Title: Literature Analysis of Gothic Writing

Author: Rene Ribant-Amthor

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject/Content: English/Literature Analysis of Gothic Writing

Summary of Lesson: Students research the bubonic plague for basic understanding of what it is, when it occurred and what impact it had on society. They then research Edgar Allan Poe and the gothic style of writing. The lesson culminates with the students writing a persuasive essay defending why the bubonic plague was a natural subject matter for Edgar Allan Poe to choose in his short story "The Masque of the Red Death."

Focus Questions: Why is the bubonic plague an ideal subject for Edgar Allan Poe to write about?

Databases(s): Science In Context

Procedures:

- This lesson may be taught in conjunction with a biology course studying diseases. It may also be taught individually in an English class studying gothic writers and/or persuasive essays.

- Steps/Activities by teacher: Before the activity begins ensure that students are familiar with the persuasive essay format. Also, ensure that students have been given a brief description and examples of gothic writing.

- Provide students with access to Gale databases for topic research.

- Instruct students to access the Science In Context database and research the bubonic plague.

- Instruct students to use the school library to research the style of Edgar Allan Poe.

- Lead discussion on their findings from their research. Encourage them to try to infer how the two connect.

- Instruct students to access and read Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Masque of the Red Death" via the school library LitFinder.

- Assign persuasive essay.

Steps/Activities by student(s):
• Access the Science In Context database and research the bubonic plague.
• Visit the school library and research the style of Edgar Allan Poe.
• Respond to the following discussion questions:
  o What is the bubonic plague?
  o When and where did it occur?
  o What impact did it have on society?
  o Who is Edgar Allan Poe?
  o What works is he most known for?
  o What style of writing is Edgar Allan Poe most known for?
  o Do you think the bubonic plague would be a subject matter Poe would find interesting to write about? Why or why not?
  o If Poe wrote a story about the bubonic plague who do you think would be the character? What would the setting be? What would the plot be? What would the tone be?
• Visit the school library and research Edgar Allan Poe and his style.
• Read the short story "The Masque of the Red Death" by Edgar Allan Poe.
• Write a five paragraph persuasive essay explaining why the bubonic plague is an ideal subject matter for Edgar Allan Poe. Focus on the bubonic plague, Edgar Allan Poe’s style and how the two connect.

Outcome: Students learn about the historical relevance of the bubonic plague, the gothic style of Edgar Allan Poe and write a persuasive essay connecting the two.