

Edgar Allan Poe's image is not just instantly recognizable, it is perfectly suited to his reputation. From the prisoner strapped under a descending pendulum blade to Raven refusing to leave the narrator's chamber, these macabre and innovative stories of Gothic horror are what make Edgar Allan Poe one of the greatest American authors. After all, horror was a popular genre of the period. With many practitioners, yet Poe stood out thanks to his careful attention to form and style. As a literary critic, he identified two cardinal rules for the short story form: firstly, it must be short enough to read in one sitting; secondly, every word must contribute to its purpose by mastering these rules. Poe's attention to detail, his underworld theme with intense and singular experience, and what he called the unity of effect.