

The Cask of Amontillado Questions

1. Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration to make a point. Look at the first paragraph. What phrase used by the narrator is an example of hyperbole? Write down the full sentence. Does this make you more sympathetic or less toward the narrator/murderer? Why?
2. Montresor tells us, “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.” In your own words, explain what this means.
3. What is it about Montresor that makes him an especially effective enemy to Fortunato? Give an example from another story – book, film, whatever.
4. Fortunato, who has been outdrinking and enjoying Carnival, is wearing a clown’s hat. Symbolically, why is this an interesting – and appropriate – costume choice by the writer?
5. To whom, do you suppose, is Montresor telling this story? What evidence gives you that assumption?
6. Name three of the many clever things Montresor does to lure Fortunato into his trap.
7. Poe uses several elements of foreshadowing. Write down two lines that foreshadow the grisly event at the end of the story.
8. Locate and write down an example of verbal irony.
9. Is Montresor a reliable or unreliable narrator? Explain.
10. Poe is a master at creating mood. Write down two lines that help establish the creepy, eerie, suspenseful mood.
11. Is there any crime/offense that Fortunato could have unwittingly committed that would make Montresor’s rage seem reasonable to you? Do you think individuals are ever justified in taking justice into their own hands? Explain.