

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 Raven”
- Hand out the “Paraphrasing the Masters” chart.
- Paraphrase the poem. This can be done in small groups, individually, or as a class.

Making Sense of Difficult Sentences

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

Original Sentence or Passage	Paraphrased Sentence or Passage
<p>Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore, While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door. "Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door - Only this, and nothing more."</p>	<p>One night at midnight, I was hanging out by the fire reading a strange story from back in the day when I suddenly heard a tapping at the door. I figured it was nothing more than a visitor.</p>
<p>Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December, And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor. Eagerly I wished the morrow; - vainly I had sought to borrow From my books surcease of sorrow - sorrow for the lost Lenore - For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore - Nameless here for evermore.</p>	
<p>And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain Thrilled me - filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before; So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating, "Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door - Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; - This it is, and nothing more."</p>	
<p>Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer, "Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore; But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping, And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door, That I scarce was sure I heard you" - here I opened wide the door; - Darkness there, and nothing more.</p>	
<p>Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before; But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token, And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?" This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!" - Merely this, and nothing more.</p>	
<p>Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning, Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before. "Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice: Let me see, then, what thence is, and this mystery explore - Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; - 'Tis the wind and nothing more."</p>	
<p>Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter, In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore; Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he; But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door - Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door - Perched, and sat, and nothing more.</p>	
<p>Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling, By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore. "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven, Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Nightly shore - Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly, Though its answer little meaning- little relevancy bore; For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door -</p>	

<p>Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door, With such name as "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour. Nothing further then he uttered- not a feather then he fluttered - Till I scarcely more than muttered, "other friends have flown before - On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before." Then the bird said, "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken, "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store, Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore - Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore Of 'Never - nevermore'."</p>	
<p>But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling, Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door; Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore - What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore Meant in croaking "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core; This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er, But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er, She shall press, ah, nevermore!</p>	
<p>Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor. "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee - by these angels he hath sent thee Respite - respite and nepenthe, from thy memories of Lenore: Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! - prophet still, if bird or devil! - Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore, Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted - On this home by horror haunted- tell me truly, I implore - Is there - is there balm in Gilead? - tell me - tell me, I implore!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil - prophet still, if bird or devil! By that Heaven that bends above us - by that God we both adore - Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn, It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore - Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore." Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>"Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend," I shrieked, upstarting - "Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore! Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken! Leave my loneliness unbroken!- quit the bust above my door! Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door; And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming, And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor; And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor Shall be lifted - nevermore!</p>	

Making Sense of Difficult Sentences (Key – Answers may vary)

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
<p>Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore, While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door. "'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door - Only this, and nothing more."</p>	<p>One night at midnight, I was hanging out by the fire reading a strange story from back in the day when I suddenly heard a tapping at the door. I figured it was nothing more than a visitor.</p>
<p>Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December, And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor. Eagerly I wished the morrow; - vainly I had sought to borrow From my books surcease of sorrow - sorrow for the lost Lenore - For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore - Nameless here for evermore.</p>	<p>The story takes place in December. There was a fire place sending out creepy shadows. I was trying to get over my sadness for Lenore. She's dead.</p>
<p>And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain Thrilled me - filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before; So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating, "'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door - Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; - This it is, and nothing more."</p>	<p>The curtains gave me a bit of a fright. I consoled myself by saying it's just a visitor.</p>
<p>Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer, "Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore; But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping, And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door, That I scarce was sure I heard you" - here I opened wide the door; - Darkness there, and nothing more.</p>	<p>I mustered up some courage and began speaking; then I opened the door and saw nothing.</p>
<p>Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before; But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token, And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?" This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!" - Merely this, and nothing more.</p>	<p>There was no one there and I was freaked out a little. Then I heard someone whisper "Lenore." I think it may have been myself.</p>
<p>Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning, Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before. "Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice: Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore - Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; - 'Tis the wind and nothing more."</p>	<p>I went back into the room, troubled. Then I heard the tapping again. This time it was louder. There's something at the window. I'll check it out.</p>
<p>Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter, In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore; Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he; But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door - Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door - Perched, and sat, and nothing more.</p>	<p>I opened the window and a raven came in like he owned the place. He perched on a statue of Pallas Athena right above the door and just sat there.</p>
<p>Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling, By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore. "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven, Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Nightly shore - Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	<p>He looked quite serious, so I started talking to him, asking where he came from and what his name was. He said his name was "Nevermore."</p>
<p>Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly, Though its answer little meaning- little relevancy bore; For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door -</p>	<p>I was shocked by the raven's clear speech, although it made little sense. I can hardly imagine a bird named "Nevermore." That's a ridiculous name.</p>

<p>Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door, With such name as "Nevermore."</p>	
<p>But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour. Nothing further then he uttered- not a feather then he fluttered - Till I scarcely more than muttered, "other friends have flown before - On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before." Then the bird said, "Nevermore."</p>	<p>That's the only word he spoke. Then I mentioned that he would be leaving soon, to which he replied "Nevermore."</p>
<p>Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken, "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store, Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore - Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore Of 'Never - nevermore'."</p>	<p>That was shocking, indeed. I surmised that was the only word he knew. His master has obviously met some kind of disaster and the sad bird carries a burden of loneliness.</p>
<p>But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling, Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door; Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore - What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore Meant in croaking "Nevermore."</p>	<p>Then I started wondering if there was something more to this bird and his utterances. What did this ominous bird mean by repeating "nevermore."</p>
<p>I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core; This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er, But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er, She shall press, ah, nevermore!</p>	<p>I thought about it but didn't say anything. The bird kept staring at me. I kept thinking of Lenore who I will never see again.</p>
<p>Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor. "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee - by these angels he hath sent thee Respite - respite and nepenthe, from thy memories of Lenore: Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	<p>Then it seemed that the air grew thick, like the room became full of perfume from an invisible angel. Then I yelled at the bird, asking for relief from sadness. A little potion would be nice.</p>
<p>"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! - prophet still, if bird or devil! - Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore, Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted - On this home by horror haunted- tell me truly, I implore - Is there - is there balm in Gilead? - tell me - tell me, I implore!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	<p>I yelled at the bird some more, asked him if he were a devil or just a random bird blown in from a storm. Then I begged to know if there would be any relief from my sufferings, to which he replied "nevermore."</p>
<p>"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil - prophet still, if bird or devil! By that Heaven that bends above us - by that God we both adore - Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn, It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore - Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore." Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	<p>I wanted to flip the bird the bird. I asked him if I'd ever see Lenore again and he said "nevermore."</p>
<p>"Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend," I shrieked, upstarting - "Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore! Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken! Leave my loneliness unbroken!- quit the bust above my door! Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."</p>	<p>I told the bird to get the hell out of my room and to metaphorically remove his beak from my heart, to which the raven replied "nevermore."</p>
<p>And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door; And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming, And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor; And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor Shall be lifted - nevermore!</p>	<p>The dang bird did not leave and never will. And my soul will remain in sadness forever. Life sucks!</p>

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