STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

The Pit and the Pendulum

1. What is the first scene the narrator describes?

2. After "swooning" and describing various states of being conscious, where does the narrator

come to his senses?

3. How did the narrator first explore his dungeon?

4. In what way did he venture to explore after his first circuit? What problem did he

encounter?

5. After they realized he would now cautiously avoid the pit, what fate did the narrator's

captors plan for him?

6. What else was in the room with the narrator?

7. How did the narrator get free from the table under the pendulum?

8. After the narrator became free from the table, he was subjected to yet another means toward

death. What was it?

9. Just as he was about to be forced into the pit, what happened?

10. One of Poe's trademarks is that he uses all of his literary tools to produce a single effect for

the reader. What is the effect given by this story?

11. What effect does the ending (the narrator's being saved) have on us as readers?

12. One of Poe's favorite conflicts is that of madness vs. reason. How is that conflict resolved in

his story?

13. There are many references to "hope" in this story. According to Poe, is there hope?

14. Where is the climax of this story?

15. In what ways does this story show gothic influences?