**EDGAR ALLEN POE**

1. **Introduction**
   1. **Attention Getter:** “Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work!” Was Edgar Allan Poe referring to himself? Was he a madman or a sane and intelligent individual? Looking through the events of Poe’s life and analyzing his writings, one must wonder.
   2. **Thesis Statement:** Due to the tragedies experienced throughout his life, from childhood, throughout adolescence, and into the careers and family life of his adulthood, depression and melancholy are the prevalent themes in all of Edgar Allan Poe’s writings.
2. **Point 1:** Early Childhood
   1. Birth
   2. Siblings
   3. Abandonment and death of parents
   4. Foster family
   5. **Clincher:** The amount of lossEdgar Allan Poe experienced in childhood compounded the sadness he portrayed in his writings. As he states in his story “Ligeia,” “…my memory is feeble through much suffering.”
3. **Point 2:** Adolescence
   1. Education
   2. Death of foster mother
   3. Relationship with foster father
   4. College
   5. **Clincher:** **A**s he grew older, Edgar Allan Poe’s life did not become any easier; his problems just grew bigger too. The culmination of which occurred as he attended his foster father, John Allan, at his deathbed and was rejected again. His mind must surely have imagined an act of revenge upon this cold-hearted “father.” As Poe continued to write, his writings grew even darker, and his revenge spewed forth in “The Tell Tale Heart,” in which the narrator kills the old man for whom he works because of an irritation. “I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.” Poe exacted his revenge, if not in real life, at least in his writings.
4. **Point 3:** Careers
   1. Debt
   2. Army
   3. Editor
   4. Writer
   5. Speaker
   6. Debt
   7. **Clincher:** Throughout his life, every one of Edgar Allan Poe’s attempts at success was thwarted. His writings reflect the dismalness of his life. In “The Fall of the House of Usher” he begins, “One dark summer day, when the clouds hung low in the sky, I rode on horseback through the dreary countryside. By evening, I could see the melancholy House of Usher. With the first glimpse of that bleak and lonely building, a sense of gloom overcame me.” Looking over his own failures, a sense of gloom must have overcome Poe also.
5. **Point 4:** Family Life
   1. Loves
   2. Marriage
   3. Wife’s Death
   4. Lostness
   5. **Clincher:** Every time Edgar Allan Poe sought solace in a romantic relationship, his loves were taken from him, frequently by the dreaded disease - tuberculosis. Several of Poe’s writings portrayed this evil villain in his life. In “The Masque of the Red Death,” Poe describes this villain as “Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held limitless power over all.” This villain held a limitless power over Poe and all he held dear.
6. **Conclusion**
   1. **Restate Thesis:** The tragedy woven throughout Edgar Allan Poe’s life led him to become a world-renowned writer of tragic and depressing literature. His early years began in heartbreak with the death of his mother and the abandonment of his father. Through his growing years, the death of his adoptive mother and the mother of a childhood friend plagued him with morbid thoughts. His multitude of failures through his adult years culminating in the death of his wife sent him spiraling into the pit of despair.
   2. **Final Thought:** Poe’s life of woe is summed up in his famous poem, “The Raven,” when Poe utters the words that describe his life--raised hopes dashed to bits before his eyes: “And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor shall be lifted—nevermore!”