

Read-Aloud Resources



Interactive Read-Aloud Lesson Plan: *The Raven* by Edgar Allen Poe

Grades 9–10

Introduction

This is an approximately 60–90-minute lesson. It could easily be broken up over more than one class period. Day 1: Vocabulary and Background Knowledge Building and begin the poem. Add an exit ticket to determine how well students are comprehending. Day 2: Finish poem with YOU DO annotations and writing assignment.

CCSS (Grades 9–10):

- **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). [Common Core State Standards Initiative](#)
- **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. [Common Core State Standards Initiative](#)
- **L.9–10.4.a:** Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. [Common Core State Standards Initiative](#)
- **L.9–10.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. [Common Core State Standards Initiative](#)
- **L.9–10.5.a:** Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text. [Common Core State Standards Initiative](#)
- **SL.9–10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. [Common Core State Standards Initiative](#)

Materials:

- Printed text + document camera/projection
- Copies of text and handouts for each student

0:00–20:00: Introduction (Build Vocabulary and Background Knowledge)

Vocabulary Visualization Activity (handout) (15 minutes):

- 1. Mini lesson on connotation.**
 - This could be reading multiple books in one day, an author study, or reviewing the books you've read aloud so far in the week/month/year.
 - If needed: Definitions of connotation and denotation are sufficient if students have encountered the terms before.
- 2. Have students work in groups to categorize one set of words based on definitions and connotations.**
 - Groups should share their words, a few ideas that arose, and their category names. Offer feedback as necessary. Each student should write down the category names the other groups came up with. Select favorites.
- 3. Ask questions.**
 - "What are some predictions you can make about a poem with these words?"
 - "What questions arise for you about this poem?"

Character and Setting (3 minutes):

- 1. Put sheet under document camera or put images onto slides.** Most kids will be familiar with ravens or crows.
- 2. Go over the idea of a crest as something some birds have.**
 - Note that ravens don't have one, hence the speaker's statement that the raven's crest has been shorn.
- 3. Tell students that the poem takes place in the speaker's "chamber" or bedroom.**
 - Note that the window plays an important role. You might talk about shutters if you think your students won't know the term.

20:00–50:00: During Reading

Read through each stanza in full before stopping to make meaning. This allows students to get a good feel for the sound of the language (rhythm, rhyme, etc.) while balancing the need to model that the meaning-making process is ongoing.

Additionally, students need both modeling and practice comprehending on their own. A read-aloud in the secondary classroom should follow a Gradual Release of Responsibility model.

Ideally, you would have an essential or guiding question for your unit that you would think aloud as you did this read-aloud, which would then become a basis for student writing.

I Do:

For the first few stanzas (2–6 or so) model your own thinking process and annotations using the

document camera. Here, I use a variety of strategies in my meaning making, including sentence analysis, visualization, asking questions, etc. Students may need explicit instruction in some of these strategies. Sometimes simply teaching them to ask “What do I notice? What do I wonder?” is sufficient.

For more information, see:

- *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms, 3rd Edition* by Cynthia Greenleaf, Ruth Schoenbach, Linda Friedrich, Lynn Murphy, and Nika Hogan
- *Mosaic of Thought, Second Edition: The Power of Comprehension Strategy Instruction* by Ellin Oliver Keene and Susan Zimmermann

We Do:

As you make your way through the poem, begin pulling in student voices by asking questions about the points you would have previously modeled. Then, when they’re ready, read a stanza aloud and give students three minutes to mark it up and make meaning on their own. (If you’ve done explicit comprehension strategy instruction, this is a chance for them to begin using it more independently, and a cheat sheet with the strategies is a great scaffold for those who need it.)

A really great way to affirm student voices is to have a student bring up their own paper with their own annotations and put it under the document camera. They can then talk about the thinking they did and the annotations they made while you sit in their seat. They get to be the teacher and lead the annotation for the class. When they’re done, have them ask if anyone has anything to add. If there are still things that haven’t been said that you want to make sure everyone hears, use questioning to guide the “teacher” in making meaning under the document camera.

This must be done in a supportive environment in which students are praised for being brave enough to take the chance to put themselves out there. Make it so that not only the high-status students have an incentive to do so by calling out instances of interesting or creative thinking or good use of strategies. (*Reading for Understanding* has a great section on fostering this kind of risk taking.)

You Do:

After some number of students have shared in this way and you feel confident that at least 75-80% are ready to give it a go independently, send them off to finish annotating the poem on their own (if you want to use it as a formative assessment) or in pairs/groups for additional supported practice. At this point, you can offer additional teacher-led guidance to a small group (opt-in or shoulder tap) as a Tier II support.

Points to Pause	What to Point to
Before reading	Poem is broken into stanzas, like little paragraphs. Each stanza has an indented line at the end of it. Indented lines end with “more” or “Nevermore.”
<p>Stop at end of first stanza</p> <p><i>Mention that the beginning will be annotated the most because you are orienting yourselves to the world of the poem.</i></p>	<p>Strong rhythm, hypnotic.</p> <p>Starts “once upon a ...” like a fairy tale, but “once upon a midnight dreary” is much darker in tone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Makes me ready to hear a story and wonder about whether there might be some fantastical or unbelievable elements in this, like magic. <p>Really long sentence opens the poem (break it down).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Comma at the end of each of the first three lines and then a period at the end of the fourth. ■ And then another period at the end of the sixth. <p>First sentence: First line has a comma in the middle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Once upon a midnight dreary ...” happening in the middle of the night. Spooky. ■ Refer to “dreary” in vocabulary lesson. <p>“While I pondered,” time word + use of gloss.</p> <p>Next phrase “weak and weary” suggesting he’s tired and not feeling great, but he’s up thinking hard about something (author versus speaker, assumptions about gender of speaker?).</p> <p>“Over” (about), use of gloss.</p> <p>“While,” “suddenly,” time words.</p> <p>“As of ...” that’s like saying “as if ... “ or “like. The speaker is comparing.</p> <p>“Chamber”—setting.</p> <p>Use of quotation marks + “I muttered” = talking to self.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Speaker reassuring themselves.
Stop after second stanza	<p>“Ah distinctly I remember”—telling this story from some point after it happened.</p> <p>Vivid language to describe dying of fire and how it sets mood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Wrought” like a blacksmith “works” metal into shape by hammering and pounding. This is hard work and not some easy, calm death—this is painful. <p>Speaker’s state of mind: “Eagerly I wished the morrow.”</p> <p>Vainly = in vain or unsuccessfully.</p> <p>Next line inverts the grammar a bit.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We could put “from my books” in parenthesis = where speaker is trying to borrow something from. ■ Have to wait until after to find out what they’re trying to borrow (borrow = temporary). ■ “Lost Lenore”, “nameless here for evermore”—possibilities for loss.
Stop after the third stanza	<p>“Silken, sad uncertain rustling” consonance—whispering (spooky or sad, like at a funeral or like there are ghosts)</p> <p>Curtains are rustling, breeze or ghost.</p> <p>Repetition—trying to calm down?</p>
Stop after the fourth stanza	<p>Time word: Presently.</p> <p>Haven’t opened the door yet. Weird, but suspenseful: “Darkness there and nothing more.”</p> <p>Stanza ends here, emphasizing that emptiness.</p>
Stop after the fifth stanza	<p>Stands there a “long” time “wondering, fearing, doubting, dreaming dreams.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repetition of the -ing verbs, one after the other, sounds frantic, speeding up your reading. ■ Whispering the name of the person he’s lost in the dark. Echo is almost like there is really someone there whispering back to them, which is spooky. ■ Also emphasizes the speaker’s loneliness. <p>What are the “dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before?” Daring to dream someone back from the grave? Maybe evidence of Lenore being a dead lover.</p> <p>Evidence for gender of speaker—laws and mores of the 19th century: homosexuality was illegal, so Poe probably wouldn’t have written a homosexual love affair (if that is what it is) explicitly into the text. We could at least make an argument for the speaker being male. But does it matter what gender the speaker is? To what extent does this poem speak to universal grief?</p>
Stop after the sixth stanza	<p>Change in tone: Some action and more passion. Sharp contrast to the dying fire and the darkness and the bleak December, the weariness and weakness of the first few stanzas.</p> <p>Even the weird tapping gets louder.</p>
Stop after the seventh stanza	<p>Mime flinging open a shutter.</p> <p>Obeisance = vocabulary word.</p> <p>Allusion: Associating the raven with a goddess of wisdom.</p>
Stop after the eighth stanza	<p>Beguiling = vocabulary word.</p>

	<p>Contrast: Grave and stern decorum makes him smile—what does this tell us about what the tone of the dialogue might be? Lighter, silly.</p> <p>Shorn/craven = allusion to knights who did something cowardly getting their hair shaved.</p> <p>The raven speaks! What might Nevermore mean?</p>
Stop after the ninth stanza	<p>I was shocked.</p> <p>Consider talking about how ravens can <i>learn</i> to talk. If you want a silly interlude, you can show this video. The best part is that the raven doesn't just say "nevermore"—it has <i>learned</i> to say "say nevermore," so clearly the owner tried to teach it that.</p>
Stop after the 10th stanza	<p>Lonely/placid/one word. We are back to the serious and sad mood/tone.</p> <p>"Other friends have flown before"—loss of Lenore, feeling lonely.</p> <p>The raven will leave me too. But the raven says "never more. Is the raven saying he'll never leave the speaker?"</p>
Stop after the 11th stanza	<p>Speaker is trying to convince himself that the raven's statement is meaningless—that it just comes from having lived with an unlucky, hopeless and despairing master. But they also tell us that they believe "nevermore" to be a word that captures melancholy and burdensomeness.</p>
Stop after the 12th stanza	<p>Speaker is going back and forth between feeling lonesome and having a little bit of fun with the raven. Trying not to take it too seriously.</p> <p>Model visualizing the speaker wheeling a chair in front of the door and "sinking" into it.</p> <p>Calls the bird "ominous." Consider briefly introducing the root "omen" and talking about how the bird might be an omen.</p>
Stop after the 13th stanza	<p>The speaker is so intense. They wheeled a chair in front of the raven so they could more easily stare up at it "but no syllable expressing"—they're silently staring and the raven is silently staring back (in fact, the raven's fiery eyes are burning into the speaker's soul).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fiery eyes are associated with demons. <p>Contrast between staring intently at the demon bird and "my head at ease reclining," causing him to realize that Lenore will never again sit on the chair.</p> <p>Lamplight is gloating as if any amount of light is an unkind reminder of his loss.</p>
Stop after the 14th stanza	<p>"Then" followed by comma. We have another time word, marking an event. The feeling in the room changes.</p> <p>Perfumed with censer, presence of angels—sounds like a religious ritual. Perhaps they're remembering a funeral? The change in feeling in the room stirs their feelings.</p>

	<p>Who might they be calling a “wretch”? They tell the “wretch” that God has sent the wretch respite and nepenthe ... all they have to do is drink it and they’ll forget her (talking to herself).</p> <p>But the raven says it won’t work—they’ll never forget.</p>
Stop after the 15th stanza	<p>Now they call someone “Prophet,” which we can tell is the raven this time because they’re saying the prophet is still a prophet whether it’s a bird or a devil. Possible origins of the raven don’t matter</p> <p>What does the speaker believe the prophet-raven is predicting by saying “nevermore?”</p> <p>What do they ask? Implore = vocabulary word. Balm of Gilead allusion.</p> <p>Calls the raven evil but then asks for help.</p>
Stop after the 16th stanza	They’re clearer in their question now, but the raven offers no relief.
Stop after the 17th stanza	<p>Tells the raven to get out but the raven says “nevermore.”</p> <p>How is the bird’s beak in his heart?</p>
Stop after the 18th stanza	<p>What does it mean that the raven never left?</p> <p>What might the raven symbolize?</p> <p>Why does the speaker remind us again that the bird is on the statue of the goddess of wisdom?</p> <p>What does it mean that the raven’s shadow is thrown on the floor?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What does it mean that the speaker’s soul will never be lifted out of that shadow?

50:00–90:00: After Reading

Ideally, this text reading would be connected to a larger project or assessment. Students should move from annotating to making meaning based on the prompts related to those assessments. Absent of that, however, you might have them answer a question like this: *What does it mean that the raven never leaves the speaker’s room and how does the author lead the reader to this understanding over the course of the poem?* OR *How does the author develop a mood for the reader and why is it important for the poem?*

1. Pose the question to students and tell them to write a quick response answering the question with their gut reaction. After a few minutes, tell them to go back through and mark at least five places in the text they might use as evidence of their answer.
2. Put students into small groups and have them discuss their answers to the question and offer evidence in support of their answers. Tell them their goal is to understand their classmates’ positions thoroughly and encourage them to ask both clarifying and probing questions. Tell them if they hear good reasoning or evidence, they should make note of

<p>Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;— This it is, and nothing more.”</p>	
<p><u>Presently</u> my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer, “Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore; But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping, And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door, That I <u>scarce</u> was sure I heard you “—here I opened wide the door;— Darkness there and nothing more.</p>	<p><u>Presently</u> = soon <u>Scarce</u> = barely</p>
<p>Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before; But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave no token, And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore!” This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!”— <u>Merely</u> this, and nothing more.</p>	<p><u>Merely</u> = just, only</p>
<p>Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning, Soon I heard again a tapping somewhat louder than before. “Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice; Let me see, then, what <u>thereat</u> is, and this mystery explore— Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;— ’Tis the wind and nothing more!”</p>	<p><u>Thereat</u> = literally “there at,” meaning “at that place” or “because of that”</p>

<p>Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter, In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly <u>days of yore</u>; Not the least obeisance made he; not an instant stopped or stayed he; But, with mien of lord or lady, <u>perched</u> above my chamber door— Perched upon a <u>bust of Pallas</u> just above my chamber door— <p style="text-align: center;">Perched, and sat, and nothing more.</p></p>	<p><u>Days of yore</u> = old timey days, the past <u>Perched</u> = sat or rested on something (used for birds) <u>Bust of Pallas</u> = a statue (but just the head and shoulders) of Pallas (another name for Athena, Greek goddess of Wisdom)</p>
<p>Then this <u>ebony</u> bird beguiling my sad <u>fancy</u> into smiling, By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore, “Though thy crest be <u>shorn</u> and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no <u>craven</u>, Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Nightly shore— Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s <u>Plutonian</u> shore!” <p style="text-align: center;">Quoth the raven “Nevermore.”</p></p>	<p><u>Ebony</u> = black (a dense, dark wood used for carving and black piano keys) <u>Fancy</u> = imagination (note this is a noun, not an adjective here) <u>Shorn</u> = shaved <u>Craven</u> = coward, cowardly <u>Plutonian</u> = related to the underworld/afterlife (Pluto is the Roman god of the underworld)</p>
<p>Much I <u>marveled</u> this <u>ungainly</u> fowl to hear <u>discourse</u> so plainly, Though its answer little meaning—little <u>relevancy bore</u>; For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door— Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door, <p style="text-align: center;">With such name as “Nevermore.”</p></p>	<p><u>Marveled</u> = was shocked by, admired (usually, “marveled at”) <u>Ungainly</u> = awkward <u>Discourse</u> = speaking, talk <u>Relevancy</u> = connectedness or appropriateness <u>Bore</u> = held or carried (had)</p>
<p>But the raven, sitting lonely on the <u>placid</u> bust, spoke only That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour. Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered— Till I <u>scarcely</u> more than muttered “Other friends have flown before—</p>	<p><u>Placid</u> = calm <u>Scarcely</u> = barely, only</p>

<p>On the morrow <i>he</i> will leave me, as my hopes have flown before.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Then the bird said “Nevermore.”</p>	
<p>Startled at the stillness broken by reply so <u>aptly</u> spoken, “Doubtless,” said I, “what it <u>utters</u> is its only <u>stock and store</u> Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore— Till the <u>dirges</u> of his Hope that melancholy burden bore Of “Never—nevermore.”</p>	<p><u>Aptly</u> = appropriately <u>Utters</u> = speaks <u>Stock and store</u> = full inventory of supplies, all someone’s possessions <u>Dirges</u> = songs to mourn the dead</p>
<p>But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling, <u>Straight</u> I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door; Then, upon the <u>velvet</u> sinking, I <u>betook myself</u> to linking Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this <u>ominous</u> bird of yore— What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, <u>gaunt</u> and ominous bird of yore Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”</p>	<p><u>Straight</u> = immediately <u>Velvet</u> = a soft cloth that often indicates wealth <u>Betook myself</u> = started <u>Ominous</u>.: threatening, making it seem like something bad is going to happen, unlucky <u>Gaunt</u> = extremely thin, often because of starvation, sickness, or age</p>
<p>This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing To the <u>fowl</u> whose fiery eyes now burned into my <u>bosom’s</u> core; This and more I sat <u>divining</u>, with my head at ease reclining On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamplight <u>gloated</u> o’er, But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight <u>gloating</u> o’er, <i>She shall <u>press</u>, ah, nevermore!</i></p>	<p><u>Fowl</u> = bird <u>Bosom</u> = chest <u>Divining</u> = guessing, figuring out <u>Gloated/gloating</u> = enjoyed(-ing) one’s own success, often with the negative connotation of enjoying someone else’s loss <u>Press</u> = sit on (press with her body)</p>
<p>Then, <u>methought</u>, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen <u>censer</u> Swung by <u>Seraphim</u> whose faint foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor. “<u>Wretch</u>,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee</p>	<p><u>Methought</u> = I thought <u>Seraphim</u> = the highest level of angels in medieval mythology/theology <u>Wretch</u> = a terrible, low, evil person <u>Respite</u> = relief from something unpleasant</p>

<p><u>Respite</u>—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore; <u>Quaff</u>, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”</p>	<p><u>Guaff</u> = drink</p>
<p>“<u>Prophet!</u>” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!— Whether <u>Tempter</u> sent, or whether <u>tempest</u> tossed thee here ashore, Desolate yet all <u>undaunted</u>, on this desert land enchanted— On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore— Is there—<i>is</i> there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”</p>	<p><u>Prophet</u> = someone who can tell the future or receives messages from a god <u>Tempter</u> = the Devil <u>Tempest</u> = storm <u>Undaunted</u> = not discouraged, still going despite difficulty</p>
<p>“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil! By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore— Tell this soul with sorrow <u>laden</u> if, within the distant <u>Aidenn</u>, It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore— Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”</p>	<p><u>laden</u> = burdened, weighed down <u>Aidenn</u> = paradise (an poetic form of “Eden”)</p>
<p>“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or <u>fiend!</u>” I shrieked, upstarting— “Get <u>thee</u> back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore! Leave no black <u>plume</u> as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken! Leave my loneliness unbroken!—<u>quit</u> the bust above my door! Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”</p>	<p><u>Fiend</u> = demon or devil <u>Thee</u> = you <u>Plume</u> = feather <u>Quit</u> = leave</p>
<p>And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting</p>	

<p>On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door; And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming, And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor; And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor Shall be lifted—nevermore!</p>	
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Poem text: Public domain, downloaded from Project Gutenberg.
 Glossing: Vanessa Siino Haack, *Joyful Literacy*, 2026.

Vocabulary Visualization

Review:

Denotation: The dictionary definition of a word.
Connotation: Ideas and feelings that words create for us when we hear them; ideas and feelings associated with certain words

Directions:

1. Read through the words and definitions assigned to your group
2. Think about: What images come up for you when you read these words together? Write some words or make some quick sketches in the “My notes” box to keep track of your thinking
3. Share your thinking in your group.
4. Together, decide on a word or phrase (no more than 3-5 words) that seems to capture the connotations of these words. Think of it as the name of the category these words fit into. (Maybe use “Words that describe...” or “Words about...”)

<p>Dreary, adj.: dull, lifeless, depressing Weary, adj.: extremely tired (physically or of experiencing something) Desolate, adj.: deserted, bare, lonely, abandoned Bleak, adj.: empty of growth and life and exposed to wind, rain, and heat Melancholy, adj.: sad, sorrowful, discouraged</p>	
<p><u>My notes on connotation</u></p>	<p><u>Group: What could we name this category?</u></p>

Grave, adj.: serious and significant/important
Stern, adj.: serious and strict, inflexible
Stately, adj.: dignified, grand, elegant
Decorum, noun: correct and proper behavior
Obeisance, noun: signs of respect, honor, and submission (often a bow or curtsy)
Countenance, noun: face and facial expression, appearance
Mien, noun: a person's look or manner, attitude, way of carrying yourself and behaving

My notes on connotation

Group: What could we name this category?

Beguile, verb: to charm, attract, or enchant someone (sometimes in a way intended to trick them)
Entreat, verb: to try to convince someone to do something that you have great need of, sincerely, anxiously, and humbly
Implore, verb: to beg someone desperately

My notes on connotation

Group: What could we name this category?

Allusions in *The Raven*:

You could have students look these up before reading rather than giving them the information. These are offered as a reference.

An **allusion** is a literary device (a thing writers use) that makes an indirect reference to something outside the text, often mythology or another text. Authors use allusions as a way of packing in a lot of ideas/information into a small number of words, which can help create richness and depth in a text.

Plutonian/underworld:

Pluto is the Roman god of the underworld, the afterlife, and the dead. He rules over the lands of the dead. Something that is Plutonian is something related to him or to death. The term is connected to darkness, death, transformation, things hidden and secret and unknown, hidden/secret power

Nepenthe:

Nepenthe is a drug described in Homer's *Odyssey*, an ancient Greek story of a hero's difficult journey home after the Trojan War. Nepenthe is supposed to make people who take it forget their grief. It is supposed to take away grief and sorrow.

Balm in Gilead:

A rare and expensive perfume mentioned in the Hebrew/Christian Bible that was supposed to have amazing healing powers. There is a famous line in the Bible where Jeremiah, a prophet, asks, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" It has come to be used as a reference when someone is suffering and cannot find comfort or help, to mean something like, "Why can't I get any relief?"

Aidenn:

This is a reference to the Hebrew/Christian Garden of Eden (Aidenn is a poetic word for Eden), which is a paradise (ideal place) where people lived before they sinned against God and were sent out into the world. Many Christians believe that after death (or at some future time) Christians will rejoin God in paradise.

Shorn (shaved) knight:

In medieval times, knights who were accused of doing something cowardly might have their heads shaved as a way of demonstrating their shame to the world.

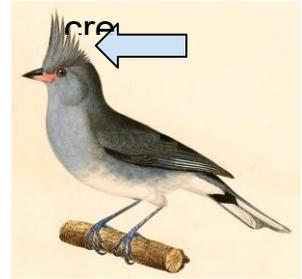
Pallas Athena:

Athena is the Greek goddess of Wisdom. She is sometimes called Pallas Athena (and sometimes it is shortened to Pallas). She embodies (and is a reminder of) wisdom, intellect, and reason.

Characters and Setting



Pictured left:
A raven's
crest



Pictured right:
Other birds with
a more
pronounced
crest



Pictured above: A bust
of Pallas Athena



Pictured left:
Window lattices