Before Reading

Summary
“The Raven” (1845) gave Poe his first major success as a writer. Poe’s purpose for writing this poem was simple. He wanted to show his readers a mind filled with “fantastic terrors.”

Vocabulary

- **lore**—facts, stories, beliefs.
- **entreat**—asking for.
- **implore**—beg.
- **peering**—looking carefully.
- **obeisance**—bow or curtsy.
- **mien**—the appearance.
- **beguiling**—deceiving.
- **countenance**—face.
- **craven**—coward.
- **marvelled**—was amazed.
- **relevancy**—relationship to the matter at hand.
- **placid**—calm.
- **burden**—chorus or refrain.
- **betook**—started.
- **ominous**—fateful.
- **ghastly, gaunt**—shockingly thin.
- **divining**—discovering.
- **censer**—jar or bowl for burning incense.
- **respite**—rest, relief.
- **quaff**—drink deeply.
- **quoth**—said.
- **tempest**—storm.
- **plume**—feather.

(Tested vocabulary used in the online vocabulary quiz is underlined.)
The Raven
by Edgar Allan Poe

Use the Building Comprehension exercise below as a way to improve your comprehension of the selection.

The Raven—Reader Response Journal
Complete the sentences below with your own thoughts, feelings, and views about the poem that you have just read. Respond deeply. Write honestly. Admit confusion. Expand upon Poe’s ideas and unique literary style.

1. I wonder . . .

2. I most enjoyed . . .

3. I can’t understand . . .

4. I was most disturbed by . . .

5. If I had been . . .
6. I was surprised . . .

7. I know the feeling . . .

8. Why did . . .

9. I liked the idea . . .

10. I wish . . .