



International Center  
for Leadership  
in Education



**Gold Seal Lesson:**

Copernicus Education Gateway

<b>Author(s):</b> Elizabeth Pierce			<b>Lesson Title:</b> Poe - Black Cats and Bricks			
<b>Grade Span</b>			<b>ICLE Application Model</b>			
K-4	5-8 X	9-12	A	B	C	D X

**Instructional Focus:**

**Reading** Students read a variety of grade level materials, applying strategies appropriate to various situations

**Writing** Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences with sophistication and complexity appropriate to the grade level

**Listening** Students listen for a variety of purposes appropriate to the grade level

**Speaking** Students speak for a variety of purposes and audiences with sophistication and complexity appropriate to the grade level

**Performance Task**

The student reads *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allan Poe. The student engages in a small group project in which the group builds a small wall in the classroom. The student reads directions to mix mortar. The student mixes mortar to a consistency that will satisfy laying brick. The student lays brick and mortar to construct a wall approximately 3 feet long by 4 feet tall. The student leaves the structure in damp-like environment for one week (e.g., covering wall with plastic bags and putting moist sponges in plastic bag environment) as the wall was described in the short story (see excerpt in attachment). After one week, the student uses a crowbar to dislodge bricks so that brick wall is 2 feet long by 2 feet tall. The student relays bricks with new mortar that he/she has tried to make look like the old mortar. The student waits one day and then, based on an analysis of the brick wall, writes on the computer an essay on whether Poe's plot in *The Black Cat* was realistic or not. The student supports his/her argument with facts from the experiment.

**ICLE Essential Skills**

Apply in writing the rules and conventions of grammar, usage, punctuation, paragraphing and spelling.  
ELA 1

Follow oral or written directions.  
ELA 4

Follow written directions carefully and accurately.  
ELA 6

Apply the information gathered from technical texts in real-life situations.  
ELA 35

Understand the characteristics of **parallel, perpendicular, and intersecting lines**.  
MATH 2

Understand the best procedures for statistical **data collection, organization, and display** including making estimates and predictions and drawing inferences.

MATH 5

Analyze the **truth value of simple sentences** by stating whether a simple objective statement (closed sentence) is true or false, or whether a statement containing pronouns or variables (open sentence) becomes true or false upon replacement of those pronouns or variables.

MATH 12

Know and apply the principles of scientific inquiry. (*Implicit in this statement are the processes of prediction, estimation, developing hypotheses, drawing conclusions, evaluation, and following ethical principles and professional procedures.*)  
(Not Ranked)

**Not  
Ranked  
SCIENCE**

Plan and apply real or hypothetical models and constructions to facilitate investigation and learning and the solution to practical problems. (Not Ranked)

**Not  
Ranked  
SCIENCE**

Identify the factors of weathering, i.e., weathering processes (exposure, breakdown, effect of climatic conditions), weathering rates (particle size relationships, mineral composition), soil formation (as a result of weathering), and soil solution (the end product of weathering in the form of minerals in surface and ground water).

**SCIENCE 18**

**Scoring Guide:**

Score each of the following characteristics on a scale of 4 to 0, where 4 = surpasses expectations; 3 = high quality performance; 2 = satisfactory quality performance; 1 = minimum quality performance; 0 = does not meet expectations.

**CHARACTERISTICS**

**CRITERIA  
SCORE**

- **Mixes Mortar**
- Follows directions
- Works cooperatively with others
- Stays on task
- Knows when to ask questions

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- **Lays Brick and Mortar**
- Constructs wall to 3' x 4' dimensions
- Builds wall so it is stable
- Leaves wall in damp environment
- Works cooperatively with others

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- **Dislodges Brick and Rebuilds Wall**
- Removes bricks so wall is 2' x 2'
- Removes bricks so that none are broken

- Follows directions in mixing new mortar
  - Makes conscious attempt to make new mortar look like old
  - Works cooperatively with others
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- **Writes Essay**
  - Applies the rules and conventions of grammar, usage, punctuation, paragraphing, spelling
  - Presents information in well-organized fashion that will be clear to the target audience
  - Uses editing and revising skills to improve effectiveness and accuracy
  - Defines a position on a topic and writes persuasively to persuade a specific audience
  - Uses examples from experiment to support opinion
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- **Technology**
  - Makes proper use of technology
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- **Task Management**
  - Manages time wisely
  - Cooperates with others
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**Keywords**

English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
<b>Reading</b> Comprehension In Context Independent Reading Integration	<b>Algebra</b> Coordinates Equations Estimation Factoring Math in Daily Life Problem Solving	<b>Earth Science</b> Climate Earth Materials Environment Models/Construction Scientific Inquiry
<b>Writing</b> Compare/Contrast Composition Critique Technical Writing Integration Word Processing	<b>Geometry</b> Deductive Geometry in Daily Life Perimeter Problem Solving Spatial Sense Surface Area Three-Dimensional Objects	<b>Life Science</b>
<b>Communications</b> Discussion Listening Visuals	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>Chemistry</b> Environment Reactions
<b>Literature</b> American Literature Fiction Non-Fiction Plot Primary Sources Integration	<b>Calculus</b>	<b>Physics</b> Change Physical Properties Scientific Process Temperature
<b>Other</b> Masonry Reading Technical Instructions	<b>Trigonometry</b>	<b>Other</b>

	Other	
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**Picture, Chart, or Graph file name(s):**

**Excerpt from Poe's *The Black Cat* to which student should compare construction**

For a purpose such as this the cellar was well adapted. Its walls were loosely constructed, and had lately been plastered throughout with a rough plaster, which the dampness of the atmosphere had prevented from hardening. Moreover, in one of the walls was a projection, caused by a false chimney, or fireplace, that had been filled up, and made to resemble the rest of the cellar. I made no doubt that I could readily displace the bricks at this point, insert the corpse, and wall the whole up as before, so that no eye could detect anything suspicious.

And in this calculation I was not deceived. By means of a crowbar I easily dislodged the bricks, and, having carefully deposited the body against the inner wall, I propped it in that position while with little trouble, I relaid the whole structure as it originally stood. Having procured mortar, sand, and hair, with every possible precaution, I prepared a plaster which could not be distinguished from the old, and with this I very carefully went over the new brick-work. When I had finished, I felt satisfied that all was right. The wall did not present the slightest appearance of having been disturbed. The rubbish on the floor was picked up with the minutest care. I looked around triumphantly, and said to myself: "Here at least, then, my labor has not been in vain."