Edgar Allan Poe may be best remembered today for his gory and twisted poems and stories such as the chilling tale of murder in "The Tell-Tale Heart," but his own life it seems was even stranger than fiction. His unconventional life probably contributed to his ability to craft creative stories, but it also likely contributed to the mysterious circumstances surrounding his death. How did a man so celebrated for his writing end up mysteriously dead at age 40?

A Rough Beginning
Poe was born in 1809 in Boston, Massachusetts to two stage actors. His father abandoned the family a year later, and his mother died from tuberculosis when Poe was only three years old. Poe was taken in by the Allan family who raised him until adulthood, giving him the name Edgar Allan Poe.

Unlucky In Love
In 1836 Poe married his young cousin Virginia, who was only 13 at the time. But just a few years later in 1842 she began showing symptoms of tuberculosis, the disease that had already killed his mother and brother.

An Untimely Death
Poe’s eventful life would come to a short end in 1849. In May he was found wandering around Baltimore’s streets. He was delirious and very ill. He was also wearing someone else’s clothing and repeating the name "Reynolds." He was taken to the hospital where he died a few days later. Newspapers reported that he died of "congestion of the brain," which may indicate alcoholism or a stroke.

I’m LOVIN’ LIT
# Nonfiction Article of the Week

8-8: Stranger Than Fiction: The Life of Edgar Allan Poe

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Have you tried the reading literature companion to this resource, **Short Story of the Month Club**?

The first **two-week unit** is FREE!

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imlovinlit.com
Activities, Difficulty Levels, and **Common Core Alignment**

<table>
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<th>Difficulty Level: *Easy **Moderate ***Challenge</th>
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Activities, Difficulty Levels, and **TEKS Alignment**

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<th>Difficulty Level: *Easy **Moderate ***Challenge</th>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 8: Skills Test <em>Modified w/Key</em>*</td>
<td>ELAR.5(C) 8(D) 9(B)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Instructions for Google Classroom Digital Components

All student activities are available in digital format compatible with Google Classroom. They are available in two formats: Google Slides and Google Forms.

Google Slides
First, I have made all student pages (excluding assessments) in Google Slides format. Students can simply add text boxes to any area they wish to type on. To access the Google Slides for this article, copy and paste the link below into your browser. *Note that you’ll need to make a copy of the folder or slide before you can use it.*

Google Forms
I have made the assessments available in Google Forms. Here, they are self-grading, and I have set them all up with answer keys so they are ready to go for you. You’ll need to find these two files in your download folder to use Google Forms. The first file contains the links to the Forms, and the second file is explicit instructions for use. Look inside the Google Forms folder.
A Couple of Options for Teaching Article of the Week Units

Here are my favorite suggestions for organizing these units with your schedule.

*Please note that thumbnails show article 6.1 and activities.

Option A: Quickie Unit
Simply complete all lesson activities in order OR pick and choose the activities you want to complete in order.

Time Needed: 2-3 fifty-minute class periods
Pros: Super flexible; perfect filler around your other units; makes it easy to assign easier components for homework; ideal no prep sub plans if you have to be out for 2-3 days in a row.
Cons: Fitting them all in around everything else you’ve got to do.

Option B: Daily Model
Use as a class starter or specific routine in your classroom everyday at the same time.

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes/day, 5 days/week
Pros: IDEAL for block scheduling when you need to always change it up; Great way to fit nonfiction articles in with what you’re already doing.
Cons: There are 25 total articles for each grade level, so some weeks you’ll need to skip the articles (I’d skip when doing projects, novels, during short weeks, and plan to finish up right before testing); May be difficult to commit to something rigid like this if you’re a type B teacher like myself ;)

Here’s how the daily model works:

Monday: Read article & complete basic comprehension activity
Tuesday: Text evidence activity
Wednesday: Skills focus activity (based on one key skill for each article)
Thursday: Integrate information (other sources)
Friday: Assessment
Walkthrough

I have discussed here how I use each activity and included hints and links to help you, too. Feel free to take or leave what you like. Even if you don’t plan to do every activity, I still recommend reading through this section to get the most out of these activities. Looking for a schedule to follow? Check the previous page for two suggested scheduling options.

These lessons and activities were designed to meet the needs of eighth graders during the first half the school year. The articles, activities, questions, and assessments will become increasingly rigorous and challenging as we progress through the year.

Activities 1-2

• *There are no higher order thinking questions included here – only basic, literal comprehension.
• These activities are designed to be completed on an either/or basis, meaning your students should only complete one of them, not both.
• Use Activity 1 for a quick cold-read assessment or after you’ve read the article together. I use these to hold students accountable for reading carefully. I recommend having students complete activity 1 without the article as long as they’ve just read the article (so not the next day), unless you’re providing a testing accommodation.
• Use Activity 2 for an open-ended option for the same exact questions. Students may have a harder time answering this one without the article, so choose this one if you want students to use the article but still prove that they’ve understood the content.
Nonfiction Article of the Week
8-8: Stranger Than Fiction: The Life of Edgar Allan Poe

Activities 3-4

• Again, these activities are either/or, so choose one or the other but not both.
• Activity 3 requires students to annotate text evidence in the article and includes an article annotation key.
• Activity 4 requires students to choose text evidence from a bank at the bottom. This format prepares students to choose from and distinguish between pieces of text evidence on a state assessment. I recommend mixing it up and going back and forth between these among units until your students are proficient at both methods.

Activity 5

• This activity is focused around the main skill for this article: RI.8.5 – Analyze Text Structure, including text features of an article.
• Complete answer keys included, as always.

Activity 6

• This activity requires students to integrate information from another source or media.
• Here, students view a brief video about myths surrounding Poe.
  - Youtube: https://youtu.be/BQ0MTGdQ4o0
  - Backup: https://goo.gl/Ea587Q
  - Explore more: https://lpb.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/edgar-allan-poe-buried-alive

BONUS VIDEO to consider!!! https://youtu.be/iQOhM6c0Lo - I love for 8th grade, but preview first for sure! She discusses the 19th century version of sexting as well as uses the phrase “pissed off” and emphasizes the bit(ch) in obituary. It’s a really really good and interesting bio of Poe that talks to 14 year olds on their level IMO. Still, because of the “cursing,” I didn’t use for Activity 6 and had to use a semi-snoozer instead…
Activities 7-8

• Skills assessments should ALWAYS be given with access to the text. ALWAYS. This is always the case on standardized tests, and hey, in real life too, right?!
• What’s the best way to make sure your students are prepared for the state assessment? Assess them regularly with that format. I always let my students practice for the first few before I start counting them for a grade, and I always use the basic comprehension assessment (activity 1 or 2) as an easy grade so it levels the playing field.
• Activity 7 is the regular assessment.
• Activity 8 is the modified assessment. The modified assessment offer students only two answer choices instead of four. Note that only the multiple choice portion of the modified test is different from the original. Simply put, only page one is different. Complete keys included as always (not shown).
• In a hurry? I always include only multiple choice questions on the first page in case you’re in a hurry and need to skip the open-ended portion of the test. I don’t recommend skipping regularly but every now and then, I need a grading break.

Self-grading Google Forms assessment always included for:
• Activity 1 (Comprehension Quiz)
• Activity 7 (Skills Test)
• Activity 8 (Modified Skills Test)
his mother and brother. She became increasingly ill over the coming years. It was during this period that Poe published his famous “The Raven” poem, which illustrated the theme of loss that was coming to define his life. Virginia passed away in 1847.

Poe’s behavior became more erratic after his wife died, and his romantic life became even more complicated. He started dating and became engaged to the poet Sarah Helen Whitman, but his drinking led to the end of the relationship. Then Poe began seeing his former fiancée Sarah Elmira Royster again.

An Untimely Death

Poe’s eventful life would come to a short end. In 1849 he was found wandering around Baltimore’s streets. He was delirious and very ill. He was also wearing someone else’s clothing and repeating the name “Reynolds.” He was taken to the hospital where he died a few days later. Newspapers reported that he died of “congestion of the brain,” which may indicate alcoholism or a stroke.

However, there is no hospital record to confirm this, and many theories of his cause of death have since emerged. Some theorize he may have been murdered as part of a cooping plot, a common practice at the time. Cooping was a form of voter fraud where kidnapped individuals were inundated with liquor, dressed in others’ clothes, and sent to vote multiple times for a particular candidate. Medical practitioners who reopened the case in recent years believe he may have actually been suffering from rabies, a disease passed through animal bites.

In a final tragic twist, Poe’s obituary and later his first biography were written by his foe, Rufus Griswold. Griswold thought Poe was uneducated and Poe claimed Griswold was untalented. They wrote harsh reviews of one another. In an article and subsequent book about Poe after his death, Griswold invented details and actually created fake letters to make Poe appear in a negative light. Historians have had to unravel the web of lies created by Griswold to get at the truth of the life of Edgar Allan Poe.

The last major poem written by Poe was “Annabel Lee,” published immediately after his mysterious death in 1849. In this poem, Poe captured the grief he felt over losing his precious Virginia, a grief that haunted him to the grave:

From “Annabel Lee”

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride.
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

-Edgar Allan Poe
Nonfiction Article of the Week
8-8: Stranger Than Fiction: The Life of Edgar Allan Poe

Finding Text Evidence

Find each piece of text evidence in the article and highlight OR underline it with the color specified. Be sure to choose the piece or pieces of evidence that most strongly support the statement.

For items 1-4, you’ll be citing textual evidence to support what the text says explicitly.

1. Find the sentence that tells how old Poe was when he died. Highlight it in blue.
2. Find the sentence that identifies the last major poem that Poe wrote. Highlight it in green.
3. Find three sentences that reveal the events that immediately preceded Poe’s death. Highlight them in purple.
4. Find the sentence that explains what cooping means. Highlight it in gray.

For items 5-8, you’ll be citing one piece or multiple pieces of textual evidence to support inferences drawn from the text.

5. Find two pieces of text evidence that detail a rocky relationship between Poe and his foster father. Highlight them in orange.
6. Find one piece of text evidence that shows where Poe gained inspiration for “The Raven.” Highlight it in yellow.
7. Find three pieces of evidence that support the idea that Poe was unable to follow through with educational and military commitments. Highlight them in pink.
8. Find four pieces of evidence that support the idea that many theories exist about how Poe died. Highlight them in red.
Despite his prolific work in life, Poe was originally buried in an unmarked grave. Many years later, his gravestone was moved and decorated with this statue (right).

his mother and brother. She became increasingly ill over the coming years. It was during this period that Poe published his famous “The Raven” poem, which illustrated the theme of loss that was coming to define his life. Virginia passed away a few years in 1847.

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Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

—Edgar Allan Poe
B. Analyze Text Structure

Complete the timeline by adding missing events and dates. All dates are approximate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>Poe born in Boston, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Poe’s mother died of tuberculosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Poe attended boarding school in Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Poe enlisted in the U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poe died under mysterious circumstances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A. Analyze Structure & Features of a Nonfiction Article

Choose or write the correct answer for each question.

1. The article is divided into ___5___ main sections. They are:

2. There are __11__ paragraphs in the article.

3. There are ___6___ graphics in the article. (Graphics may include images, photographs, illustrations, diagrams, maps, graphs, tables, charts, and other types of graphics.)

4. What type of graph is shown at the bottom of the first page of the article? What does the graph show? Why do you think it was included?
   The pie graph shows the results of a Fanpop poll about favorite Poe stories. It was probably included so that readers can compare their favorite Poe stories to that of the survey respondents.

5. Why is the Annabel Lee text graphic included at the bottom of the second page?
   The Annabel Lee text graphic is included to show readers the last stanza of Poe’s last major published poem. These words from the last stanza show Poe’s grief for his lost wife, Virginia.

6. What is the overall major text structure of the article?
   b. order and sequence

7. How do paragraphs 7 and 8 relate to each other?
   Both paragraphs 7 and 8 are related to his death. Paragraph 7 discusses the events that proceeded his death, while paragraph 8 discusses events surrounding and immediately after his death. These paragraphs are in order of chronological events just like the rest of the article.