

Plan a circle: “The Tell-Tale Heart”

Edgar Allan Poe (1843) · public-domain short story · grades 8–11 · ~1 week / two meetings. Rights: Public domain.
Kit section 5 (group agreement & calendar), scaffolded for this text. Students fill the group, calendar, and roles.

Text, group, and target

Text / author / edition	“The Tell-Tale Heart” — Edgar Allan Poe (1843). _____ (edition)
Group / period / dates	
Grade / TEKS target (p. 3)	Grade 8 · §110.24 — 7(A): theme through characters/events; 6(C,D): support inferences; 1(D): student-led discussion.
Learning intention	We are learning to explain how the narrator’s unreliable voice reveals a theme about guilt and the mind.
Success criteria	I bring one open question, cite two details with locations, respond to a peer, and name how my thinking changed.

Reading map & calendar

Chunk	Read through	Meeting date · leader
1	The plan, the seven nights of watching, and the killing.	
2	The police visit and the confession.	

Members & first-meeting jobs (p. 7 roles)

Member	First job	Rotates to (next meeting)

Text-specific discussion questions (open — more than one answer)

- **Predict:** The narrator insists he is sane — what will his behavior reveal instead? What clue hints at it?
- **Question:** Why might Poe let the narrator tell his own story? How does that shape our trust?
- **Clarify:** What is the “beating” the narrator hears at the end — literal or guilt?
- **Summarize:** Order the events of the night of the murder, without opinion.
- **Interpret the theme:** How does the narrator’s voice reveal a theme about guilt or madness? Use two details.

Optional Jigsaw lenses (p. 4): *Character* (the narrator) · *Point of view* (unreliable first person) · *Language* (repetition, dashes, exclamation) · *Plot* (control unraveling) · *Theme* (guilt and conscience).

Reading notes: “The Tell-Tale Heart”

Name: _____ · Home group: _____ · Section: “The Tell-Tale Heart,” _____ · Expert lens: _____

Everyone prepares. Read the whole assigned section. Write or draw three important ideas, two supporting details with locations, and one summary in your own words. Keep interpretation separate from summary.

Questions

What needs clarification?
What could the group explore?

3 · Important ideas

Character choices, conflicts, themes, or central ideas.

1.

2.

3.

Vocabulary

Word + location + meaning or clue.
Mark anything still uncertain.

2 · Supporting details

Short quote or accurate paraphrase + page/paragraph + what it shows.

1.

2.

1 · Summary in my own words

Bring to the circle

My interpretation: These details suggest _____

Synthesis (connect two lenses): _____

After discussion: My thinking changed / became clearer because _____

TEKS evidence: 6(C,D) supported inference; 7(A) theme through characters/events; 1(D) response to a peer. · Pair with the PlotPoint “The Tell-Tale Heart” room.