**Mysteries of the World?**

What are some of the mysteries of this world and beyond? Brainstorm a list of Unknowns. What are some of the wonders of the world? What are some of the wonders, unknown or mysteries of the human experience?

**Gothic Literature**

* The 11-16th Century was the height of Gothic Literature
* the first detective stories were born from the conventions of Gothic Literature

**Elements of Gothic Literature:**

1. **Claustrophobia**  - confinement and threatening architecture
2. **A Pursuit** – like a stalking of a maiden by a villain
3. **Supernatural**  - magic, demons and disruption of natural law, like in Frankenstein
4. **Sentient Architecture** – inanimate objects have minds of their owns ie: talking mirrors or statues that move.
5. **Extraordinary positions of characters** – crazy people of characters that are going insane
6. **Suspension of rationality** – events occur that are completely irrational (ie: the narrator in Poe’s “Tell Tale Heart” kills a man because he thinks he has a really weird looking eye).
7. **Demons**
8. **Evil is superior** - this is a common theme in all of Poe’s work
9. **Destructive Emotions** – emotions that drive characters to madness
10. **Genealogical Complications** – fear/threaten relatives or plot deaths of relatives for the receival of fortunes etc.
11. **Psychological Fears**: rats, buried alive, poison etc.
12. **Weak Women**

Gothic Literature is full of Horror and Terror. Horror and Terror Defined:

“Terror is a source of the sublime, that is, it is a product of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling”

Horror is the sight and Terror is the hell created in the mind, the condition in which Horror is felt.

**Who is Edgar Allan Poe?**

Poe is an author of many internationally known poems, and short stories. He never wrote novels because he said that the ‘tale’ was a supreme form of fiction over the novel because it was compact and brief and therefore every word is controlled in order to create the highest points of intensity. All of his stories can be read in under ½ hour. Brevity allows the writer to strive for Unity of Interest, which Poe believes is very important.

Poe was never recognized for his work while he was alive, the way he is now. He is often referred to when discussion of mystery, superstition or gothic literature is mentioned. Additionally, he is credited for turning the short story from an anecdote to art. He virtually created the detective story and perfected the psychological thriller.

What inspired Poe’s theme of writing stems from a lifetime of experiencing his own tragedies having lost his birth mother, then his adoptive mother to death and both his father and adoptive father running out on him. He later finds love and then loses his wife to Tuberculosis. All the while the majority of his adult life was faced with poverty, alcoholism and nightmares. He always wore black and was seen as insane by some or bizarre.

**Poe Facts:**

* His writing inspired the famous stories of “Sherlock Holmes”
* Poe created ideas and techniques used in modern horror stories and movies
* The word detective was not even around during the time of Poe, but came about because of his introduction to the writing style Mystery.
* Every year an award is given to the best mystery novel and it is called the Edgar Award.

**Themes within Poe’s Writing:**

* Victimization
* Power and powerlessness
* Extreme states of being
* Dehumanization
* Memory and mourning for dead (probably because this was such a strong reality in his own life)
* Need for transcendence
* Superstition
* Death
* Deterioration of mental state of a character