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# Why Is a Raven Like a Writing Desk? 50 min

## Objective:

Students will:

- define macabre and conceptualize it as a genre
- research Edgar Allan Poe
- connect Poe's work to art
- present their findings as found poetry

## Big Idea:

This lesson prompts students to explore the macabre through a research study of the famous and lauded writer, Edgar Allan Poe, and it culminates in student creation found poetry to synthesize their research.

## 1. Warm Up / Anticipatory 10 min

To begin warming up the brain, show the following [video](#), which comes from the Wonderopolis page for #1607, Who Was Edgar Allan Poe. Ask students to simply experience it the first time around, with no tasks. Then, show it again and ask students to write down their reactions to the video, what they associated with it, and what they think it means. Once all students have seen the video twice and written, ask for students to share aloud. One excellent way to be sure that various voices are heard instead of calling on students with their hands raised is to use the [Random Name Picker Wheel](#). You'll need Internet, but it will be a fun, interactive way to help ensure equity of student voice in the classroom. As student share aloud, generate a list of associated ideas on the board or on chart paper.

## Resources

- WebQuest <http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=112970>
- Raven Video for Warm-Up <https://vimeo.com/40291524>
- <http://wg.wonderopolis.org/uploads/users/63/363/original.jpg>
- Macabre Art <https://www.pinterest.com/explore/macabre-art/?lp=true>
- The Raven <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48860/the-raven>

- James Earl Jones reading The Raven <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXU3RfB7308>

## 2. Investigation and New Learning 20 min

To begin the lesson, share the objectives with students and ask them what they already know about Edgar Allan Poe, if anything. Add this to a [K-W-L](#) chart in a central place. Then, distribute the following [graphic organizer](#) (or ask students to draw their own) and place the word [macabre](#) in the middle. Give students time to write in what they predict this word means just by looking at it, activating prior knowledge, and by asking their peers. Then, in another color, provide time for students to use reference materials to define the word and fill in new knowledge. Once they have completed this, use the Random Name Picker Wheel to have a few students share, filling in a class model at the front of the room (using a document camera, SMART board, or chart) so that any misconceptions are cleared up.

Next, ask students to research Edgar Allan Poe and related macabre art by completing a WebQuest. There are several online already, included in links, or you can create your own. The idea here is to have students break out into small groups, visit websites and use print resources (as available) and pull out relevant information to complete a found poem in the end. While researching, students should record important quotes with main ideas, significant details, and key vocabulary from the sources they search. These should be noted, along with the sources from which they came, on either note cards or in a Writer's Notebook.

## 3. Review & Check for Understanding 30 min

When students have completed their WebQuests, they will individually or in small groups create found poems to capture the important pieces of information they have found on Edgar Allan Poe, macabre, and the art that connects to both. In these found poems, students will not use any original words, except articles and conjunctions needed for flow, but instead only words and phrases from their research. They can create these on paper or using technology if available. If in small groups, each group should present and give an explanation of why they chose to create their poems using the particular words and phrases. If individual, use the Random Name Picker Wheel to choose a few students to share aloud.

**Note:** By using this alternative method of formative assessment, you will be able to capture whether or not students are able to meet the lesson objectives and demonstrate the related standards/skills without giving a traditional test or quiz. In addition, you will be weaving in arts and humanities with literature and writing. These could easily be polished and made into larger projects if time allows.