

# Socratic Seminar Questions for “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe

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A Socratic Seminar is designed as a polite and open discussion about a piece of fiction. For today, we will discuss as a whole class, in a circle. In most instances, a Socratic Seminar will be split between two groups. You are to politely respect differing opinions when arriving at answers. *Use your text* when answering questions as well, as simple, non-thoughtful answers do not count.

1. First, and foremost, the text was quite complex. Does anyone have a brief synopsis (summary) of the poem and its major events?
2. What do you think is important about the title of the poem, “The Raven”? Why does he use the title? You may do a quick search and reading on ravens to reveal your answer.
3. What are the major conflicts in “The Raven”? What types of conflict (physical, moral, intellectual (of the mind), or emotional) do you read? How do you know this?
4. Who are the major players or characters in “The Raven”? How does Edgar Allan Poe reveal them?
5. What are some themes? Symbols? How do they relate to the overall flow or meaning of the poem?
6. Does the poem end the way you expected? How? Why or why not?
7. What is the central/primary purpose of the poem? That is, why did Poe write this poem in the first place? What might he have tried to be coping with in his life that seems oddly similar? (Use your notes on the life of Poe for help). Is the purpose important or meaningful?
8. How does the work relate to Poe’s other works of supernatural and horror literature? Would you read it at Halloween? Why do you think I avoid reading it on Monday, specifically (be vague and sensitive of feelings in the room when answering this)?
9. How essential is the setting? Could the poem have taken place in another place or time? Do you get enough of a sense of where and when the poem takes place?
10. What is the significance of the raven in mythology and literature? Here, you’ll need to do a bit of Google investigation again.
11. How is madness or insanity explored in the poem?
12. Would you recommend this poem to a friend? Why or why not?