**11th grade American Literature “The Fall of the House of Usher” Study Guide**

1. Tarn
2. Pervade
3. Emaciated
4. Catalepsy
5. Deplorable
6. Munificent
7. Goad
8. Sojourn
9. Revel
10. Vivacious
11. Patrimony
12. Similitude
13. Sedge
14. Precipitous
15. Pallid
16. Fissure
17. Affinity
18. Tumultuous
19. Hearken
20. Lurid

1. What MOOD does Poe create at the beginning of the story? Copy a quote down for support.

2. Use four words or phrases to describe the Usher House.

3. What point of view is used in the story? Is the narrator reliable? Why/why not?

4. Who is the narrator of the story and why is he visiting the House of Usher?

5. What two things do the peasantry/common people in the story think the term ‘House of Usher’ refers to?

6. What is the narrator’s initial reaction to the sight of his friend Usher, and how does he feel about the prospect of cheering him up?

7. Describe the room that Roderick Usher is staying in.

8. Describe Roderick’s illness. What are the symptoms?

8. Describe Madeline’s illness. What are the symptoms?

9. Summarize the poem, “The Haunted Palace.” (pg 302-303) \*it’s okay to use outside resources for this question

10. Why won’t Roderick leave the house when it seems to be having such a devastating effect upon him?

11. Who is Roderick’s only living relative?

12. Describe what happened on the final night of the narrator’s stay at the House of Usher.   
  
  
  
13. Describe the symbolism of the following:   
a. The house splitting in two and crashing into the tarn:   
  
  
b. The vacant, eyelike windows of the house:   
  
  
c. The inverted reflection of the house in the dying pond:

**Multiple Choice Assessment Practice Questions**

14. Which of the following is true of “The Fall of the House of Usher?”  
a. Roderick was a victim of paralysis and was bedridden most of his life.  
b. Madeline was pretending to be dead so that she could come back to kill her brother and inherit the estate.  
c. As his sister becomes more physically ill, Roderick becomes increasingly ill emotionally and mentally.  
d. The house was uninhabited and in great disrepair.

15. The basic facts of “The Fall of the House of Usher” include all of the following with one exception. Which of these statements is in error?  
a. The narrator has been invited to visit Roderick Usher, an old friend.  
b. Roderick has a twin sister who dies of a cataleptic seizure the first night.  
c. Roderick and his sister are the only surviving members of an ancient family.  
d. The sister is buried while still alive.  
  
16. Why is the narrator going to the House of Usher?  
 A. He was summoned there by his fiancee.  
 B. He is the landlord.  
 C. He is a physician.  
 D He has been summoned by his childhood friend.

17. The quality of Romanticism most clearly illustrated in “The Fall of the House of Usher” is:   
a) the American past;   
b) the beauty of the natural world;   
c) legend and folklore;   
d) irrational elements of the mind.  
  
18. The mood and atmosphere of the opening paragraph is sustained throughout the story, a mood of pervasive   
a) curiosity;   
b) horror;  
 c) boredom;   
d) anxiety  
  
19. Before he enters the Usher mansion, the narrator notes “a barely perceptible fissure” in the building, an example of   
a) foreshadowing;   
b) a false clue;   
c) vivid detail;   
d) the use of local color

**Foreshadowing and Summarization**

“Fall of the House of Usher”

During a dull, dark, and soundless day in autumn, I was passing alone, on horseback, through a dreary tract of country. At length I found myself within view of the melancholy House of Usher. With the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom spread through me. I looked upon the house and its bleak walls with vacant eye-like windows and a few white trunks of decayed trees with utter depression. What was it, I paused to think, that so unnerved me about the House of Usher?

**Summarize \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

I reined my horse to the steep brink of a black mirror-like mountain lake that lay by the house. I looked down with a shudder upon the inverted images of the gray marsh [plants](http://www.education.com/topic/study-help-biology-plants/?__module=DeepLink&hit&id=42469), ghastly tree stems, and vacant eye-like windows. Nevertheless, in this gloomy mansion I intended to spend some weeks. Its owner, Roderick Usher, had been one of my close companions in boyhood, but many years had elapsed since our last meeting.

**Summarize \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

I called to mind the letter I had lately received from Roderick that indicated an uneasiness. He had spoken of an illness, a mental disorder, that depressed him. He also expressed an earnest hope that if he were to see me, his best friend, it would both cheer him up and improve his health. It had been his straightforward manner and truthfulness about the situation that compelled me to honor his request without hesitation.

**Summarize \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

As boys, we had been even closer, yet I knew very little of my friend. He had always been quite shy and not forthcoming about his situation. I was, of course, aware that for generations his family had been noted for its somewhat peculiar temperament and involvement in the arts, although more often the unusual rather than the typical styles of art and [music](http://www.education.com/topic/kids-music/?__module=DeepLink&hit&id=1817). I had learned, too, that in the minds of the peasantry, over the centuries, the family had always been thought a bit strange. According to the local people, both the mansion and the family were referred to as "The House of Usher."

**Summarize \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Now, I was here, looking down into the mountain pool. I again lifted my eyes to the house itself from its image in the pool, and scanned the building more closely.

The years of weather had discolored the stonework. Minute molds overspread the exterior, hanging from the masonry in a fine tangled web. No portion of the walls had fallen but there was a great inconsistency between the overall look and the crumbling condition of individual stones. It reminded me of old woodwork that rots for many years, with no breakage. Perhaps the eye of a more observant person might have seen a barely visible split, which extended from the front roof of the building down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the dark waters of the mountain pool! I, obviously, did not!

**Summarize \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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|  | **Which of these is NOT an example of foreshadowing in the selection?** | |
| **a.** | a sense of insufferable gloom |
| **b.** | the curve of a lake |
| **c.** | gray and dark marsh plants |
| **d.** | a barely visible split in the wall |
| **4.** | **Which of the following is an example of foreshadowing?** | |
| **a.** | that it's an autumn day |
| **b.** | A man is wearing pants |
| **c.** | that the side of the house has a split |
| **d.** | that the narrator's riding a horse |
| **5.** | **Based on the selection, which do you predict could NOT happen?** | |
| **a.** | The narrator finds that Roderick is sick and needs his help. |
| **b.** | The narrator finds things inside the House of Usher as creepy as on the outside! |
| **c.** | The narrator worries about his own [safety](http://www.education.com/topic/child-safety/?__module=DeepLink&hit&id=21983) in the House of Usher. |
| **d.** | The narrator has a pleasant, uneventful stay at the House of Usher. |