

Grade 6: **Unit 4**

Short Stories: **Whole Class Short Story Seminars**

Seminar 1: Whole Class Short Story

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars analyze the narrator’s attempt to prove his sanity throughout the text. They understand that guilt drives him to confess to murder.

Seminar 1:

“The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Build excitement for this unit by telling scholars that they will spend the next few days analyzing excellent short stories. They will dive straight into Unit 4 by reading a dark tale of mystery, “The Tell-Tale Heart,” from the great American writer Edgar Allen Poe.

Read and Discuss 1 — 40 minutes

Read:

- **Read or play a recording:** Paragraphs 1–11

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is the narrator trying to convince the reader of? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does the narrator try to prove to the reader that he is not mad?

Read:

- **Read or play a recording:** Paragraphs 12–19

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: How does the narrator behave in front of the police? Why does he act this way? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Poe demonstrate the shift in the narrator’s behavior throughout the interrogation with the police?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why does the narrator confess to the murder? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Scholars reread paragraphs 10–19.

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why does Poe compare the old man’s heart to a “watch enveloped in cotton”? (paragraphs 10 and 18). Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What role does the narrator’s acute sense of hearing play throughout the story?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What is the significance of the story’s title, “The Tell-Tale Heart”? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Seminar 2: Whole Class Short Story

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand Bradbury's argument about the dangers of technology. They explain how Bradbury conveys this message throughout the story.

Seminar 2:

"There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Build excitement for today's seminar by telling scholars that they will read a short story by Ray Bradbury, an American author and screenwriter who was well-known for his work in the horror and science fiction genres. Tell scholars to think about what the author's message may be as they read the story.

Read and Discuss 1 — 30 minutes

Read:

- **Read or play a recording:** Paragraphs 1–27

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Based on paragraphs 10–12, why is the house uninhabited? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How are the house and the dog affected by the disappearance of humans?

Read:

- **Read or play a recording:** Paragraphs 28–40

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: Why does Bradbury constantly mention the time throughout the story? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How do these time intervals impact the tone of the story?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why does Bradbury compare the house to “an altar” without “gods”? (paragraph 16) Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Paragraphs 41–81

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is the main idea of the poem? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does the tone of the poem compare to the tone of the story? How are the messages of the poem and the story different?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What is the author’s argument about advancements in technology? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Seminar 3: Whole Class Short Story

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand how Jackson conveys the dangers of tradition in "The Lottery." They explain how individuals’ desire to conform can lead them to commit violent and inhumane acts.

Seminar 3:

"The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Build excitement for today’s seminar by telling scholars that they will read the famous short story, “The Lottery.” As they read the novel’s opening paragraphs, they should envision the setting and characters Jackson is introducing.

Read and Discuss 1 — 30 minutes

Read:

- **Read or play a recording:** Paragraphs 1–27

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: Describe the setting. What mood does it create? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does the black box reveal about the villagers’ views on tradition?

Read:

- **Read or play a recording:** Paragraphs 28–82

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: How are the villagers acting when they draw their paper? Based on their reactions, what might the purpose of the lottery be? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why does the author point out that “someone gave little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles”? (paragraph 79). What message is she trying to convey to the reader?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on the ending, what is a theme of this story? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Scholars reread paragraphs 1–9.

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is the significance of the setting? Why did the author choose this setting? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What do the names of the various villagers symbolize?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why is the title of the story, “The Lottery,” ironic? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Seminar 4: Whole Class Short Story

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand Jacobs’s message about greed. They analyze how Jacobs uses suspense and foreshadowing to convey this message.

Seminar 4:

“The Monkey’s Paw” by W. W. Jacobs

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Build excitement for today’s seminar by telling scholars that W. W. Jacobs’s “The Monkey’s Paw” is an old, classic horror story. As they read the novel’s opening paragraphs, they should take note of the setting and symbols the author has chosen to create a traditional horror story.

Read and Discuss 1 — 30 minutes

Read:

- **Read or play a recording:** Paragraphs 1–66

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why is the Sergeant hesitant to hand over the monkey’s paw? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does the Sergeant’s hesitation affect the tone of this story?

Read:

- **Read or play a recording:** Paragraphs 67–96

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: Why does Mrs. White shriek in paragraph 96? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does the author create suspense in paragraphs 82–86?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How does the mood change from the beginning to the end of Part II? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Paragraphs 97–143

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why do the husband and wife disagree about making a second wish? (lines 108–125). Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What is the husband's third wish?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What is the author's message about greed? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.