

Name: _____

“The Black Cat”

Edgar Allan Poe – August 1843

After reading the shortened text of “The Black Cat” answer the following questions. All questions should be answered in complete sentences. 😊

1. Who is telling this story (narrating)? Is it the story told in first, second, or third person? How do you know?
2. Describe the narrator’s personality at the beginning of the story and compare/contrast it with the narrator’s personality at the end of the story. What do you think is the cause of this change?
3. How did the narrator feel about carving out the cat’s eye? What did he do to fight this feeling?
4. Who else did the narrator kill? Why? What did he do with the body?
5. Was the narrator more concerned with the murder or the cat? What can we infer about the narrator’s sanity because of this? Explain your reasoning.
6. Why does the narrator mention the construction of the walls and house to the police?
7. How did the police find his wife’s body? What will happen to the narrator? How do you know?

Edgar Allan Poe has a very unique style of writing that can be difficult to understand at first. On your own or with a partner work to translate his writing in “The Black Cat.” First, determine what the text means. What is going on in each particular scene? Second, what would this sound like in modern English? Feel free to use slang, different punctuation, etc. to ‘modernize’ the story.

What does it mean?	Original Text	Modern Version
	<p>For the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not -- and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. In their consequences, these events have terrified -- have tortured -- have destroyed me. Yet I will not attempt to expound them.</p>	
	<p>This hideous murder accomplished, I set myself forthwith, and with entire deliberation, to the task of concealing the body. I knew that I could not remove it from the house, either by day or by night, without the risk of being observed by the neighbors. Many projects entered my mind. At one period I thought of cutting the corpse into minute fragments, and destroying them by fire. At another, I resolved to dig a grave for it in the floor of the cellar. Again, I deliberated about casting it in the well in the yard -- about packing it in a box, as if merchandize, with the usual arrangements, and so getting a porter to take it from the house.</p>	

	<p>Finally I hit upon what I considered a far better expedient than either of these. I determined to wall it up in the cellar -- as the monks of the middle ages are recorded to have walled up their victims.</p>	
	<p>Of my own thoughts it is folly to speak. swooning, I staggered to the opposite wall. For one instant the party upon the stairs remained motionless, through extremity of terror and of awe. In the next, a dozen stout arms were toiling at the wall. It fell bodily. The corpse, already greatly decayed and clotted with gore, stood erect before the eyes of the spectators. Upon its head, with red extended mouth and solitary eye of fire, sat the hideous beast whose craft had seduced me into murder, and whose informing voice had consigned me to the hangman. I had walled the monster up within the tomb!</p>	