

Character Based Literacy Program Lesson Plan

The Masque of the Red Death



Outcomes for Today

PREPARE

1. Background

Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.



Leadership Requires Engagement Leaders develop and dedicate their talents to promote the common good. This is where they choose to spend their time and effort, Leadership requires positive civic engagement. It is making sure that the communities I am part of are better because I am in them. And that I am better because of the communities I choose to be part of.

Who was Edgar Allan Poe?

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) was an American author and poet best known for his stories of horror and the occult. He a well-known and popular author in his day, and his poem “The Raven” is one of the best-known series in American literature. Like “The Masque of the Red Death” several of his stories were set in Renaissance Europe. Poe’s early death was likely related to chronic alcoholism.

2. Wordwall

Here are five vocabulary words to teach and add to the Word Wall.

bizarre (4)	ghastly (5)	jest (8)	prostrate (9)	dominion (10)
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READ

3. Review

Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

4. Read

Read the selection, usually in a Shared Reading *Read React Predict Cycle* of 2-3 pages.

“The Masque of the Red Death” by Edgar Allan Poe

RESPOND

5. Timeline

Agree on the facts in today’s reading and list the 3-5 most important on the timeline.

1. The author describes a horrible and instantly fatal disease that has spread through the country, known as the Red Death.
2. A local prince, Prince Prospero, has decided to take his friends inside a fortress, and wait out the disease while holding a lavish and extended party inside.
3. After five or sixth months in the palace, the Prince decides to hold a masque ball.
4. The author describes a series of seven rooms the ball will be held in; they are all

- opulent and each is themed around a single color.
5. The seventh room is shrouded in black and has blood-red windows; most people don't go in because it is so eerie and creepy.
 6. During the party, a clock in the black room strikes every hour, and its sound is so terrifying that the whole assemblage stops to listen every time.
 7. The party goes on until the stroke of midnight, when a new person appears, dressed in a terrible costume.
 8. The newcomer is dressed as The Red Death, and everyone present is horrified and disgusted.
 9. Prospero orders the mystery guest seized and executed, but everyone is afraid to grab him.
 10. Prospero attacks him himself with a dagger, but is instead killed instantly by the mystery guest.
 11. Everyone chases the Red Death into the black room, where he has disappeared, leaving only his costume behind.
 12. Before morning, all of the guests have died of the horrible Red Death.

6. Map Add to ongoing class activities like a KWL chart or map: where did the characters go?

3g6 Plot Profile Chart

Complete a 3g6 Plot Profile Chart for "The Masque of the Red Death"

- Chronologically, write the 10 most important events in the story on the Description lines.
- Rate each event in intensity from 1-10, and shade in the blocks.
- Use the charts to analyze plot structure as a class.

EXPLORE

7. Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

11c12 – Cubing an Action

Create a cube for Prince Prospero's actions as a leader of his people.

- What steps did he take to stop the Red Death?
- What were the results of his decisions?
- How would you evaluate him as a leader?
- What better choices might he have made?

8. Discussion Ask discussion questions of all 9 types (see Day 1).

Key Questions

1. What historic plague does the Red Death represent?
2. Who is most hurt by Prince Prospero's actions?
3. What would a good leader have done to improve the situation?
4. Why does Poe set the climax of the story at a masquerade?
5. What does each of the seven themed rooms represent?
6. What is the symbolism of the ebony clock?

7. What does the character masquerading as the Red Death represent?
8. What qualities of leadership does Prince Prospero show?
9. Which qualities does Prince Prospero lack?
10. What modern-day events can you compare the Red Death to?
11. What literary devices does Poe use to engage his readers?
12. What is the moral of Poe's macabre tale?

9. Analyze

Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Passage, pg. 10

And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revelers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all (10.)

EXTEND

10. Write

Have each student write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

While Poe was writing to entertain an audience with a good horror story, he also sends a message about leadership and the consequences of one's actions. Prince Prospero wasn't able to use his money and influence to escape the very human tragedy of the Red Death. Instead of spending his last months locked in his palace having a good time, how might have he better acted to save his people, and possibly himself?

Pretend you are one of Prospero's closest advisors, before he locks himself in his palace. **Write a persuasive memo encouraging him to take action to stop the disease that is destroying his country.** Be specific, and mention at least three steps he could take to improve the situation.

11. Close

Close by extending today's lesson to life and the world.

Either as a class, or as individuals, discover and research a modern-day situation where a horrible and dangerous societal problem is being ignored or mishandled by the leadership involved. Write a policy proposal for the leadership; what could they do to improve life for the average person in their community? Some historical examples might be:

- mistreatment of African Americans prior to the Civil Rights movement;
- genocide in Rwanda;
- the killing of political protesters in Tiananmen Square in China.

3g6 Plot Profile Chart

10											
9											
8											
7											
6											
5											
4											
3											
2											
1											
Intensity	Description										
Event		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

11c12 Cubing an Action

When and Where			
Who – Prince Prospero			
Cause	Action	Effect	
Evaluation – How would you rate him as a leader?			

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The Masque of the Red Death



Name _____

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Writing Task

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