

1. You are going to **research the life of a poet** and **explicate** one of his/her poems; I will assign you the poet and give you the poem. The lens for examining the life of the poet will be a quotation from Thomas Carlyle: "In every man's writings, the character of the writer must be recorded." In your introduction, repeat the quotation and put it in your own words. Continue your researched essay with biographical details about the life of your poet and offer a specific example from your poet's life that connects with the quotation. You will need in-line citation and a Works Cited page.
2. Your **explication** of the poem will include responses to the list of questions from the hand-out "Poetry Unit Explication of a Poem."
3. Your **original poem** must be a minimum of fourteen lines and must reflect awareness of the following: speaker, occasion, setting, purpose, theme, structure and development, diction (connotation and denotation, alliteration, assonance, and consonance), imagery, figures of speech (including metaphor, simile, personification, metonymy, and synecdoche; your poem must reflect awareness of at least one of these elements). Your poem may also include examples of paradox, overstatement, understatement, and/or irony, and may include allusion. The form of your poem must be chosen: sonnet (Italian or Shakespearean), narrative, free verse, ballad, blank verse.
4. The project is due no later than _____.
5. Following are some suggestions for types of poems, if writing poetry is challenging for you:
 - An emotion poem (love, hate, anger, sadness, loneliness, indifference)
 - A poem that describes you
 - A poem that reflects current events in America or the world
 - A poem that reflects finding beauty in the ordinary
 - A memory poem

Following is a list of questions which you may apply to any poem, in whole or in part:

Set the stage:

1. Who is the speaker? What kind of person is he/she?
2. To whom is he/she speaking? What kind of person is he/she?
3. What is the occasion?
4. What is the setting in time (i.e. time of day, season, century)?
5. What is the setting in place (i.e. indoors or out, city or country, nation)?

Consider purpose and intent:

1. What is the subject of the poem?
2. What is the central purpose of the poem?
3. State the central idea or theme of the poem in a sentence.
4. What is the speaker's attitude about the subject (tone)?
5. Summarize the events of the poem.
6. Paraphrase the poem.

Sense:

1. Discuss the word choice (diction) of the poem. Point out words that are particularly well chosen and explain why.
2. Discuss the imagery of the poem. What kinds of imagery are used? In other words, to what senses do they appeal?
3. Point out and explain any symbols.
4. Point out examples of metaphor, simile, personification, and metonymy and explain their appropriateness.
5. If the following are in the poem, point them out and explain their function: paradox, overstatement (hyperbole), understatement (litotes), and irony (verbal, dramatic, situational).
6. Point out and explain any allusions. What is their function?

Sound and rhythm:

1. Describe the form or pattern of the poem. Depending on the form, answer all or some of the following questions:
2. Is there a rhyme scheme? Mark it on the poem.
3. Point out significant examples of sound repetition and explain their function.
4. What is the meter of the poem? Mark it on at least one stanza of the poem.
5. Is there a connection between sound and sense? Explain it.

Evaluation:

1. Does the poet effectively convey meaning through poetic devices?
2. Did you personally i.e. emotionally respond to the poem?