

Name _____

Date _____

Edgar Allan Poe - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Edgar Allan Poe believed in using writing to create specific emotional responses in his readers. He called this a piece's "effect." He favored a methodical approach to developing his poems, once saying that his approach to writing was akin to solving a math problem. With "The Raven," Poe described the process as deliberate and methodical, during which he predetermined the poem's length and melancholic tone before beginning to write. The famous refrain of "Nevermore!" was the first word Poe wrote for the piece, chosen for its vowel sounds, and the titular raven came from a need to justify the repetition of a single spoken word. Every element contributes to Poe's desired "effect" for the poem.

Which of these best describes Edgar Allan Poe's writing process?

- ☒ **A.** Calculated
- According to the passage, Poe "favored a methodical approach to developing his poems, once saying that his approach to writing was akin to solving a math problem." He carefully planned "The Raven" to create his desired effect.*
- B.** Spontaneous
- C.** Loose
- D.** Detached

2. It is perhaps fitting that an author such as Edgar Allan Poe, whose work dealt with the macabre and unknown, died under strange circumstances. In the days leading up to his death at age 40, Poe was seen around Baltimore, where he had stopped during a trip back to Philadelphia from a lecture tour. There, he corresponded with his aunt Maria, claiming to be in great spirits. Maria, for her part, had expressed concern to a friend about Poe's health and lifestyle. One night, a doctor found an unconscious Poe lying in the street. He was taken to the hospital where, although at first it seemed his health would improve, he died a few days later. Letters between Poe's loved ones and newspaper obituaries do not list the cause of Poe's death. This, in addition to the hospitalized author's calling for an unknown person named Reynolds, leaves Edgar Allan Poe's final days as one of the great mysteries in literary history.

Based on the passage, which of these is the likeliest reason Edgar Allan Poe's cause of death remains unknown?



A.

Primary sources (letters and newspaper reports) from the time do not identify a cause.

The passage states, "Letters between Poe's loved ones and newspaper obituaries do not list the cause of Poe's death," and "This... leaves Edgar Allan Poe's final days as one of the great mysteries in literary history."

B. There are conflicting reports about Poe's health and behavior during his stay in Baltimore.

C. Poe's family deliberately stopped newspapers from reporting about the author's death.

D. The doctor who treated Poe failed to file the paperwork necessary to officially diagnose him.

3. Although best known for his contributions to Gothic horror and the invention of the detective story, Edgar Allan Poe also had a great interest in science, evidenced in some of his lesser known writing. Among the author's short stories, two are commonly classified in modern terms as science fiction. In "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall," a man rides a hot air balloon to the moon, using a device that allows him to breathe in space. This fictional invention was informed by Poe's understanding of the Earth's atmosphere. "The Balloon Hoax" depicts an engineer who flies across the Atlantic Ocean on a flying machine of his design. Written in 1844, this story predates the modern advent of flight by several decades, and took inspiration from real-life designs for such vehicles.

Which of the following can you infer from this passage?

A. Poe's stories were the cause of future scientific advancements.



B.

Poe's interest in science directly influenced his fictional inventions.

According to the passage, Poe wrote about inventions that were inspired by his interest in science: a device that lets a person breathe in space, which was "informed by Poe's understanding of the Earth's atmosphere," and a flying machine that "took inspiration from real-life designs for such vehicles."

C. Poe was more interested in writing science fiction than horror, but published more of what was profitable.

D. "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall" is based on a true story.