

FAST FACTS

Author's Works and Themes: Edgar Allan Poe

"Author's Works and Themes: Edgar Allan Poe." Gale, 2019, www.gale.com.

Writings by Edgar Allan Poe

- *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (poetry) 1827
- *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems* (poetry) 1829
- *Poems* (poetry) 1831
- *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket, North America: Comprising the Details of a Mutiny, Famine, and Shipwreck, During a Voyage to the South Seas; Resulting in Various Extraordinary Adventures and Discoveries in the Eighty-fourth Parallel of Southern Latitude* (novel) 1838
- *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (short stories) 1840
- *The Raven, and Other Poems* (poetry) 1845
- *Tales by Edgar A. Poe* (short stories) 1845
- *Eureka: A Prose Poem* (poetry) 1848
- *The Literati: Some Honest Opinions about Authorial Merits and Demerits, with Occasional Words of Personality* (criticism) 1850

Major Themes

The most prominent features of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry are a pervasive tone of melancholy, a longing for lost love and beauty, and a preoccupation with death, particularly the deaths of beautiful women. Most of Poe's works, both poetry and prose, feature a first-person narrator, often ascribed by critics as Poe himself. Numerous scholars, both contemporary and modern, have suggested that the experiences of Poe's life provide the basis for much of his poetry, particularly the early death of his mother, a trauma that was repeated in the later deaths of two mother-surrogates to whom the poet was devoted. Poe's status as an outsider and an outcast—he was orphaned at an early age; taken in but never adopted by the Allans; raised as a gentleman but penniless after his estrangement from his foster father; removed from the university and expelled from West Point—is believed to account for the extreme loneliness, even despair, that runs through most of his poetry.

Paper Topics

- Select a story or poem by Poe and trace its themes to events that occurred during the life of the author.
- Read Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and discuss how the first-person point of view strengthens the story's sense of dread.

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