“The Fall of the House of Usher” Reading Guide

Describe the mood, or atmosphere, of the first paragraph. ____________________________________________
___________________________________________________ ____________________________________________
Why does Poe use long sentences in the first paragraph? (Think about the effect it has.)
___________________________________________________ ____________________________________________
What are some of the words that the narrator uses to describe the house? ________________
___________________________________________________ ____________________________________________
What is the point of view? _________________________________________________________________
What is the setting? _________________________________________________________________
Define “tarn.” ____________________________________________________________________________
Why is the narrator visiting the house of Usher? _____________________________________________
___________________________________________________ ____________________________________________
Even though the narrator and Roderick Usher were __________, the narrator admits that he ____________.
Explain the following quotation: “I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honoured as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain.” You do not need to steal and spit that whole quote!
___________________________________________________ ____________________________________________
The “House of Usher” refers to both the ____________ and the ____________.
The narrator implies that the house and the family are ____________ in their fates.
Define “fissure.” __________________________________________________________________________
Describe the house. _______________________________________________________________________


Who does the narrator meet on the staircase?

What does the narrator say about this person?

Draw Roderick’s room.

What about this room makes it seem, or feel, gothic? Or what words create a gothic feeling?

The narrator is shocked at how much Usher’s ______________ has changed. What are some of the words the narrator uses to describe this change?

Does the narrator of the story have a name?

Usher’s speech varies from ______________________ to _______________________.

Describe Roderick Usher’s illness and where it came from.

Usher says that he is not afraid of ____________, rather is afraid of _____________ itself. Why do you think he is afraid of _________________________?

Usher believes that the ______________ is causing his illness. He believes that the _____________ is ____________.
Who else lives in the house with Usher?  What is their relationship?  

______________________________

Describe Roderick’s sister’s disease.  

______________________________

*Catalepsy is a symptom of certain nervous disorders.  It is an abnormal state characterized by a trancelike level of consciousness and constantly maintained immobility.*

What happens to Madeline the night that the narrator arrives?  

______________________________

Think back to the biography that we watched on Edgar Allan Poe.  Why is it appropriate that Madeline, the only female character in the story, becomes ill and dies?  

______________________________

List some of the activities that the narrator and Roderick Usher do together to occupy themselves in the days after Madeline’s death.  

______________________________

Are any of the narrator’s efforts to cheer up Usher helping?  Explain why or why not.  

______________________________

Define “hypochondriac.”  

______________________________

Roderick Usher enjoyed playing the ___________ and creating ___________ to go with his impromptu performances.  In particular, the narrator remembers one performance titled ________________.

Who is the ruler in the poem?  

______________________________

What is the tone of “The Haunted Palace” in stanzas I-IV?  

______________________________

This poem explains the “______________” of the house of Usher, and its gradual ______________ out of the spotlight.

How does the tone of “The Haunted Palace” change in stanzas V-VI?  

______________________________

Does the narrator believe that he house is actually making Roderick sick?  

______________________________

Roderick informs that narrator that he wishes to hold Madeline’s body for a ______________ in the family vault because he fears that ________________.
In relation to the narrator’s sleeping chamber, where is the family’s vault located?

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

The vault was once used as a ________________. Why do you think a family of the Usher’s status would need a ____________ in their house?  __________________________________

The door of the vault made an

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

Roderick and Madeline are not just brother and sister; they are actually __________________________.

Before they close the lid on Madeline’s coffin, the narrator notices that Madeline still has ____________ in her cheeks and a slight ______________ on her face.

What happens to Roderick in the days after they bury Madeline?  ________________________________

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

As a result of Roderick’s condition, the narrator says the he begins _______________________________

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

Explain the narrator’s feelings during his final night in the house of Usher.  _______________________

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

What had the narrator “not seen”?

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

(A tempest is a storm. Tempestuous means stormy.)

To calm Roderick down, the narrator begins to read ___________________________________________

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

While the narrator is reading, he begins to notice _____________________________________________

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

What does Roderick begin to do?  __________________ _______________________________________

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

Roderick buried Madeline ________________. What detail(s) foreshadowed this turn of events?

___________________________________________________  __________________________________

(Foreshadowing is a literary device in which the author indirectly suggests certain plot developments will occur later in the story.)
Match the events happening in “Mad Trist” to the events happening in the house of Usher. (Draw lines to match)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The death-cry of the dragon</th>
<th>The rending of her coffin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The breaking of the hermit’s door</td>
<td>Her struggles from within the coppered archway of the vault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The clangour of the shield</td>
<td>The grating of the iron hinges of her prison</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe Madeline after her escape.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

How does Roderick die?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What happens to the house of Usher?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Identify the gothic elements in “The Fall of the House of Usher.”

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What did you like or dislike about this story?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Do you think this story would make a good scary movie in our society?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________