

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

Comprehension questions Part One

This work is to be submitted to me by the end of the week - before next week's lesson.
Work should be submitted as a Google document.

To help you with your reading and understanding of the text, you can read the French translation online at: <https://www.weblitera.com/title/?id=37&lng=1&l=>

I suggest reading the English and the French at the same time.

Paragraph 1: From 'During the whole of a dull...' to '...the vacant and eye-like windows.'

Vocabulary

Look up and write down the meanings of these words (French or English definitions):

Dull:
Dreary:
Glimpse:
Gloom:
Landscape:
Eye-like:
Sedges:
Unnerve:
The sublime:
Ponder:
Fancy (n):
Lurid:
Tarn:
Unruffled:

1. How does the opening sentence of the story set (establish) the tone? Justify your answer with quotations from the text.
2. How does the narrator see the House of Usher for the first time?
3. How does the narrator feel when he sees the House of Usher for the first time? Justify.

Paragraph 2: 'Nevertheless...' to '...I still considered a very singular summons.'

Vocabulary

Boon:
Elapse:
Importunate:
MS
Cheerfulness:

4. Which sentence shows that the narrator has known Roderick Usher since they were boys?
5. Explain in your own words why Roderick Usher sends the narrator a letter.

6. Which words (or word stems) can be found in this paragraph that were already used in the first paragraph?

Paragraph 3: 'Although as boys ...' to '... family mansion.'

Vocabulary

Excessive:

Munificent:

Trifling:

7. Summarise this paragraph in your own words.

Paragraph 4: 'I have said that the sole effect...' to '... and pervaded all.'

Vocabulary

Paradoxical:

Vivid:

Peculiar:

Reek:

Decayed:

Pestilent:

Sluggish:

Leaden-hued:

Shake off:

Scan:

Masonry:

Crumbling:

Barely perceptible:

Sullen:

Causeway:

Cunning:

Usher in(v):

Lofty:

Trellised:

Draperies:

Profuse:

Comfortless:

Tattered:

Scattered:

8. Explain in your own words what the narrator's 'strange fancy' is.

9. The house itself displays a contradiction in its appearance. What is it (answer is on page 3, left-hand side). Explain in your own words and quote from the text.

10. What is the only sign of instability in the fabric of the house? (Page 3, right-hand side)

11. Name two elements which contribute to the 'atmosphere of sorrow' and 'irredeemable gloom' in the room that the narrator is ushered into (bottom of page 3, top of page 4)

Paragraph 5: From 'Upon my entrance...' to 'with any idea of simple humanity'

Vocabulary

Sofa:
Glance:
Gaze:
Pallid:
Web-like
Ghastly pallor:
Arabesque:

12. Explain in your own words why the narrator feels both awe and pity for Roderick Usher when he sees him?

Paragraph 6 'In the manner of my friend' to 'which did not inspire him with horror'

Vocabulary

Feeble:
Futile:
Attempt:
acuteness of the sense:
Bewilder:
Insipid:
Garments:

13. What strikes the narrator about his friend's behaviour?

14. What illness does Roderick Usher say he is suffering from? Give one symptom of his illness (in your own words and quote).

15. The narrator refers to his friend's action as 'alternately vivacious and **sullen**.' Where before in the story have we seen the word 'sullen'?