



 Prestwick House

Free Lesson Plan

POETRY:

Rhyme and Repetition in Poe's "Annabel Lee"

CCSS. ELA-Language.RL.9-10.1, 2,4 | TEKS §110.31.(b)(3)

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Objectives:

By the end of this lesson your students will be able to:

- discuss the central theme or idea of "Annabel Lee";
- provide an objective summary of the events in the text;
- identify rhyme patterns in the poem;
- discuss the effects of repetition in the poem.

Time:

45 Minutes or 1 Class Period

Materials:

1 Handout: "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe

Procedure:

- 1. Pass out copies of the handout, "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe**
- 2. Ask your students to read the poem to themselves with the goals of understanding what's happening in it.**
- 3. When your students are finished, ask them the following questions.**

Are there any words that you didn't understand?

There is some vocabulary in the poem that could make it difficult to understand. Use context clues or root words to help students figure out the definitions of these words. Some of the words that your students may need help with are:

Seraphs –angels

Sepulchre – a tomb or grave

High-born – noble

Kinsman – a family member

Dissever – to sever or separate

Night-tide – Nighttime



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**Comprehension Questions**

Where does the poem take place?

The poem takes place in a "kingdom by the sea." From the type of language used to describe it, students may be able to identify the poem as taking place in a fairy-tale-like land.

Who are the characters in the poem?

The two main characters are the narrator and his love, Annabel Lee. There are also two minor characters, Annabel Lee's family member who carries her to her grave and the angels who cause her death.

When in the poem do the main events take place?

They occurred long ago, when the narrator and Annabel Lee were younger, although the narrator says they were children.

What happens in this poem?

Students should be able to summarize the poem. If they need help, walk through each stanza identifying the plot events in each.

4. Read the poem aloud and ask your students to underline each of the rhymes in the poem.

Your students should be able to identify the pattern of rhymes at the end of each short line, but they may miss internal rhymes within the lines. Point these out to students if they miss them. The annotated copy of the poem at the end of this lesson shows you the location of these rhymes.

5. Ask your students to circle any words or phrases that are repeated throughout the poem.**6. Discuss the effect that rhyme and repetition have.**

Poe believed in a concept called "Unity of Effect," in which every element of a poem should be focused on a single effect. In "Annabel Lee," Poe is focusing on the feeling of a love so strong that it extends beyond death. To do so, he invokes an image of a fantasy world similar to a fairy tale in which nothing matters other than the narrator's undying love, and he contrasts that fairy tale-feeling with a morbid subject matter.

The rhyme and repetition hold the poem together giving it a unified feeling. The repetition of phrases such as "In a kingdom by the sea" and "many and many a year ago" gives the poem a fantasy-like feeling.

The ongoing rhyme scheme and rhythmic structure give the poem a sing-song feeling that heightens the fairy-tale effect of the poem, which contrasts with the chilling surprise ending.

The internal rhyme begins at the end of the 4th stanza with the death of Annabel Lee. The rhymed words in these lines are those that focus primarily on death and the odd image of the narrator lying in his bride's grave:

chilling/killing

bright eyes/ never rise

night-tide/ down by the side/ my bride

This rhyming technique focuses the reader's attention on the more macabre elements of the poem.

Because of the alternating long and short lines, the poem has a feeling that mimics the rise and fall of the tide and the ongoing passage of time. This repeated structure is unbroken until the second-to-last stanza in which the narrator speaks of time being unable to break his love.



Annabel Lee

by Edgar Allan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea,
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know
 By the name of Annabel Lee;
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 But we loved with a love that was more than love—
 I and my Annabel Lee—
 With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;
 So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,
 To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
 Went envying her and me—
 Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we—
 Of many far wiser than we—
 And neither the angels in Heaven above
 Nor the demons down under the sea
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful 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.

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ANNOTATED VERSION

Annabel Lee

by Edgar Allan Poe



It was many and many a year ^A ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea,^B
 That a maiden there lived whom you may ^A know
 By the name of Annabel Lee;^B
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought
 Than to love and be loved by me.^B

I was a child and she was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea,^B
 But we loved with a love that was more than love—
 I and my Annabel Lee—^B
 With a love that the winged seraphs of Heaven
 Coveted her and me.^B

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,^B
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;^B
 So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,^B
 To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.^B

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
 Went envying her and me—^B
 Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea),^B
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
^C Chilling and ^C killing my Annabel Lee.^B

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we—^B
 Of many far wiser than we—^B
 And neither the angels in Heaven above
 Nor the demons down under the sea^B
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;^B
 For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams^D
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;^B
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes^E
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;^B
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side^F
 Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,^F
 In her sepulchre there by the sea—^B
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.^B

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Homework:

- 1- Write a paragraph or short essay on the effect of the dissonance between the fairy-tale feeling of most of the poem and the chilling nature of the plot?
- 2- Look up “The Bells” by Edgar Allan Poe, and review the rhyme and repetition in that poem. Write one- two paragraphs on the effect of repetition and rhyme in that poem. What is the effect that Poe obtains from the repetition in that poem?

Standards:

- CCSS. ELA-Reading Literature .9-10.1
- CCSS. ELA-Reading Literature .9-10.4
- CCSS. ELA-Reading Literature .9-10.,4

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

TEKS §110.31.(b)(3)



Sources:

Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Best of Poe: The Tell-Tale Heart, The Rave, The Cask of Amontillado, and 30 Others*. Clayton, DE: Prestwick House. 2006.

Moliken, Paul (ed). *Discovering Genre: Poetry*. Clayton, DE: Prestwick House. 2006.



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