

“The Masque of the Red Death” by Edgar Allan Poe**Selection Test****Critical Reading**

In the blank, write the letter of the one best answer.

- _____ 1. In “The Masque of the Red Death,” whom does Prince Prospero invite to his abbey?
- the plague victims of his land
 - a thousand healthy friends
 - a mysterious, masked guest
 - talented musicians
- _____ 2. In “The Masque of the Red Death,” the location of the black chamber at the western end of the suite
- suggests a mood of exploration and excitement.
 - minimizes the presence of natural light.
 - indicates a fascination with the bizarre.
 - suggests the end of daylight and life.
- _____ 3. Which phrase best expresses the mental state of the masquers before the apparition of the Red Death?
- “happy and dauntless and sagacious”
 - “gasped in unutterable horror”
 - “in them beat feverishly the heart of life”
 - “a gay and magnificent revel”
- _____ 4. Which of the following best expresses the theme, or main idea, of “The Masque of the Red Death”?
- God punished sinners through the plague.
 - Death should be faced with courage.
 - Wealth offers no refuge from death.
 - Human beings are essentially selfish.
- _____ 5. In the following passage from “The Masque of the Red Death,” which words or phrases are context clues that can help you figure out the meaning of *casements*?
- A tall and narrow Gothic window looked out upon a closed corridor which pursued the windings of the suite. These windows are of stained glass whose color varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it opened. . . . The third was green throughout, and so were the casements.
- “windows are of stained glass whose color varied in accordance with the prevailing hue”
 - “tall and narrow”
 - “a closed corridor which pursued the windings of the suite”
 - “the third was green”
- _____ 6. Which of the following details in “The Masque of the Red Death” suggests that the revelers will not live long?
- the white room
 - the locked gates
 - the prince’s dagger
 - the ebony clock

- ___ 7. The dream-like costumes of the revelers in “The Masque of the Red Death” symbolize
- repressed fears and desires.
 - extreme tension and anxiety.
 - youthful health and beauty.
 - carefree glamour and luxury.
- ___ 8. In the following passage from “The Masque of the Red Death,” what is the most likely meaning of *voluptuous*?
- It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But first let me tell of the rooms in which it was held. There were seven—an imperial suite.
- terrifying
 - ordinary
 - unusual
 - luxurious
- ___ 9. Which sentence or phrase does NOT contain context clues that *spectral* means “ghostly”?
- “The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse . . .”
 - “The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave.”
 - “[Prince Prospero’s] brow reddened with rage.”
 - “In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted”
- ___ 10. In “The Masque of the Red Death,” Prince Prospero objects to the masked stranger because he
- arrives uninvited.
 - is costumed as a victim of the Red Death.
 - interrupts the musicians.
 - refuses to dance.
- ___ 11. In “The Masque of the Red Death,” what is foreshadowed when Prospero’s “brow reddened with rage” at the sight of the intruder?
- the destructive power of anger
 - the red light from the window
 - the coming dawn in the east
 - his death from the Red Death
- ___ 12. In “The Masque of the Red Death,” how does Prince Prospero die?
- He is stabbed with a dagger.
 - He is stricken by the plague.
 - He is injured in a fall.
 - He is hanged from the battlements.

Vocabulary and Grammar

- ___ 13. Prospero’s guests were deprived of nothing. They never experienced the quality of ____.
- deprived
 - depriving
 - deprivation
 - deprive

- ___ 14. Among the revelers, there _____ a feverish _____.
- was; air
 - were; air
 - was; airs
 - were; airs
- ___ 15. During the _____ ball, the masqueraders danced _____.
- lively, gaily
 - gaily, lively
 - live, gay
 - gaily, live
- ___ 16. Which sentence contains both an adjective and an adverb?
- Courtiers firmly sealed the gates leading into the abbey.
 - During the fifth or sixth month, the prince hosted a masked ball.
 - Vivid colors filled every room except the seventh, which was ghastly.
 - The seventh room was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries.
- ___ 17. Which of the following sentences demonstrates an appropriate usage of *piquancy*?
- The man's blood-speckled forehead revealed his piquancy.
 - The unusual lighting added piquancy to the scene.
 - The revelers gasped with piquancy at the sight of the masked stranger.
 - The prince expressed his piquancy by chasing the offender through the suites.

Essay Questions

- The setting and descriptive details of "The Masque of the Red Death" contain many symbols. Choose at least three symbols from the story, and in an essay, describe what each symbol stands for. In your discussion explain how the symbols give meaning to the story.
- Is Prospero's attempt to escape death an act of unforgivable arrogance, or is it a normal human response to the inevitable? Consider the details given about Prospero's personality and behavior. In an essay, support your opinion with examples from the story or from your own experience.
- Poe stresses Prince Prospero's unusual and elaborate tastes. In an essay, explain what significance these details lend to the story's mood and theme.