

Before You Read

The Cask of Amontillado

Meet **Edgar Allan Poe**

(1809–1849)

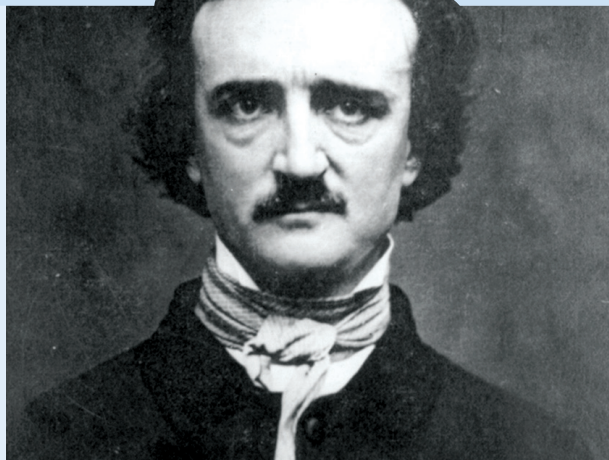
Crumbling mansions, hearts that continue to beat after death, and insane killers are just a few of the ingredients in Edgar Allan Poe’s fiction. His stories are not simple spine-tinglers, however. Poe travels deep into psychological territory, exploring guilt, rage, sorrow, madness, and fear.

A Loner Poe’s life itself was a dark and often haunting tale. His parents were poverty-stricken actors. Poe’s father left when Poe was two years old, and his mother died when he was three. Separated from his siblings, Poe was raised by John and Frances Allan. As Poe entered adolescence, he had a serious falling out with his foster father, who disapproved of his desire to write. Poe spent a few years in the army to try to regain his foster father’s approval, but once it was clear that Allan was through with him, Poe moved to Baltimore and focused on writing.

*“From childhood’s hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—”*

—Edgar Allan Poe, “Alone”

Turmoil and Grief Poe began to write poetry as a teenager and published his first collection of poems in 1829. His short stories began appearing in magazines, and in 1833, one of his tales won a prize. This led to a job as a literary editor, a position that brought him great success, but which he lost due to his changeable nature and alcoholism. Most of the



remainder of Poe’s short life was spent in poverty and pain. He continued to work, but he did not achieve the public success he felt he deserved. Alcohol remained a problem, and he was often ill. He watched the love of his life, his wife Virginia Clemm, waste away and die from tuberculosis. Poe’s loneliness, pain, and general inability to connect with others helped forge his uniquely dark vision.

A Literary Giant Poe’s essays and reviews are still read today for their literary insights. His poetry, including such famous works as “The Raven” and “The Bells,” lives on in countless collections of America’s best writing. Perhaps most of all, his fictional works continue to frighten and delight readers worldwide.

Poe is classified as an American Romantic writer, a detective fiction writer, and a Gothic writer. Some critics refer to Poe as the first truly modern writer because he probed the individual and the mystery of the self.

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Literature and Reading Preview

Connect to the Story

What kinds of wrongs or injuries would make a person want to take revenge? Do you think getting revenge makes people feel better or worse? Discuss these questions with a partner.

Build Background

Much of this story is set in the catacombs of the Montresor family, which were also used as a wine cellar. Catacombs are underground cemeteries. The walls of the narrow passageways are lined with niches where bodies are placed. Carnival is an often uninhibited celebration involving costume parades, feasting, and other festivities. It takes place mainly in Roman Catholic regions during the weeks before Lent, a holy season of abstinence and prayer.

Set Purposes for Reading

Big Idea Matters of Life and Death

As you read “The Cask of Amontillado,” ask yourself, How do details in the story evoke the idea of death?

Literary Element Mood

Mood is the emotional quality of a literary work. A writer’s choice of language, subject matter, setting, and tone, as well as such sound devices as rhyme and rhythm, contribute to creating mood. As you read “The Cask of Amontillado,” ask yourself, What emotions does the writing make me feel?

Reading Strategy Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is putting something into your own words. Unlike a summary, a paraphrase is usually about the same length as the original passage. As you read, ask yourself, How would I rephrase this passage to make it easier to understand?

Tip: Make a Chart Paraphrase difficult sentences, or parts of sentences, as you read.

Author's Words	My Paraphrase
p. 58 “The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could.”	I had put up with the many wrongs Fortunato did to me as well as I could.

Learning Objectives

For pages 56–66

In studying this text, you will focus on the following objectives:

Literary Study: Analyzing mood.

Reading: Paraphrasing.

Vocabulary

preclude (pri klōōd') *v.* to prevent; to make impossible; p. 58 *Failing grades preclude the possibility of playing in Friday's basketball game.*

impunity (im pū' nā tē) *n.* freedom from punishment, harm, or bad consequences; p. 58 *No one here knew him, so he thought he could lie with impunity.*

accost (ə kōst') *v.* to approach and speak to, especially in an aggressive manner; p. 59 *The beggars accost and scare the shoppers.*

explicit (eks plis' it) *adj.* definitely stated, clearly expressed; p. 60 *Ms. DePietro gave explicit instructions for each stage of the assignment.*

implore (im plōr') *v.* to ask earnestly; to beg; p. 63 *Some parents implore their children to study.*



The Cask of Amontillado

Edgar Allan Poe

The thousand injuries of Fortunato¹ I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitively settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, **precluded** the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but

punish with **impunity**. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.²

It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause

1. *Fortunato* (fôr' tōō nă' tō)

Vocabulary

preclude (pri klōōd') *v.* to prevent; to make impossible

2. [*A wrong is . . . done the wrong.*] These sentences might be rephrased this way: "A wrong is not avenged if the avenger either is punished for taking revenge or does not make the wrongdoer aware that he is taking revenge."

Vocabulary

impunity (im pū' nă tē) *n.* freedom from punishment, harm, or bad consequences

to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.³

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship⁴ in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity—to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian *millionnaires*. In painting and gemmary Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack—but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He **accosted** me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley.⁵ He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him, that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

3. Here, *immolation* means “death or destruction.”

4. *Connoisseurship* (kən' ə sur' ship) is expert knowledge that qualifies one to pass judgment in a particular area.

5. *Motley* is the multicolored costume of a court jester or clown.

Matters of Life and Death *What is the narrator's attitude toward the destruction of Fortunato?*

Vocabulary

accost (ə kōst') *v.* to approach and speak to, especially in an aggressive manner

“How remarkably well you are looking today!”

I said to him: “My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking today! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado,⁶ and I have my doubts.”

“How?” said he. “Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!”

“I have my doubts,” I replied; “and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain.”

“Amontillado!”

“I have my doubts.”

“Amontillado!”

“And I must satisfy them.”

“Amontillado!”

“As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi.⁷ If anyone has a critical turn, it is he. He

will tell me——”

“Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry.”

“And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own.”

“Come, let us go.”

“Whither?”

“To your vaults.”

“My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi——”

“I have no engagement;—come.”

“My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive

6. A *pipe* is a wine barrel that holds 126 gallons. *Amontillado* (ə mōn tē yā' dō) is a kind of pale, dry sherry from Spain.

7. *Luchesi* (lōō kā' sē)

Mood *How would you characterize this opening exchange between the two main characters?*

Carnival in Rome, 1839. Aleksandr Petrovich Myasoedov. Oil on canvas. State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

View the Art This painting depicts a street scene during Carnival. How would you describe the atmosphere in this painting? How does it compare with the opening scene from this story?

you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with niter.”⁸

“Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado.”

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a *roquelaure* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.⁹

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them **explicit** orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

8. *Niter* is a salt-like substance found in cool, damp places.

9. A *roquelaure* (rôk ə lor') is a knee-length cloak that was popular in the 1700s. A *palazzo* (pə lät'sō) is a mansion or palace.

Paraphrase Restate this sentence in your own words.

Vocabulary

explicit (eks plis' it) *adj.* definitely stated; clearly expressed



I took from their sconces two flambeaux,¹⁰ and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode. “The pipe?” said he.

“It is farther on,” said I; “but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls.”

10. *Sconces* are wall brackets that hold candles or torches, and *flambeaux* (flam' bō') are lighted torches.

He turned toward me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.¹¹

"Niter?" he asked, at length.

"Niter," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi——"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily; but you should use all proper caution. A draft of this Medoc¹² will defend us from the damp."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mold.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose¹³ around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

11. [*filmy orbs . . . intoxication*] This phrase describes Fortunato's eyes as clouded and watery from excessive drinking.

12. *Medoc* (mā dōk') is a French red wine. A *draft* is the amount taken in one swig or swallow.

13. To *repose* is to lie at rest, either sleeping or in death.

Mood What words in this passage suggest danger?

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant¹⁴ whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"¹⁵

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons¹⁶ intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The niter!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough——"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draft of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon¹⁷ of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed



Visual Vocabulary

Arms is short for "coat of arms," an arrangement of figures and symbols on or around a shield that, along with a motto, represents one's ancestry.

14. The Montresor family's coat of arms includes a golden foot on a sky-blue background and a snake rising up.

15. The *motto* is Latin for "Nobody provokes me with impunity."

16. *Casks* and *puncheons* are large containers for storing liquids.

17. The *flagon* is a narrow-necked bottle with a handle.

Matters of Life and Death How do these details add to the growing sense of entrapment in the story?



and threw the bottle upward with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

“You do not comprehend?” he said.

“Not I,” I replied.

“Then you are not of the brotherhood.”

“How?”

“You are not of the masons.”¹⁸

“Yes, yes,” I said; “yes, yes.”

“You? Impossible! A mason?”

“A mason,” I replied.

“A sign,” he said.

“It is this,” I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my *roquelaure*.

“You jest,” he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. “But let us proceed to the Amontillado.”

“Be it so,” I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily.

We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt,¹⁹ in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely

18. Here, *masons* is short for “Freemasons,” an organization of stonemasons and bricklayers that was formed in the Middle Ages. By the time of this story, the masons had become a social group with secret rituals and signs.

19. A *crypt* is a burial chamber.

Mood What emotion does the description in this paragraph create?

the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry²⁰ into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

“Proceed,” I said; “herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi——”

“He is an ignoramus,” interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche,²¹ and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered²² him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

“Pass your hand,” I said, “over the wall; you cannot help feeling the niter. Indeed it is *very damp*. Once more let me **implore** you to return. No? Then I must positively

leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power.”

“The Amontillado!” ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

“True,” I replied; “the Amontillado.”

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently

“Indeed it is
very damp.”

20. Here, *pry* means “to look closely; peer.”

21. Here, the *extremity of the niche* (nich) is the farthest spot inside the recess.

22. *Fettered* means “bound with chains or shackles; restrained.”

Paraphrase Restate these sentences in your own words.

Vocabulary

implore (im plôr') *v.* to ask earnestly; to beg

Matters of Life and Death What does Fortunato finally realize?



Visual Vocabulary

A *rapier* (rā' pē ə) is a long, light-weight sword with a sharp point but no cutting edge.

back. For a brief moment I hesitated—I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed—I aided—

I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined²³ position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

“For the love of God, Montresor!”

“Ha! ha! ha!—he! he!—a very good joke indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!”

“The Amontillado!” I said.

“He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone.”

“Yes,” I said, “let us be gone.”

“For the love of God, Montresor!”

“Yes,” I said, “for the love of God!”

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud: “Fortunato!”

No answer. I called again:

“Fortunato!”

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall

within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against

the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart²⁴ of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*²⁵ ☞

23. Here, *destined* means “intended for a particular purpose or use.”

24. A *rampart* is a protective barrier or fortification.

25. *In pace requiescat* (in pä'chā rek'wē es kät') is Latin for “May he rest in peace.”

Paraphrase Restate these lines, and then explain why Montresor is doing what he is doing.

After You Read

Respond and Think Critically

Respond and Interpret

1. What are one or two questions you would ask Montresor?
2. (a)How does Montresor get Fortunato to come with him to his vaults? (b)What is Montresor's motive for leading Fortunato there?
3. (a)Describe the conversation between Montresor and Fortunato as they walk in the catacombs. (b)What is ironic about Montresor's concern for Fortunato's health?
4. (a)What happens to Fortunato at the end of the story. (b)In what ways is this a "perfect" crime?

Analyze and Evaluate

5. What details does Poe include to show Montresor as a cold-blooded killer? Do you think his portrayal is effective? Why or why not?

6. Why might Poe have chosen to write this story from the first-person point of view, describing only Montresor's thoughts and not Fortunato's?

Connect

7. **Big Idea Matters of Life and Death** Do you believe that Montresor resolves his conflict with Fortunato? What else could Montresor have done to solve his problem?
8. **Connect to the Author** Poe is known as a master of the horror stories. Based on this story, would you agree? Consider the following before making your decision. What is the moment of greatest horror in this story? How well does Poe build up to this moment?

Visual Literacy

Illustration

Famed British illustrator Arthur Rackham created this image in 1935 to illustrate "The Cask of Amontillado." Study the illustration, looking carefully at the subject matter and details.

Fortunato and Montresor, 1935.
Arthur Rackham.



Group Activity Discuss the following questions with classmates. Use evidence from "The Cask of Amontillado" to support your answers.

1. How accurately does Rackham re-create the setting of "The Cask of Amontillado"? Consider the size of the niche, the number of levels of brick, the chains, and the niter.
2. How accurately does Rackham re-create the characters? Consider their clothing, the expressions on their faces, and their postures.
3. How well does Rackham capture the mood of this moment in the story? Explain.

Literary Element Mood

Mood is the feeling that an author creates in a literary work. The mood can suggest an emotion, such as fear or joy; it can also suggest the quality of a setting, such as gloom or airiness. For example, if Poe had described the catacombs as “peaceful” or “still,” he would have created a quiet, restful mood.

1. Describe the overall mood that Poe creates in this story. In what way does the mood contribute to the story’s suspense?
2. How does Poe create the mood? Point to specific examples throughout the story to support your answer.
3. What impact does the Carnival setting have on the mood of this story?

Review: Suspense

As you learned on page 21, **suspense** is a feeling of curiosity, uncertainty, or dread about what will happen next in a story. Writers increase the level of suspense by creating a threat to the central character and raising questions in the reader’s mind.

Details That Create Suspense	Why They Create Suspense
No one is home at Montresor’s house.	No one can witness the crime.

Reading Strategy Paraphrase

Review the chart you made while reading the story, and then answer the following questions.

1. Look at footnotes 10 and 11 on pages 60 and 61. Explain why footnotes and paraphrasing help you understand Poe’s writing.
2. Choose a sentence from the story that requires paraphrasing primarily because of its difficult vocabulary. Then paraphrase the sentence.

Vocabulary Practice

Practice with Context Clues Identify the context clues that help you determine the meaning of each boldfaced word.

1. Taking those classes will **preclude** the possibility of your working on the newspaper committee, which meets at the same time.
2. Would Joe be punished, or would he commit the crime with **impunity**?
3. Some people greet you in a timid way, while others **accost** you.
4. I have **explicit** instructions on how to get to the meet instead of a vague description.
5. “Please, please don’t go to that party,” Mrs. Weeks **implored**.

Academic Vocabulary

Poe’s essays and reviews are still read today for their literary **insights**.

—Meet Edgar Allan Poe, page 56

Insights is an academic word. A sports reporter who thoroughly analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of a baseball team might be said to have **insights** into the game of baseball. Using context clues, try to figure out the meaning of the word in the sentence about Poe above. Check your guess in a dictionary.

For more on academic vocabulary, see pages 54–55 and R79–R81.

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Respond Through Writing

Research Report

Investigate Setting In “The Cask of Amontillado,” Poe’s specific settings are fictional, but Carnival celebrations and catacombs do exist. Using primary and secondary sources, prepare a research report of 1,500 words or more on Carnival or catacombs.

Understand the Task **Primary sources** are firsthand accounts of an event, such as diaries or eyewitness news articles written at the time the event took place. **Secondary sources** are sources written by people who did not influence or experience the event.

Prewrite Write four or five questions to guide your research. Answer those questions by checking secondary sources and, if possible, primary sources. Prepare detailed notes, identifying your sources for each fact or idea. Create an outline like the one below to help structure your report, adding relevant information under each outline point.

The Catacombs of Europe

- I. Purposes over the years
 - a. Burial grounds
 - b.
- II. Construction
- III.

Draft Develop a thesis statement that identifies your topic and explains what you plan to say about the topic. As you write, refer to your notes and outline to make sure you have included the correct information in a coherent order. Use your research to support your thesis and main points. You may also wish to include visual aids—photographs or period illustrations—to help readers visualize the setting of your report.

Revise As you incorporate the information in your notes, evaluate whether the information is relevant. Delete information unrelated to your thesis, and add any missing facts and ideas. If you have used any technical terms, make sure they are explained thoroughly and correctly, to avoid any misunderstandings. Give credit where credit is due and cite your sources. See pages R33–R37 for information on avoiding plagiarism.

Edit and Proofread Proofread your paper, correcting any errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Use the Grammar Tip in the side column to help you use colons correctly.

Learning Objectives

In this assignment, you will focus on the following objectives:

Writing: Writing a research report.

Grammar: Understanding how to use colons.

Grammar Tip

Colons

Colons can be used to introduce a list. Often, the words *the following*, *these*, or *as follows* can be a clue that you should use a colon. The words before a colon should form a complete sentence.

INCORRECT

In “The Cask of Amontillado,” Montresor’s catacombs contain: bones, niter, and wine.

CORRECT

In “The Cask of Amontillado,” Montresor’s catacombs contain the following: bones, niter, and wine.