both by Michael Jackson—or Nirvana’s “[Smells Like Teen Spirit](#).” Any other appropriate song Weird Al has made a video parody of will also serve. Once the class has chosen, show the corresponding music video, followed by Weird Al’s version: “[Eat It](#),” “[Fat](#),” and “[Smells Like Nirvana](#),” respectively. In these videos, Weird Al has parodied not only the music, but the music videos. Ask students to identify specific instances of parody in addition to the overarching ideas.

20 Min: Parody Activity adapted from [Read Write Think](#). Distribute copies of the William Carlos Williams poem “[This is Just to Say](#)” and Kenneth Koch’s “[Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams](#).” Have students first read “This is Just to Say,” then Koch’s poems. In groups, discuss how the latter is or is not parody. Students can then write their own poems in Williams’ style in their journals.

5 Min: Ticket out the door: What is Parody?

Day 4: Thursday [RL-1,2,3,5,9; W-3,4; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

5 Min: Re-emphasize the basics of parody, if necessary. Ask for volunteers to read their variations on “This is Just to Say.”

10 Min: Watch The Simpsons’ version of “[The Raven](#),” from the “Treehouse of Horror” episode of Season One. Also available via [Amazon Instant Video](#). Discuss the elements of parody present.

35 Min: Parody Group Writing. Adapted from Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth: Heinemann. P94.

Distribute the following assignment:

In groups, take a Mother Goose rhyme or another children's story and retell it in the style of Edgar Allan Poe. One student should write a final copy to turn in. Your parody should:

- Remain faithful to the main elements of the children's rhyme or story
- Tell the story in a voice that uses elements of Poe's narrative style, including:

Common themes

Typical sentence structures

Recurring words

Methods of narration

Narrative perspective

- Exaggerate these elements so they are clearly recognizable and humorous

Day 5: Friday [RL-1,2,3,5,9; W-3,4; L-1,4,6]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

10 Min: Finish up Poe Parodies, if necessary.

38 Min: Present Poe Parodies to the class. Play Poe-cabulary in any remaining time.

2 Min: Show *The Graveyard Book* [preview](#) to the class.

Week IV

Day 1: Monday [RL-2,3,5,6]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

2 Min: Briefly introduce *The Graveyard Book*, showing students how to access the [website](#) featuring videos of the author reading the book aloud.

48 Min: Read Chapter 1 of *The Graveyard Book*.

Day 2: Tuesday [W-5; SL-1,2, 4, 6; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

Developing Sensory Detail

Activity 1: What Is That Sound I Feel? Adapted from Smagorinsky, P., Johannessen, L.R., Kahn, E.A., & McCann, T.M. *The dynamics of writing instruction: A structured process approach for middle and high school*. (2010). Portsmouth: Heinemann. P64-7.

Appropriately spooky sounds can be accessed via internet soundboards [here](#) and [here](#), among other places.

10 Min: Hand out the following worksheet:

What Is That Sound I Feel?

1. Identify the sound you have just heard
2. How does the sound feel? Is it smooth, jarring, enticing, chilling? Give at least three words.
3. How does the sound move? Does it surround, creep, fade, etc.?
4. Compare the sound to something else that will help describe it.

The sound is like _____

5. Combine the best details you have written into a sentence that *identifies* the source and *describes* the sound. Imagine you are walking alone in the woods and have just noticed this sound.

Example: As I crept through the woods, a lonesome howl alarmed me before it faded into the darkness.

Play a spooky sound a few times for the class, moving through the worksheet together. Repeat with a new sound if it seems like students are having trouble.

10 Min: In small groups, play a new sound and have students fill out the sheet. Repeat the sound a few times as students work, so that it remains fresh in their minds.

5 Min: Each group shares the sentence they wrote for #5. Comment on any effective details and figurative language. Discuss incorporating descriptive, figurative sound descriptions into student writing.

Activity 2: Describing Sounds. Adapted from Smagorinsky, P., Johannessen, L.R., Kahn, E.A., & McCann, T.M. *Teaching students to write personal narratives*. (2012). Portsmouth: Heinemann. P40-1.

15 Min: Complete the following activity. Questions will be projected on an overhead, or otherwise visible to the entire class:

Using what you've just learned about vivid, effective descriptions of sounds:

Identify a setting from one of your writing journal entries

List the sounds you might hear in this place

Think of a way to describe each sound in more vivid detail, and write down the best phrasings you come up with.

10 Min: Share your favorite description with your small group, and then share as an entire class.

Day 3: Wednesday [RL-2,3,5,6; W-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

40 Min: Read *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 2; Complete a Quote Journal Entry (#4)

10 Min: Ask for volunteers to share their quote selection with the class. Discuss what elements *The Graveyard Book* shares with the selections we have read from Edgar Allan Poe.

Day 4: Thursday [RL-3; W-3,4,5; SL-3; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

10 Min: Hand out the following prompt (Adapted from Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth: Heinemann. P41.):

Writing Journal #3: A Scene from another Perspective

Rewrite any scene we have read in this unit from the perspective of another character in that scene. Be sure to include the key actions from that scene and record how your chosen character reacts to them. Do your best to capture the atmosphere the original author has created. Your entry should be at least 3 double-spaced pages.

Read prompt and discuss potential ideas within your small groups

30 Min: Write in journals on assigned prompt

10 Min: Discuss what you've written with your small groups. What worked or didn't work from your initial ideas? What do you like about the compositions written by the other members of your group? Would you want to use this composition as the basis for the final project?

Collect journals as students exit the room.

Day 5: Friday [RL-2,3,5,6; W-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping. Return Journals.

50 Min: Read *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 3.

Distribute *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 4 as students exit the room.

HW: Read *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 4; Complete a Quote Journal Entry (#5)

Week V

Day 1: Monday [RL-1,2,3; W-1; SL-1,4,6; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

Body Biography. Adapted from Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth: Heinemann. P36-7.

5 Min: Hand out and review the following prompt, with a body outline printed on the reverse side for student planning:

For your chosen character, your group will be creating a *body biography*—a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of a character’s life within *The Graveyard Book*. The body biography should:

- review significant events, choices, and changes involving the character
- communicate the full essence of the character by emphasizing the character’s primary traits.
- promote discussion of the character
- include the following:
 - visual symbols
 - an original text
 - the character’s three most important lines from the book

40 Min: Students should plan out their Body Biographies and then create them on sheets of butcher paper.

5 Min: Each group presents their Body Biography to the class. At the end, we will hang them up around the room.

Day 2: Tuesday [W-5; SL-1,2,4,6; L-1, 4,6]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

5 Min: Finish any Body Biography presentations we ran out of time for on Monday.

Writing Activity: Scenes and Settings. Adapted from Hillocks, G. (2007). *Narrative writing: Learning a new model for teaching*. Portsmouth: Heinemann. P112-3. and Smagorinsky, P., Johannessen, L.R., Kahn, E.A., & McCann, T.M. *Teaching students to write personal narratives*. (2012). Portsmouth: Heinemann. P55-7.

Project [*The Triumph of Death*](#) by Pieter Brueghel the Elder at the front of the classroom.



10 Min: Ask the class to describe what they see, writing or typing out a list of what they've said. Next, show students how to combine these phrases into compound sentences, using a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, nor, or, so, and yet) or a semicolon (;). Be sure that the coordinating conjunctions are written somewhere everybody can see them.

4 Min: In small groups, students should next write down a list of ten more details they can see in the painting.

10 Min: Have students exchange their group's list with that of another group. Using their new list, each student writes down five new compound sentences using either a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon.

5 Min: Ask for volunteers to read any favorite compound sentences out loud. Discuss how using compound sentences adds to a description of a setting, and how students might plan to incorporate such details into their projects.

14 Min: Poe-cabulary!

Day 3: Wednesday [RL-2,3,5,6, 7,9]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

40 Min: Watch and listen to Neil Gaiman read [Chapter 5](#) of *The Graveyard Book*.

5 Min: Listen to Béla Fleck's "Danse Macabre," recorded specifically to accompany *The Graveyard Book*.

5 Min: Discuss how hearing the book read and the music played creates a different literary experience.

Distribute *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 5.5 (Interlude) as students exit the room.

HW: Read *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 5.5 (Interlude)

Day 4: Thursday [RL-2,3,5; W-3,4,5]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

10 Min: Hand out the following prompt:

Writing Journal #4: An episode of *The Graveyard Book*

The Graveyard Book doesn't cover each year of Bod's life; instead, it tells the story of important episodes as he gets older. There are gaps between each chapter, and three more chapters to go. Write an episode to fit into *The Graveyard Book*. Your episode should include major characters from the book and emulate its atmosphere. Your episode should be at least three double-space pages long.

Read prompt and discuss potential ideas within your small groups

30 Min: Write in journals on assigned prompt.

10 Min: Discuss what you've written with your small groups. What worked or didn't work from your initial ideas? What do you like about the compositions written by the other members of your group? Would you want to use this composition as the basis for the final project?

Day 5: Friday [RL-1,2,3,5,6; W-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping

50 Min: Read *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 6.

Distribute *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 7 as students exit the room.

HW: Read *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 7; Complete a Quote Journal Entry (#6)

Week VI

Day 1: Monday [RL-1,2,3; SL-1; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

15 Min: Read *The Graveyard Book* Chapter 8.

35 Min: Fishbowl Discussion on *The Graveyard Book*. Arrange desks appropriately. Bring your journals to share your favorite quotes and moments from the book (or tell the class why you didn't like it!) Put the desks back in order before leaving class.

Day 2: Tuesday [RL-2,3,5; W-3,4,5,6,10; SL-1,4,5,6; L-1,2,3]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

10-15 Min: Have students fill out the following sheet about their final creative composition (Adapted from Hillocks, G. (2007). *Narrative writing: Learning a new model for teaching*. Portsmouth: Heinemann. P40.) Group discussion is not discouraged.

Setting

Where does the story take place? How is the place important to the story? What needs to be explained?

Atmosphere

How is the atmosphere suspenseful? What elements of the Gothic mood have you incorporated? How does your composition capture the October spirit?

Characters

Who are the characters? Which are important to the action of the story? What do we need to know about them?

Initiating Action

What begins the action? What causes a character to do something?

Attempts

What attempts does the character make? To do what? Why?

Results

What are the results of the character's attempts? Does the result initiate a new action?

Responses

How does the character respond to or feel about the initiating action, the attempts, and the results?

Dialogue

What do the characters say to one another?

35-40 Min: Use the rest of class to work on final compositions. Be sure to check on student progress throughout.

Day 3: Wednesday [RL-5,6; SL-1,; L-1]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

20 Min: Watch the first 20 minutes of the movie *Coraline*, based on another Neil Gaiman novel.

20 Min: In groups, have students turn *The Graveyard Book* into a movie. Would you make it stop-motion, like *Coraline*? Cast actors to play the main roles/voices, and design a movie poster.

10 Min: As a class, examine each group's selections. Why or why not would somebody be a good fit for a role? How did you picture each character as you read *The Graveyard Book*?

HW: Practice presenting your final composition aloud to somebody

Day 4: Thursday [RL-2,3,5; W-3,4,5,6,10; SL-1,4,5,6; L-1,2,3]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping.

50 Min: Creative Composition Presentations. Turn the fluorescent lights off and, using floor lamps as lighting, create a sort of stage at the front of the room. Make the atmosphere as dark and chill-inducing as possible. Halloween décor would work nicely.

Day 5: Friday [RL-2,3,5; W-3,4,5,6,10; SL-1,4,5,6; L-1,2,3]

5 Min: Attendance and Housekeeping

50 Min: Continue Creative Composition Presentations. If there is enough time at the end, play Neil Gaiman's audiobook recording "Click-Clack the Rattlebag" for the class (it's 13 minutes long).

Works Cited

- Coats, Karen. "Between Horror, Humour, and Hope: Neil Gaiman and the Psychic Work of the Gothic" *The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders*. Eds. Anna Jackson, Karen Coats, and Roderick McGillis. Routledge: New York. 2008.
- Ensio, T.C. & Boxeth, K.R. (2000). The effects of publishing on student attitudes toward writing. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED448471>
- Gaiman, Neil. "Awards and Honors." <http://www.neilgaiman.com/p/About_Neil/Awards_and_Honors>
- . "Some Strangeness in the Proportion: The Exquisite Beauty of Edgar Allan Poe." Accessed at <http://www.neilgaiman.com/p/Cool_Stuff/Essays/Essays_By_Neil/Some_Strangeness_in_the_Proportion:_The_Exquisite_Beauties_of_Edgar_Allan_Poe>
- . *Fragile Things: Short Fictions and Wonders*. William Morrow: New York. 2006.
- . "Interview with the Scottish Book Trust." < <http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/podcasts/audio/neil-gaiman-the-graveyard-book>>
- Goodyear, Dana. "Kid Goth: Neil Gaiman's fantasies." *The New Yorker*. 25 Jan 2010. Accessed online 15 October 2012 < http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/01/25/100125fa_fact_goodyear>
- "Goth, n.". OED Online. September 2012. Oxford University Press. 15 October 2012 <<http://www.oed.com.proxygsu-uga1.galileo.usg.edu/view/Entry/80221?redirectedFrom=goth>>.
- "Gothic, adj. and n.". OED Online. September 2012. Oxford University Press. 15 October 2012 <<http://www.oed.com.proxygsu-uga1.galileo.usg.edu/view/Entry/80225?redirectedFrom=gothic>>.
- Hillocks, G. (2007). *Narrative writing: Learning a new model for teaching*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Jackson, Anna, Karen Coats, and Roderick McGillis. "Introduction." *The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders*. Eds. Anna Jackson, Karen Coats, and Roderick McGillis. Routledge: New York. 2008.
- Powell, Anna, and Andrew Smith. "Introduction: Gothic Pedagogies." *Teaching the Gothic*. Eds. Anna Powell and Andrew Smith. Palgrave Macmillian: New York. 2006.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by design: How to create and carry out instructional units*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Smagorinsky, P., Johannessen, L.R., Kahn, E.A., & McCann, T.M. *Teaching students to write personal narratives*. (2012). Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew, and Tony Magistrale. "Preface." *Approaches to Teaching Poe's Prose and Poetry*. Eds. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock and Tony Magistrale. Modern Language Association of America: New York. 2008