**Mentor Text: Variation in Sentence Structuring and Meticulously Developing Claims**

**Directions:** Choose at least two sections of the reading and annotate based on how the author structures his or her sentences and how they elaborate on their claims. Afterwards, you will choose at least 3 sentences in which you will copy; however, you are going to mark out certain words in order to create a “fill in the blank” style sentence. Also, circle 4 vocabulary words YOU WILL start using in your writing. Check out my examples ☺

**Poe's Short Stories** By Edgar Allan Poe

**Critical Essays Edgar Allan Poe and Romanticism**

**Introduction**

Few writers exist outside of the currents of the times in which they live, and Poe is no exception. He is clearly a product of his time, which in terms of literature, is called the Romantic era. The Romantic movement was one which began in Germany, moved through all of Europe and Russia, and, almost simultaneously, changed the entire course of American literature. Among England's great Romantic writers are William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, and Sir Walter Scott. Romantic writers in America who were contemporaries of Poe include Hawthorne (whose works Poe reviewed and admired), Herman Melville, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, whom Poe did not like and to whom he was rather insulting in a review.

Poe's brand of Romanticism was akin to his contemporaries but most of his works often bordered on what was later called the gothic genre. The following discussion is *not*a comprehensive view of Romantic concepts, but instead, it is intended as a basic guide and explanation for some of the conventions or some of the devices often found in Poe's stories.

**Intuition and Emotion**

Perhaps the most dominant characteristic of the Romantic movement was the rejection of the rational and the intellectual in favor of the intuitive and the emotional. In his critical theories and through his art, Poe emphasized that didactic and intellectual elements had no place in art. The subject matter of art should deal with the emotions, and the greatest art was that which had a direct effect on the emotions. The intellectual and the didactic was for sermons and treatises, whereas the emotions were the sole province of art; after all, Poe reasoned, man felt and sensed things before he thought about them. Even Poe's most intellectual characters, such as M. Dupin ("The Purloined Letter," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," etc.), rely more on intuition than on rationality. As one examines M. Dupin, Poe's famous detective, one notes that he solves his crimes by intuitively placing himself in the mind of the criminal. Throughout Poe's works, his characters are usually dominated by their emotions. This concept explains much of the seemingly erratic behavior of the characters in all of the stories. Roderick Usher's emotions are overwrought; Ligeia and the narrator of that story both exist in the world of emotions; the behaviors of the narrators of "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat" are not rational; in "The Cask of Amontillado," the hatred of Montresor exceeds all rational explanations. Throughout Poe's fiction, much of the behavior of his characters must be viewed and can be explained best in terms of the Romantic period in which he wrote.

**Setting and Time**

Usually in a Romantic story, the setting is in some obscure or unknown place, or else it is set at some distant time in the past. The purpose for this is so that none of Poe's readers would be diverted by references to contemporary ideas; Poe created new worlds so that his readers would concentrate wholly on the themes or atmospheres with which he infused his stories. Poe believed that the highest art existed in a realm that was different from this world, and in order to create this realm, vagueness and indefiniteness were necessary to alienate the reader from the everyday world and to thrust him toward the ideal and the beautiful. Thus, Poe's stories are set either in some unknown place, such as in "The Fall of the House of Usher," or else they are set in some romantic castle on the Rhine, or in an abbey in some remote part of England, as in "Ligeia," or else they are set during the period of the Spanish Inquisition (the fourteenth century), as in "The Pit and the Pendulum." In other words, Poe's reader will *not*find a story which is set in some recognizable place in the present time. Even Poe's detective fiction is set in France rather than in America, thus giving it a Romantic distance from the reader.

**Characterization**

Often the characters are not named or else they are given only a semblance of a name. The narrator in "Ligeia" does not even know the Lady Ligeia's last name nor that of her family. With the exception of a story like "The Cask of Amontillado," where the narrator is addressed by another character, or a story like "William Wilson," where the title identifies the pseudonym of the narrator, we usually do not know the names of the narrators of the other stories discussed in this volume, or even the names of the narrators of most of Poes other works. For a Romantic like Poe, the emphasis of literature ought to be on the final*effect*and the *emotion*produced thereby. The greatness of "The Pit and the Pendulum" is not in knowing the name of the narrator but in sensing his fears and his terrors.

**Subject Matter**

The Romantic writer is often both praised and condemned for emphasizing the strange, the bizarre, the unusual, and the unexpected in his or her writing, and it is out of the Romantic tradition that we get such figures as the monster in *Frankenstein*and Count Dracula. The Romantic felt that the common or the ordinary had no place in the realm of art. Poe eschewed or despised literature that dealt with mundane subjects. Such things could be seen every day. The purpose of art, for Poe, was to choose subjects which could affect the reader in a manner which he would not encounter in everyday life. Thus, the subject matter of many of his tales dealt with living corpses, with frightening experiences, with horrors which startled the reader, and with situations which even we have never imagined before.

In conclusion, what might sometimes seem puzzling in a story by Poe, such as an unexpected ending or an unexpected event, is not puzzling if we remember that what he created was a result of his writing during the Romantic tradition. While his tales can be read as "stories," they take on further significance as superb examples of the Romantic tradition.

**Emily Dickinson Poem Selection**

**Success is counted sweetest**

**By: Emily Dickinson**

Success is counted sweetest

By those who ne'er succeed.

To comprehend a nectar

Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host

Who took the Flag today

Can tell the definition

So clear of victory

As he defeated – dying –

On whose forbidden ear

The distant strains of triumph

Burst agonized and clear!

**Much Madness is divinest Sense –**

By: Emily Dickinson

Much Madness is divinest Sense -

To a discerning Eye -

Much Sense - the starkest Madness -

’Tis the Majority

In this, as all, prevail -

Assent - and you are sane -

Demur - you’re straightway dangerous -

And handled with a Chain -

**Because I could not stop for Death**

By: Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death--  
He kindly stopped for me--   
The Carriage held but just Ourselves--   
And Immortality.  
  
We slowly drove--He knew no haste  
And I had put away  
My labor and my leisure too,  
For His Civility--  
  
We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess--in the Ring--   
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain--   
We passed the Setting Sun--  
  
Or rather--He passed us--  
The Dews drew quivering and chill--  
For only Gossamer, my Gown--  
My Tippet--only Tulle--  
  
We paused before a House that seemed  
A Swelling of the Ground--  
The Roof was scarcely visible--  
The Cornice--in the Ground--  
  
Since then--'tis Centuries--and yet  
Feels shorter than the Day  
I first surmised the Horses' Heads   
Were toward Eternity--

**I heard a Fly buzz - when I died –**

By: Emily Dickinson

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -

The Stillness in the Room

Was like the Stillness in the Air -

Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -

And Breaths were gathering firm

For that last Onset - when the King

Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away

What portion of me be

Assignable - and then it was

There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -

Between the light - and me -

And then the Windows failed - and then

I could not see to see –

**The Soul Selects Her Own Society**

**By: Emily Dickinson**

The Soul selects her own Society --  
Then -- shuts the Door --  
To her divine Majority --  
Present no more --  
  
Unmoved -- she notes the Chariots -- pausing --  
At her low Gate --  
Unmoved -- an Emperor be kneeling  
Upon her Mat --  
  
I've known her -- from an ample nation --  
Choose One --  
Then -- close the Valves of her attention --  
Like Stone --