

# Mystery Writing



LEVEL D-4 • Written by Elfrieda H. Hiebert



A WHITE CIRCLE CRIME CLUB

**THE  
MYSTERIOUS  
MR. QUIN  
AGATHA CHRISTIE**

*Queen  
of Crime*



Mystery novels by this  
writer, Agatha Christie,  
ask the question:  
'Who did it?'

# What is Mystery Writing?

The door cracks and slowly opens. Readers catch their breath. Anything could be on the other side of that door. In mystery writing, that is the point. The thrill is in the suspense, or not knowing what will happen.

Mystery stories often have riddles to solve. Sometimes, a person may be trying to find the answer to the question, “Who did it?” The reader travels with that person as he or she looks for clues and solves the crime.

In addition to feelings of suspense, the feeling of danger is an important part of a mystery. The reader reads on, thrilled by the danger the person in the novel faces. In mystery writing, the ending is often a surprise.

## Key Notes:

**What can happen in mystery stories?**

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**The characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson appear in many mystery books and movies.**



# Mystery History

Riddles have been a part of storytelling since ancient times. Some ancient Greek authors of plays included elements of mystery in their works. However, most people trace the modern mystery to the work of Edgar Allan Poe. One of his short stories, which appeared in 1841, is called the first modern mystery because it had a riddle, clues, and a detective who solved the crime.

Since then, many kinds of mysteries have been bestsellers. Popular mysteries have been written about New York City police detectives and sweet older people who solve crimes in English towns. Several authors have even written about cat detectives that help solve crimes. Mystery books are one of the most popular kinds of fiction today.

## Key Notes:

**What kinds of mysteries are popular today?**

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**This bird, a raven, is  
written about in a poem  
by Edgar Allan Poe.**

# Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe had a hard childhood. His mother died when he was young and he was moved from place to place. He was later kicked out of school. Poe then wrote poetry for magazines and worked as a magazine editor. After his first mystery story was printed in 1841, Poe wrote many more stories.

Poe also wrote poetry. One of his best-known poems is “The Raven,” a haunting poem about lost love that was printed in 1845.

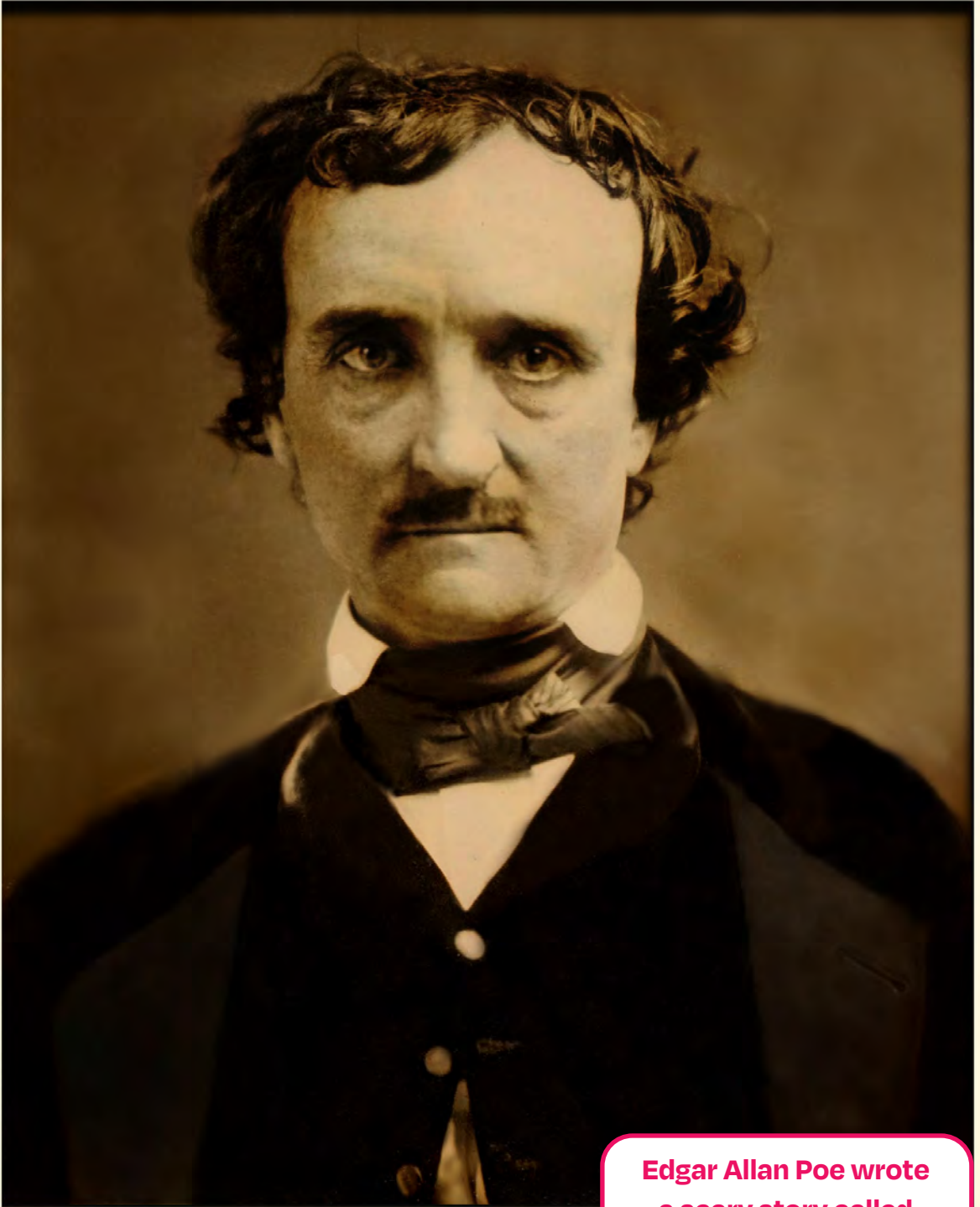
Poe wrote poetry and short stories for the rest of his life. His death is a mystery, too. Poe died after stumbling around the streets, wearing someone else’s clothes. No one knows what happened to him on that mysterious night.

## Key Notes:

**What did Edgar Allan Poe write?**

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**Edgar Allan Poe wrote  
a scary story called  
'The Tell-Tale Heart.'**



# "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Edgar Allen Poe's story "The Tell-Tale Heart" is a scary tale. It is the story of a man's growing obsession with an old man who, the narrator admits, has done nothing to him. Readers enter the narrator's strange world of obsession. They see that he can think of nothing but his dislike for the old man.

Part of the mystery of "The Tell-Tale Heart" is in finding out what the narrator will do. As readers follow the story, they notice that the narrator becomes more and more upset. His language becomes more and more odd. By the end, readers understand that the narrator is mad. "The Tell-Tale Heart" is a story not easily forgotten.

## Key Notes:

**What is the mystery in "The Tell-Tale Heart"?**

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