Comprehension Questions:

1. Why does the narrator say that he must kill the old man?
   He does not want to kill the old man as he hasn't done anything wrong, he just wants to get rid of the ‘vulture eye’ of the old man.
   “I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this!”

2. How does he rehearse his crime:
   He practises entering the old mans room and shining the light on the eye for seven nights before hand.
   “Every night about twelve o’clock I slowly opened his door. And when the door was opened wide enough I put my hand in, and then my head. In my hand I held a light covered over with a cloth so that no light showed. And I stood there quietly. Then, carefully, I lifted the cloth, just a little, so that a single, thin, small light fell across that eye.”

3. What happens to his plan on the night of the murder?
   He makes a noise which wakes the old man while he is sneaking into his room.

4. Why does the sound of the heartbeat send him into “uncontrollable terror”?
   He starts to feel the guilt and cannot get rid if the noise, he thinks the police officers can hear it as well.

5. How is the old man killed?
   He gets suffocated by the heavy bed being put on top of him.

6. How does he dispose of the old man’s body?
   He cuts of his head, arms and legs and puts them under the floorboards in the old mans room.

7. What brings the police officers to the house?
   A neighbour heard a shriek coming from the house.

8. How does the narrator first receive them?
   He welcomes them in with out any fear as he thinks they will not find anything.

9. What happens to change his sense of security?
   He starts the hear noises and his anxiety builds up, making him to begin feeling guilty.

10. How does Poe show throughout the story that the narrator is mad?
Vocabulary: Using context clues and a dictionary define the following.

1. acute
2. cunningly
3. death watches
4. derision
5. dissemble
6. dissimulation
7. Evil Eye
8. gesticulations
9. reposed
10. sagacity
11. stealthily
12. tattoo
13. vehemently
14. wary

Responding:

1. Suspense is a key element in the plot of the story. It maintains interest and heightens the feeling of mystery. Suspense compels the reader to read on, to discover what happens next, and how things turn out. Discuss the elements of suspense in Poe’s famous story and show how it is achieved before and after the murder.

   He went into the old man’s room for seven nights, waiting for the eye to be open so he can kill him. Since he took so long the suspense had built up a lot by the eighth night.

2. What do stalking the old man and the post-murder details reveal about the narrator’s character?

   He is insane, because he went to such an extent to kill the old man just because of his appearance. He also claims at the beginning of the story that he is not mad, making his sound more insane.

3. Poe is a master at creating atmosphere. What are some of the story details and images that would have a strong appeal to its audience?

   When he describes the eye he is very descriptive and makes a strong image in your head. “One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it.”

Writing Activities: Choose one of the following.

1. Rewrite the final scene of the story from the perspective of one of the police officers. You might wish to write the official report filed by them.

2. Write about the idea that obsessions can be destructive.

3. Write a poem or song lyrics about the events of this story.

4. Discuss the concept of “madness” – is the narrator really crazy? Or just a little “misunderstood”.

5. Is there such thing as the perfect crime? If there was a way you could commit some kind of crime and get away with it… would you do it? What would you do?
Notes:

Types of short stories:

- Classical plot story: conflict - action - solution
- Formula/magazine story: formulaic. Action centred, fasted paced, move rapidly to climax.
- Slice of life: psychology, inner life focus, can be plotless, suggestions and implications.
- Expressionistic/surrealistic: deep symbolic meaning.

The Tell-tale heart is mostly a classical plot story and partly a magazine story, each type of short story can be linked to the story.

Narrative structure:

Plot structure graph

1. Plot the main points of the story on a plot structure graph.

2. Explain what you learn in the exposition or introduction of the story.
   We learn that the narrator thinks that he is not insane, making him seem very insane. We learn that he is friends with an old man who is staying in his home, he likes the old man, but he cannot stand the his ‘vulture eye’, so he plans to kill him.
3. List the events that are included in the rising action of the story. For seven nights, the narrator is extra nice to the old man, but at 12pm every night, he slowly creeps into the old man's room and shines a light upon his eye to see if it is open, since it is not open he cannot kill him since he only wants the eye gone. On the eighth night everything happens much slower and with more caution, he accidentally wakes the old man and for an hour the narrator waits in the dark.

4. Identify the conflict in this story. The narrator cannot stand the old man's 'evil eye' he likes the old man, but not the eye.

5. Describe the climax of the story. When the narrator finally murders the old man on the eighth night by strangling him.

6. List the events that are included in the falling action of the story. After the old man was strangled, he was cut up and placed underneath the floor boards. The police came to the house inquiring a scream that a neighbour heard during the night, the narrator thought he had nothing to fear and started showing the police that nothing was out of order.

7. Explain how the conflict is resolved. The narrator kills the old man and hides his body, never to see the eye again.

8. Describe how the writer uses suspense in developing the plot of this story. He creates suspense by making the narrator go into the old man's room for seven nights before he commit the murder, when each day goes past that he does not murder the old man, the suspense increases within the story. Upon the eighth night, more suspense is added when he This suspense builds up the story ready for the climax.

**Context:**

Predict what happened next in the story: The narrator will be arrested and taken either to a prison or an asylum when he will have wait to be hanged.

**Setting:**

1. Identify the main setting. The house that the narrator and the old man are staying in. They seem to be in an area with neighbours.
2. Create a brainstorm of adjectives to describe it.
3. Locate at least 3 quotes to support your descriptions.
4. Evaluate whether this setting is realistic or not. Explain why with reference to the story.
Choose a character… The narrator

1. Describe the character at the beginning of the story.
He is trying to convince us that he is not insane. He then goes on the try prove his point by telling his story.
2.
3. x
4. x
5. x

Themes

1. Identify an important theme in the story.
Mental illness
2. Identify and describe 3 examples of the theme being shown within the story.
   Which characters are linked to this theme?
   - Within the first paragraph the narrator says “How, then, am I mad?”. 
   - The narrator plans to kill the old man just because he does not like his eye.
     “I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.”
   - The narrator hears noises in whilst he is in the old mans room talking to the police officers. “Yes the sound increased” ”Was it possible they heard not?”
3. Explain the theme’s relevance to today’s world. Record examples of which are seen on real life.
   In todays world there are still people with mental illnesses, and people still murder others for small reasons.
   Examples of people with mental illnesses who have killed others:
   - David Berkowitz killed 6 people, he claimed the neighbours dog told him to, he was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.
   - Richard Chase killed 6 people, he was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.
   - Kristen Gilbert killed 4 people while working as a nurse. She was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder.
4. Describe the authors intention in relation to this message. What did Edgar Allen Poe want the viewer to learn or think about?
5. Identify and describe the social issues that are represented in the story.
**Language questions:**

1. Explain what type of language the author uses. Is it formal or informal? Include examples.
   - Informal

2. Describe how time is handled in the story. Is it chronological? Are there flashbacks?
   - The story is the narrator telling how and why he killed the old man, how it lead up for a week before hand. All the events are being recalled from his memory. It is in chronological order when the narrator is telling his story.

3. Record an example of something that the narrator says. What do we learn about their personality from what they say.
   - “I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.” This shows the audience that the narrator is insane, he wants to kill the old man just because of an eye.

4. Describe the tone of the story. Is it positive, negative, menacing, scary, etc? Explain why you think this, Include examples.
   - Throughout the whole story there is a creepy tone, the narrator is stalking the old man and going into his room every night, he wants to kill him just because of his eye. At the climax of the story there is a negative and gory tone when the narrator murders the old man, chops him up and hides him under the floorboards.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>Repeating something that has already been said/written.</td>
<td>When the narrator goes into the old man's roomful seven nights “And I did this for seven long nights”</td>
<td>This adds suspense to the story, is builds the story up for the climax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>Comparing objects using like or as.</td>
<td>“a single dim ray, like the thread of a spider”</td>
<td>It gives the reader a better description of what is going on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jargon</td>
<td>Special words or expressions.</td>
<td>“tattoo”</td>
<td>A term used in the 1800’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliteration</td>
<td>The occurrence of the same letter or sound.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assonance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Onomatopoeia</td>
<td>When words have relationship to sounds.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>Giving an object a human like feature.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Saying something is another thing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyperbole</td>
<td>Exaggerated statements or claims.</td>
<td>“A watch’s minute hand moves more quickly than did mine.”</td>
<td>Emphasises how slowly the narrator was moving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of senate lengths</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotive language</td>
<td>Words that give a passage emotion.</td>
<td>“my blood ran cold”</td>
<td>Its more emphasised than saying he got scared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>“How, then, am I Mad?”</td>
<td>Gives the reader something to think about. And shows that the narrator is mad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalisation</td>
<td>Using capital letters.</td>
<td>“Death”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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