

18/19 OCTOBER 2016

Greetings, AmLit Scholars—

Schedule complications resulting from the administration of the PSATs mean that some sections of English 11: American Literature may not meet on October 18 & 19.

Those sections that do meet will be granted a work period.

Instructions will be shared aloud during class.

Thank you for your flexibility—  
Mr Leo

**Homework (extended from previous class plan):**

1. Prepare a conversation starter related to your Poe Topic. The conversation starter should include textual evidence from a minimum of two (2) pieces of literature from two different genres (one short story and one poem).
  2. Upload your conversation starter to Turnitin.com prior to the start of our next class meeting.
- N.B. These conversation starters will be assessed at the start of class.

N.B. If you would like me to delete your first submission of this assignment to Turnitin.com so that you can revise your Poe conversation starter in time to submit it prior to the start of our next class meeting (20/23 October, depending on your section), please let me know.

**“Excellent” Sample Conversation Starter from a Former Student**

K'Sondra Fredrickson:

The Power and Limits of Ratiocination: while Poe's work often reflects upon the power and limits of logical, rational thinking, it also contemplates other ways of knowing in similar ways. For example, Poe's work both acknowledges intuition (the ability to know or understand something without the need for conscious reasoning), but also undermines its importance and power. For example in “The Tell-Tale Heart” the narrator hears the “beating of his hideous heart” (Poe 6) of the man that he killed. The ability to hear the beating heart is a sort of intuition, or sixth sense but at the same time, he undermines the importance of a sixth sense by having it not only be useless, but by also having it give the murderer away. The exact same use of a sixth sense occurs in the “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Usher senses the coming of his sister, but it does him no good in the end: “yes, I hear it, and have heard it. Long- long- long- many minutes, many hours, many days” (44). One of the harder to discern examples of this useless sixth sense is in Poe's poem “The Raven.” Here, the raven who was “tapping at [his] chamber door” (line 5) represents his fears and sorrows that will come. The bird gives him an intuition of sorts into the future, but in this case knowing and having the raven who “still is sitting, still is sitting/ On the pallid bust of Pallas just above [his] chamber door” (103-104) staying there and watching you for ever was probably worse then knowing, so in this case the intuition of the future is, again, useless and causes more harm than good. So, if rational knowing is both powerful and limited and

intuitive knowing is both powerful and limited, can anything really be known in a Poe text? If so, how? And would that knowledge always be unreliable? [conversation starter]