

## “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**The Author:** Edgar Allan Poe

*Dates:* 1809 – 1849

*Type of writing for which famous:* poetry, short stories, literary criticism,  
“inventor of the detective story”

*Facts from life:* unhappy life, orphaned at three, his young wife died

### **Vocabulary:**

1. **cunningly** - done in a clever, tricky way
2. **vexed** – annoyed
3. **stifled** – smothered
4. **suppositions** – things that are supposed or considered to be true
5. **enveloped** – covered completely
6. **refrained** – kept from doing something
7. **dismembered** – cut the arms and legs from
8. **vehemently** – very emotionally; intensely
9. **raved** – talked like an insane person
10. **hypocritical** – one who pretends to have qualities she or he does not have

### **Comprehension**

**Write a short answer for each of the following.**

1. What is the author trying to prove by writing this story?
2. What is the narrator’s motive for his killing?
3. The narrator looks at the man every night for seven nights but doesn’t kill him until the eighth. Why does he wait until the eighth night?
4. Why does the narrator reveal the hidden body to the police?

## Analysis

**Mood (Atmosphere) – Mood is the overall feeling of the literary work. It is the feeling the reader gets from the story. Writers use many devices to create mood, including *images, dialogue, setting, plot, word choice, sentence style, and punctuation.***

**What is the mood in “The Tell-Tale Heart”?**

**How does Poe create the mood?**

1. What two images help to create the mood?
2. How does the style of Poe’s sentences contribute to the mood?
3. What marks of punctuation help to establish the mood?
4. List three words or phrases that create the mood.
5. What occurs in the plot of the story that establishes the mood?

## “Tell-Tale Heart” Closing Argument

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Brainstorming:** Imagine that you are a lawyer in the murder trial of the narrator. Assume the point of view for:

1. the lawyer who is defending the narrator and trying to prove his innocence
2. the lawyer prosecuting him and trying to prove his guilt.

**List evidence for guilty and not guilty arguments below.**

**Guilty:**

**Not Guilty:**

**Your assignment:** Write a one-page closing argument from the perspective of **either** the prosecuting attorney or the defense attorney. **Remember**, a good argument has a **strong beginning and closing, convincing word choice, good evidence, and appropriate length**. A good argument *must* also **counter the argument that the opposition** will use. In other words, it must try to explain why the opposing argument is wrong.

