

## Lesson Plan: Paraphrasing the Masters

**RL.9-10.1** - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**RL.9-10.4** - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

**L.9-10.3** - Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

**L.9-10.4** - Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

**L.9-10.4a** - Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

**L.9-10.5** - Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

**L.9-10.5a** - Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.

**L.9-10.5b** - Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

### Procedures

- Read the first 2-3 paragraphs of “The Fall of the House of Usher.”
- Hand out the “Paraphrasing the Masters” chart.
- Paraphrase difficult passages from the story. This can be done in small groups, individually, or as a class.

This assignment will prove difficult for some students. Provided here are three charts: (1) The first example is done completely; (2) The first example is done and the difficult passages are selected; (3) The entire thing is filled out.

# Making Sense of Difficult Sentences

Use the following chart to make sense of difficult sentences in the story you are currently reading. Use the example as a model.

Original Sentence or Passage	Paraphrased Sentence or Passage
"DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher."	It was a really crummy day in the fall. It was cloudy and foggy and misty and just plain crappy. I was riding my horse through an especially crappy area. It was evening when I arrived at the really, super depressing House of Usher.

## Making Sense of Difficult Sentences

Use the following chart to make sense of difficult sentences in “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Use the example as a model.

Original Sentence or Passage	Paraphrased Sentence or Passage
<p>DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher.</p>	<p>It was a really crummy day in the fall. It was cloudy and foggy and misty and just plain crappy. I was riding my horse through an especially crappy area. It was evening when I arrived at the really, super depressing House of Usher.</p>
<p>I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible.</p>	
<p>I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul</p>	
<p>What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble</p>	
<p>I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth.</p>	
<p>I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and <u>lurid</u> <u>tarn</u> that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray <u>sedge</u>, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.</p>	

## Making Sense of Difficult Sentences

Use the following chart to make sense of difficult sentences in “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Use the example as a model.

Original Sentence or Passage	Paraphrased Sentence or Passage
<p>“DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone length, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher.”</p>	<p>It was a crummy day in the fall. It was cloudy and foggy and misty and just plain crappy. I was riding my horse through an especially crappy area. It was evening when I arrived at the really, super depressing House of Usher.</p>
<p>I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible.</p>	<p>This crazy thing that I can’t explain happened. At the instant I saw the house, I felt super-duper depressed. I couldn’t stand it and there was nothing that could make it go away.</p>
<p>I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul</p>	<p>I looked at the house and its surroundings. I looked at the yard, the depressing walls, the creepy windows, the rotten weeds, and a few dying trees. It was an unbelievably depressing scene.</p>
<p>What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble</p>	<p>I thought about it but don’t know exactly what it was about the House of Usher that made me feel this way. I concluded it is an unsolvable mystery.</p>
<p>I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth.</p>	<p>The only conclusion I could make is that somethings that make us feel a certain way can’t be explained by logic. There are things that we just can’t figure out.</p>
<p>I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and <u>lurid</u> <u>tarn</u> that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray <u>sedg</u>e, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.</p>	<p>I stopped my horse right at the steep edge of a disgusting mountain pond that received no light, right next to the house. I looked down and shuddered with disgust. You could actually see the upside down reflection of the rotten weeds, scary tree branches, and creepy windows in the pond. It was even creepier than I thought!</p>

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