

READING

Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe was an American writer, poet and critic. He is most famous for his stories and poems of horror and mystery. He is considered to be the father of the detective story.

Poe was born on January 19, 1809 in Boston, Massachusetts. He never really knew his parents. His father left the family early in Poe's life and his mother died when he was only three. Poe went to live with John Allan, a successful businessman, in Richmond, Virginia. It is said that when he was thirteen years old, Poe wrote poems on the back of some of Allan's business papers.

In 1826, Poe went to the University of Virginia. He was an excellent student, but he didn't have enough money to continue his studies. He tried to get money by gambling, but he failed. He moved to Boston and published there his first book, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, in 1827. Around this time, Poe joined the U.S. Army. He studied at the United States Military Academy in West Point. He was a good student, but was kicked out after a year because he didn't do his duties.

After leaving West Point, Poe tried to become a full-time writer. From 1831 to 1835, he lived in Baltimore with his aunt Maria Clemm and her daughter Virginia. In 1835, Poe became an editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond. He fell in love with Virginia and the couple married in 1836 when she was only thirteen years old.

In the 1830s, Poe published *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, a collection of stories. It contained some of his most famous short stories, for example *The Fall of the House of Usher* or *Ligeia*. In 1841, he wrote *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, a detective story. His short story *The Gold Bug* won a literary prize in 1843. In 1845, Poe published his most famous poem, *The Raven*. In this poem, a student is visited by a raven on a stormy December midnight.

Poe's wife Virginia died in 1847. Poe continued writing, but he wasn't healthy and had financial problems. His final days remain mysterious. On October 3, 1849, Poe was found on the street in Baltimore. He was taken to Washington College Hospital, where he died on October 7. Some people think that alcohol played role in his death. Poe's last words were "Lord, help my poor soul!"

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How old was Edgar Allan Poe when his mother died? _____
- 2 How did Poe try to get money when he was studying at the University of Virginia? _____
- 3 Why was Poe kicked out of West Point? _____
- 4 Which story by Edgar Allan Poe won a literary prize in 1843? _____
- 5 What is Poe's most famous poem? _____
- 6 Where did Edgar Allan Poe die? _____
- 7 What were Poe's last words? _____

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Edgar Allan Poe didn't live with his biological parents. _____
- 2 Edgar Allan Poe was a very good student. _____
- 3 Edgar Allan Poe published his first book in Richmond. _____
- 4 Edgar Allan Poe was thirteen years old when he married Virginia Clemm. _____
- 5 *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is a science-fiction story. _____
- 6 *The Raven* takes place on a November night. _____
- 7 It is possible that Edgar Allan Poe died because of his drinking. _____

SOURCES: <https://www.biography.com/people/edgar-allan-poe-9443160>, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Raven-poem-by-Poe>, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edgar-Allan-Poe>

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How old was Edgar Allan Poe when his mother died? **he was three years old**
- 2 How did Poe try to get money when he was studying at the University of Virginia? **by gambling**
- 3 Why was Poe kicked out of West Point? **because he didn't do his duties**
- 4 Which story by Edgar Allan Poe won a literary prize in 1843? **The Gold Bug**
- 5 What is Poe's most famous poem? **The Raven**
- 6 Where did Edgar Allan Poe die? **in Washington College Hospital in Baltimore**
- 7 What were Poe's last words? **"Lord, help my poor soul!"**

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Edgar Allan Poe didn't live with his biological parents. **T**
- 2 Edgar Allan Poe was a very good student. **T**
- 3 Edgar Allan Poe published his first book in Richmond. **F (it was published in Boston)**
- 4 Edgar Allan Poe was thirteen years old when he married Virginia Clemm. **F (she was thirteen years old)**
- 5 *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is a science-fiction story. **F (it is a detective story)**
- 6 *The Raven* takes place on a November night. **F (it takes place on a December night)**
- 7 It is possible that Edgar Allan Poe died because of his drinking. **T**