Edgar Allan Poe

- American writer and poet, 1809–1849
- known for horror stories
- his life was sad too

What I will talk about

- 1 childhood
- 2 writer + famous works
- 3 wife Virginia
- 4 his death = mystery
- 5 why still important

Childhood and youth

- Boston 1809, parents = actors
- father left, mother † 1811 (TB), Edgar 2
- John Allan, Richmond → middle name, never adopted
- university at 17, gambling, debts
- left after < 1 year

Life as a writer

- army, fake name Edgar A. Perry
- 1st book: 50 copies, 'by a Bostonian'
- live only from writing = unusual
- editor + critic → 'Tomahawk Man'
- little money → poor all his life

His most famous stories

- Usher: old dark house → breaks, falls into lake
- Rue Morgue: Dupin, logic → 1st detective story
- Tell-Tale Heart: body under floor, heart beating, confesses

The Raven

- 1845, most famous poem
- man alone at night, Lenore dead
- raven flies in, he asks questions
- answer always 'Nevermore'
- famous all over America, only ~ $9

His wife Virginia

- 1836 married cousin Virginia (13 / 27), strange even then
- 1842 coughing blood while singing → TB (like his mother)
- 1847 † at 24
- 'most poetical topic in the world'
- Annabel Lee = probably about Virginia

His mysterious death

- 3 Oct 1849: Baltimore tavern, confused, someone else's clothes
- 7 Oct † in hospital, age 40
- alcohol / illness / election fraud
- gangs: kidnap, change clothes, vote many times
- records lost → never know

Why he is still important

- 1) first modern detective story
- Doyle: 'Where was the detective story until Poe breathed the breath of life into it?'
- 2) big influence on horror
- 3) pop culture: Baltimore Ravens, Edgar Award

Thank you

- sad life: lost people he loved, no money, death = mystery
- still read ~200 years later
- Thank you. Questions?