“The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allen Poe
The Tell-Tale Heart
Short Story by Edgar Allan Poe

Introducing the Short Story with VIDEO TRAILER

Literary Analysis: Suspense
Reading Skill: Evaluate Narrator
Vocabulary in Context
INTRODUCING THE SHORT STORY

What makes you SUSPICIOUS?

Has something or someone ever seemed dangerous or untrustworthy to you?

The feeling you had was suspicion.
INTRODUCING THE SHORT STORY

What makes you SUSPICIOUS?

While suspicion might come from a misunderstanding, it can also be a warning that something is very wrong.

In this story, you’ll meet a man whose own suspicions are his downfall.
INTRODUCING THE SHORT STORY

What makes you SUSPICIOUS?

DISCUSS

With a small group, discuss suspicious characters you’ve read about or seen on television shows.

In what ways did these characters look or act differently from other characters?

Continue your discussion by creating a list of warning signs that should make a person suspicious.
The Tell-Tale Heart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3rEPESRvRM
Writers often “hook” readers by creating a sense of excitement, tension, dread, or fear about what will happen next. This is called **suspense**.
Edgar Allan Poe uses the following techniques to develop suspense:

- describing a character’s anxiety or fear
- relating vivid descriptions of dramatic sights and sounds
- repeating words, phrases, or characters’ actions

As you read “The Tell-Tale Heart,” notice what causes you to feel suspense.
Have you ever suspected someone was not telling you the truth?

Just as you can’t trust every person you meet, you can’t believe all narrators, or characters who tell a story.
To evaluate a narrator’s **reliability**, or trustworthiness, pay attention to his or her actions, attitudes, and statements.

Do any raise your suspicions?
As you read “The Tell-Tale Heart,” use a chart like the one below to record clues that reveal whether the narrator is reliable or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrator’s Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makes Me Suspicious:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Poe uses the words in the box to the right to reveal how the main character is acting, feeling, and thinking. For each word below, choose a word from the box that is closest in meaning. Answers appear in brackets.

1. annoy ▼ [vex]
2. cautiously ▼ [stealthily]
3. intense ▼ [acute]
4. crack ▼ [crevice]
5. deceptive ▼ [hypocritical]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary in Context</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. smothered ▼</td>
<td>[stifled]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ridicule ▼</td>
<td>[derision]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. think of ▼</td>
<td>[conceive]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. strongly ▼</td>
<td>[vehemently]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. shameless daring ▼</td>
<td>[audacity]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- acute
- audacity
- conceive
- crevice
- derision
- hypocritical
- stealthily
- stifled
- vehemently
- vex
The Tell-Tale Heart

**Vocabulary in Context**

- **acute** *adj.* sharp; keen
- **audacity** *n.* shameless daring or boldness
- **conceive** *v.* to think of
- **crevice** *n.* crack
- **derision** *n.* ridicule
Vocabulary in Context

**hypocritical** *adj.* false or deceptive

**stealthily** *adv.* cautiously; secretly

**stifled** *adj.* smothered  **stifle** *v.*

**vehemently** *adv.* with intense emotion

**vex** *v.* to disturb; to annoy