

Name: _____

Date: _____

Current Unit

Team: _____

“The Pit and the Pendulum” Reading Guide

Edgar Allan Poe set his story in the final years of the _____, which was a period of time in which the Roman Catholic Church tried, imprisoned, tortured, and murdered _____, or those who opposed the church.

What is suspense? _____

(As you read, think about how Poe uses suspense in his story, as well as how he creates suspense.)

“The Pit and the Pendulum”

What is the point of view? _____

In the beginning of the story, readers immediately find out that the protagonist is sentenced to _____

Who are the “black-robed judges”? _____

What is the significance that these judges are dressed in black? _____

Define “swoon.” _____

On page ____, the narrator is losing himself into _____

When the narrator opens his eyes, where is he? _____

What does “*autos-da-fé*” mean? _____

Explain the “fearful idea [that] drove the blood in torrents upon [the narrator’s] heart.” _____

What makes the narrator decide against the above mode of death? _____

Why does that narrator tear the hem off of his robe? _____

How big does he think his dungeon is? _____

After the narrator trips, what does he find? _____

How do the opening and closing of door create suspense? _____

Why does the narrator congratulate himself upon finding the pit? _____

What happens after the narrator drinks from the water pitcher? _____

The narrator notices that the general shape of his prison is a _____

What has changed about the narrator's "personal condition"? _____

Define "surcingle." _____

The narrator's torturers removed the water pitcher but left _____

What is painted on the ceiling? _____

What is special or different about this figure? _____

After the narrator noticed the swinging pendulum, he notices several enormous _____ coming out of the _____.

The narrator notices that the pendulum is _____

What is on the pendulum's "nether extremity"? _____

What do you think this "nether extremity" is designed to do to the narrator? _____

The pendulum makes a _____ sound as it swings through the air.

Define "recusant." _____

How long does the narrator think he lies on the table watching the pendulum get closer? _____

What are some of the emotions that the narrator feels as he watches the pendulum? _____

Explain the following quotation: "I was an imbecile – an idiot." _____

Where was the pendulum design to hit the narrator? _____

Explain what the narrator realizes about his bandages and the pendulum blade. _____

What is the narrator's plan to free himself? _____

The narrator is overcome by the realization that he is _____ but still in the hands of the

_____.

After he escapes, what begins to happen to the room? _____

Where is the narrator being forced to? _____

Explain the conclusion of the story. _____

Where is the story set? _____

How did Poe create suspense in the story? _____

Did you like the ending?
