TRUE! Nervous, very, very nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? I heard all things in the heaven and on the earth. I heard many things in hell. How then am I mad? Listen! And observe how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first I got the idea. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. I didn’t want his gold. I think it was his eye! Yes, that was it! Whenever his vulture eye looked at me my blood ran cold, and so gradually, I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus get rid of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You think I am mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I went to work! I was very kind to the old man during the whole week before I killed him. And every night about midnight I opened his door oh, so gently! And then, I put in a dark lantern all closed so that no light shone out, and then I put in my head. I moved it very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man’s sleep. Ha! Would a madman have been as wise as this?

And then when my head was well in the room I opened the lantern cautiously -- just so much that a single thin ray fell on the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights, every night just at midnight. But the eye was always closed, and so it was impossible to do the work, for it was not the old man who vexed me but his Evil Eye. And every morning, I went into the room and spoke kindly to him, asking how he had slept that night. So you see he could not suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in on him while he slept. On the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was opening the door little by little, and he not even dreaming of my secret thoughts. I chuckled at the idea, and perhaps he heard me, for he moved on the bed suddenly as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back -- but no. His room was as black as pitch so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept on pushing it steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped on the fastening, and the old man sprang up in the bed, crying out, ”Who’s there?” I kept still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed, listening; just as I had done night after night.

I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror; the sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when one is terrified. I knew the sound well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him although I smiled secretly. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise. His fears had been ever since growing on him. Although he neither saw nor heard, he felt the presence of my head in the room.

When I had waited a long time very patiently without hearing him lie down, I decided to open a little crack in the lantern. So I opened it until a single dim ray shot out from the crack and fell on the vulture eye.

It was open, wide, wide open, and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I could see nothing else of the old man’s face, for I had directed the ray precisely on the eye.
Have I not told you that I could hear all things in heaven and on the earth? I say, now I heard a low, dull, quick sound -- such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury as the beating of a drum inspires the soldier into battle.

But even then I kept still. I hardly breathed. I kept the ray steadily on the eye. Meantime the beating of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder every moment! I have told you that I was nervous: I certainly was!

And now at the dead hour of the night, in the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new fear came over me -- a neighbour would hear the sound! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once -- once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But for many minutes the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. Finally it stopped. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the body. There was no pulse. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If you still think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise steps I took to hide the body. I worked hastily, but in silence. I took up three planks from the flooring of the room, and put the body underneath the floor. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, that no human eye -- not even his -- could have detected anything wrong.

When I was ready, it was four o'clock -- still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart -- for what had I now to fear? Three men entered, who introduced themselves as officers of the police. A neighbour had heard a shriek during the night; information had been given to the police, and they (the officers) had been sent to search the house.

I smiled, -- for what had I to fear? I welcomed them in. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was away in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I let them search -- search well. Finally I led them to his room. I showed them his treasures, secure, all there. I felt so confident I brought chairs into the room, and asked them here to rest. I myself, placed my own seat on the very spot under which lay the body of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was feeling at ease. They sat and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, after a while, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears; but still they sat, and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct, until I found that the noise was not within my ears.

No doubt I now grew very pale; but I talked more fluently, and with a louder voice. Yet the sound increased -- and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound -- such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I talked more quickly, but the noise increased. I arose and argued about nothing in a high voice and with violent gestures; but the noise increased. Why would they not leave? I paced the floor up and down, as if excited by the discussion, but the noise steadily increased. O God! What could I do? I raved -- I swore! I swung the chair on which I had been sitting, but the noise rose over everything. It grew louder -- louder -- louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they didn't hear? Almighty God! -- No, no? They heard! - - They suspected! -- They KNEW! -- They were making a mockery of my horror! -- This I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! I couldn't take those smiles any longer! I felt that I must scream out or die! -- And now -- again! -- louder! louder! louder! louder! --

"Listen!" I shrieked, "I admit the deed! -- tear up the planks! -- here, here! -- it is the beating of his hideous heart!"

"Clarke-TellTaleHeart" by Harry Clarke - Printed in Edgar Allan Poe's Tales of Mystery and Imagination, 1919. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>observe</th>
<th>to notice</th>
<th>dreadful</th>
<th>terrible, frightening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to wrong</td>
<td>to do sth* bad to sb*</td>
<td>uncontrollable</td>
<td>not being able to control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vulture</td>
<td>a bird that eats other animals</td>
<td>burst</td>
<td>break out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gradually</td>
<td>little by little</td>
<td>neighbour</td>
<td>sb living close by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thus</td>
<td>in this way</td>
<td>leap</td>
<td>jump forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get rid of</td>
<td>to make sth go away</td>
<td>shriek</td>
<td>scream with a high voice, like a big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gently</td>
<td>in a soft and kind way</td>
<td>in an instant</td>
<td>at once, very quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lantern</td>
<td>an old type of lamp that uses gas</td>
<td>drag</td>
<td>to move sth heavy by pulling it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cautiously</td>
<td>carefully</td>
<td>gaily</td>
<td>feeling glad, laughingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ray</td>
<td>a narrow bright line from a light</td>
<td>deed</td>
<td>sth sb does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vex</td>
<td>to make sb angry or irritated</td>
<td>muffle</td>
<td>to hide a sound with sth</td>
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<tr>
<td>suspect</td>
<td>to think that sb is doing sth bad</td>
<td>scantily</td>
<td>almost not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>contain</td>
<td>to keep sth inside</td>
<td>contain</td>
<td>to keep sth inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>triumph</td>
<td>a happy feeling of winning</td>
<td>triumph</td>
<td>a happy feeling of winning</td>
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<tr>
<td>chuckle</td>
<td>to make a small noise like laughing</td>
<td>chuckle</td>
<td>to make a small noise like laughing</td>
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<tr>
<td>startle</td>
<td>to get surprised</td>
<td>startle</td>
<td>to get surprised</td>
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<tr>
<td>pitch</td>
<td>a dark hole in the ground</td>
<td>pitch</td>
<td>a dark hole in the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steadily</td>
<td>slowly and carefully</td>
<td>steadily</td>
<td>slowly and carefully</td>
</tr>
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<td>fastening</td>
<td>a lock that keeps the lantern closed</td>
<td>fastening</td>
<td>a lock that keeps the lantern closed</td>
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<td>spring*, sprang, sprung</td>
<td>to jump a little</td>
<td>spring*, sprang, sprung</td>
<td>to jump a little</td>
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<td>in the meantime</td>
<td>at the same time</td>
<td>in the meantime</td>
<td>at the same time</td>
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<tr>
<td>slight</td>
<td>very small</td>
<td>slight</td>
<td>very small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>groan</td>
<td>a sound that comes from your throat, when you’re in pain</td>
<td>groan</td>
<td>a sound that comes from your throat, when you’re in pain</td>
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<td>mortal</td>
<td>sth that has to do with dying</td>
<td>mortal</td>
<td>sth that has to do with dying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arise*, arose, arisen</td>
<td>to get up</td>
<td>arise*, arose, arisen</td>
<td>to get up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soul</td>
<td>your inner thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>soul</td>
<td>your inner thoughts and feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pity</td>
<td>to feel sorry for</td>
<td>pity</td>
<td>to feel sorry for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ever since</td>
<td>from that time onwards until now</td>
<td>ever since</td>
<td>from that time onwards until now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither - nor</td>
<td>not one and not the other either</td>
<td>neither - nor</td>
<td>not one and not the other either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presence</td>
<td>being there</td>
<td>presence</td>
<td>being there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patiently</td>
<td>without any hurry</td>
<td>patiently</td>
<td>without any hurry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crack</td>
<td>a small opening</td>
<td>crack</td>
<td>a small opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dim</td>
<td>not bright at all</td>
<td>dim</td>
<td>not bright at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furious</td>
<td>very angry</td>
<td>furious</td>
<td>very angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaze</td>
<td>to keep looking at sth with staring eyes</td>
<td>gaze</td>
<td>to keep looking at sth with staring eyes</td>
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<td>precisely</td>
<td>exactly</td>
<td>precisely</td>
<td>exactly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>envelope</td>
<td>to put sth around an object</td>
<td>envelope</td>
<td>to put sth around an object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase</td>
<td>to become bigger</td>
<td>increase</td>
<td>to become bigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fury</td>
<td>anger</td>
<td>fury</td>
<td>anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>battle</td>
<td>when soldiers fight</td>
<td>battle</td>
<td>when soldiers fight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*sb=somebody, sth=something
Story Files

Tell the background to this story in your own words by answering the following questions:

- Who lived in the house?
- What was their relationship like?
- Why did one of them decide to kill the other?

Who is telling the story?

Make up a profile of the person telling the story by answering the following questions:

- Is the person a man or a woman?
- How old is he / she?
- What’s his / her occupation (yrke)?
- What’s his / her relationship with the old man?
- Why are they living in the same house?
- What’s he / she like as a person?

The following sentence is mentioned twice in the story:

“...a low, dull, quick sound -- such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.”

Acting

Work in groups of 4-5. Act out the situation when the three policemen come into the house until they arrest the murderer.
Word Files

Draw
1. A face with a ‘vulture’ eye.
2. A lantern with a single ray of light.
3. A watch enveloped in cotton.
4. Three planks taken up from the flooring of the room.
5. The beating of his hideous heart.

Close friends. Find words and phrases that have a very similar meaning and write the pairs down in your notebook.

agony, calmly, confident, dreadfully, excite, gaily, seat, hardly, in the meantime, board, leap, little, rave, observe, little by little

steadily, scarcely, chair, terror, cheerily, hideous, swear, inspire, slight, satisfied, detect, during, plank, spring, gradually

Make these sentence frames into full sentences:

• Ever since I was a child I have...
• I am neither... nor... but I do like...
• One of the places where I feel at ease is...
• I like myself but I wouldn’t mind getting rid of my....
• If I saw ... I would recognise him/her in an instant.

Form Files — Adverbs

In what way? There are a lot of words in the story that tell you the way how something is done. Choose the missing words in the following sentences from the word box.
1. And observe how ____ I can tell you the whole story.
2. And so ____ I made up my mind to take the life of the old man.
3. You should have seen how ____ I went to work!
4. I opened his door oh, so ____.
5. I moved the lantern very, very ____ , so that I might not disturb the old man’s sleep.
6. When my head was well in the room I opened the lantern ____ — just so much...
7. And every morning, I went into the room and spoke ____ to him.
8. Perhaps he heard me, for he moved on the bed ____ as if startled.
9. I knew he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept on pushing it ____.
10. I had waited a long time very ____.
11. I had directed the ray ____ on the eye.
13. I then smiled ____ , to find the deed so far done.
14. The sound would not be heard through the wall. ____ it stopped.
15. I worked ____ , but in silence.
16. I then replaced the boards so ____ , that no human eye could have detected anything wrong.
17. They sat and while I answered ____ , they chatted of familiar things.
18. I now grew very pale; but I talked more ____.
19. I talked more ____ , but the noise increased.
20. And still the men chatted ____ , and smiled.

angrily  gaily  pleasantly
calmly  gently  precisely
cautiously  gradually  quickly
to cheerly  hardly  slowly
cleverly  hastily  steadily
finally  kindly  suddenly
fluently  patiently  wisely
Lifeline — Chatting

The main character in the story experiences a lot of different feelings throughout the episode.

Work with a partner. Find the situations when he feels these feelings and explain why:

1. nervousness  6. fear
2. love          7. confidence
3. triumph       8. cheerfulness
4. fury          9. horror
5. terror        10. agony

Think of situations in your life when you have felt any of these feelings. Tell your stories to your partner.

Chat in groups of 4 or 5. Each member tells one of his / her stories to the others. Each of the other members have to ask the teller at least one question about the story.

The murderer in the story tries to prove that he/she is not mad. What do you think? Can you find arguments for or against?

Writing

Write your own horror story.
You can also tell a story you have seen on a film or read in a book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horror story characters:</th>
<th>Other features:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghost</td>
<td>Attic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vampire</td>
<td>Blood</td>
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<td>Alien</td>
<td>Castle</td>
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<td>Psycho</td>
<td>Coffin</td>
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<td>Living Dead</td>
<td>Corpse</td>
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<td>Devil</td>
<td>Graveyard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monster</td>
<td>Shadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannibal</td>
<td>Skeleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zombie</td>
<td>Tomb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word Files B Key:
agony – terror
board – plank
calmly – steadily
confident – satisfied
dreadful – hideous
excite – inspire
gaily – cheerily
hardly – scarcely
in the meantime – during
leap – spring

Form Files — Adverbs Key
1. And observe how calmly I can tell you the whole story.
2. ...and so gradually, I made up my mind...
3. You should have seen how wisely I went to work
4. I opened his door oh, so gently!
5. I moved the lantern very, very slowly,...
6. I opened the lantern cautiously...
7. I went into the room and spoke kindly to him
8. he moved on the bed suddenly
9. I kept pushing the door on steadily
10. I had waited a long time very patiently
11. I had directed the ray precisely on the eye
13. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done.
14. The sound would not be heard through the wall. Finally it stopped.
15. I worked hastily, but in silence.
16. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, that no human eye could have detected anything wrong.
17. They sat and while I answered cheerily,
18. I now grew VERY pale; but I talked more fluently
19. I talked more quickly, but the noise increased
20. And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled