

Welcome to the Teachers' Instructions area for this student activity. Here you'll find directions and suggestions for using this activity along with the materials you need to evaluate your students' work.

Title: The Death of Me: What Happened to Poe?

Audience: Middle

Duration: 45 min

Subject Area(s):

Social Studies

Grade Level(s): 6,7,8

Teacher Directions:

Overview: In this activity students will learn about different theories regarding Poe's death. They will work in small groups to conduct research on this topic using the Knowing Poe Web site. This activity is designed for students who have read some of Edgar Allan Poe's work. You may choose to have your students read the Poe the Person section of the Knowing Poe Web site at <http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/person/> to learn about his life or the Poe the Writer section at <http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/writer/> to read some of his work.

This activity can be completed using a variety of technology configurations. If a computer lab is available, students can access the activity, worksheets and video through Thinkport. Another option would be to display the Web site on a classroom computer with a projection device. In this case, students will need a copy of each worksheet.

Introductory Activity

With the class, explore the information on the initial section of the interactive portion of the Knowing Poe Web site entitled *It'll Be the Death of Me* at <http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/person/death.asp>. This section provides a series of pictures and dialogue that can serve as background information for students. You may choose to read this portion of the site as a class or have students work individually. Begin at the rainy day scene and the introduction to a story about a student planning to write a paper and having the hard drive crash. Then follow each step in the interactive and stop when the PO-Q file draw appears with the Poe's Death files displayed.

Focus for Media Interaction The focus for viewing the *It'll Be the Death of Me* section of this Web site is for students to examine evidence, theories, and primary source materials regarding three theories of how Edgar Allan Poe died.

Viewing Activity

In *It'll Be the Death of Me* students are asked to explore information regarding different theories of Poe's death by clicking on a variety of folders. Each folder describes a different theory of how

Poe died. Have the students work in pairs and assign each pair one of the eight theories to explore. Different students have different strengths and weaknesses as readers. It would be helpful to review the different folders before making assignments, as some folders contain more clues than others, to make sure that your students are able to comfortably read through the materials in the file box and the additional links. You may wish to provide extra time or one-on-one support for less able readers as you work through the activity. Have the students use the Death of Me Find the Clues worksheet to record clues that support the theory they will be researching.

Tell the students that they will be responsible for explaining one theory of how Poe died and that they should use the worksheet to paraphrase the clues given in the folder and then search for more clues in the primary source documents listed as other resources. You may wish to assist students in paraphrasing their six clues. Remind the students that they are free to agree or disagree with the theories presented.

Post Viewing Activity

The final section of the Death of Me Find the Clues worksheet asks the students to summarize what they have learned about one theory of how Poe died. Provide time for students to work individually on this portion of the assignment. After the worksheets are completed, divide the class into small groups based on the theories they have chosen. Each group will then participate in a mock Detective's Forum where the students will create a presentation highlighting one theory of how Poe died.

Provide opportunities for students to ask questions and to critique each group's presentation in order to evaluate the plausibility of the theories presented. After each presentation have students raise their hands to show if they think this theory would hold up in court. Remind the students that no one is completely sure how Poe died, and that they can agree with more than one theory. After the students have listened to their classmates' presentations tell them to complete the final question on the Death of Me Find the Clues worksheet that asks them to summarize two additional theories on how Poe died. The students may use the information they learned from their classmates' presentations or revisit the interactive and read more about the two additional theories of how Poe died.

The Detective Forum's Scoring Tool is provided to evaluate students' work.

Extension Activities Provide time for the students to go back to the interactive and finish reading the story to determine what the student in the library does with the information. Students must have explored at least three theories (files) on Poe's death to complete the *It'll Be the Death of Me* Interactive.

Student Directions:

No one is sure how Edgar Allen Poe died, but people have suggested some amazing theories. In this activity you will act as detectives to find support for some interesting theories on Poe's death

as you determine what theories are probable.

The Students will:

Students will be able to identify and provide evidence for three theories of how Edgar Allen Poe died.

2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text: Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze and evaluate informational texts.

Grade 6

4. Determine and analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

c. State and support main ideas and messages

Assessment Limits:

→ The whole text or a portion of the text

d. Summarize or paraphrase

Assessment Limits:

→ The text or a portion of the text

Grade 7 and 8

4. Analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

c. State and support main ideas and messages

Assessment Limits:

→ The whole text or a portion of the text

d. Summarize or paraphrase

Assessment Limits:

→ The text or a portion of the text

There are several theories of how Poe died. Your goal is to find evidence and clues to support one theory of how Poe died. As you open the *It'll Be the Death of Me* Interactive portion of the Web site you will see a series of scenes containing words and pictures. The story begins on a rainy day. The text for the story is on the left-hand side and begins with information about a school assignment that's due and a hard drive crashing. You will follow each step in the *It'll Be*

the Death of Me Interactive and stop when the PO-Q file draw appears with the Poe's Death files displayed.

These folders contain evidence and clues regarding theories of Poe's death. Open *The Death of Me Find the Clues Worksheet* and write about the theory you have been assigned. To complete your worksheet you will open one folder, read the clues, and record what you have found using your own words. Your goal is to find evidence to support one theory of how Poe died. As you read, remember to evaluate each piece of evidence and think about how it supports the theory. Think like a detective might. The folder will also direct you to further resources you can use to complete the six required clues on your worksheet. You must follow some of the links to additional resources in order to complete your worksheet.

After you collect your clues, you will need to summarize your evidence to prepare for the Detective's Forum presentation. After you have listened to your classmates' presentations complete the final section of the worksheet that asks you to summarize two additional theories on how Poe died. Use *The Detective's Forum Scoring Tool* to evaluate the quality of your work.

Knowing Poe This Web site contains an interactive portion that lets you take on the role of a student writing a book report on Poe's life. You visit a dark, creepy and rarely used section of the library basement to learn about different theories of how Poe died by exploring file cabinets full of information.

<http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/person/death.asp>

How did Edgar Allen Poe die?

The Death of Me Find the Clues Worksheet ([View](#))

The Detective's Forum Scoring Tool ([View](#))

Activity Signature

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