

## AP English Literature Poetry Out Loud project

Choose a poem of no fewer than 14 lines from the Poetry Out Loud website (<http://poetryoutloud.org/>) to complete the following four elements of the project.

### **Part I: Annotation of Poem**

Follow each of these steps as you analyze the poem before writing your explication. Make notes about each step on the poem itself.

1. Notice the title. Make notes about your initial reactions at the top of the poem.
2. Locate the independent clauses in the poem, and read them individually. (They will often not end at the ends of the lines.) Notice any that are questions. For each independent clause, underline the subject once and verb twice.
3. Place boxes around vivid words whose meanings are complex or particularly apt. Look up words that you do not know; underline these words, and write synonyms above the words in the poem.
4. Look for figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, symbol, allusion). Circle them and draw an arrow to the comparison—or explain the comparison if it is implied.
5. Identify the speaker in this poem. From what point of view is the poem written? What is the occasion? Is it spoken to someone in particular? Make some notes about your ideas.
6. Locate the shift(s) in the poem (in point of view, tone, and focus); draw a dividing line and briefly explain the change. Notice the "turning" words (but, so, yet, however); make an asterisk beside these.
7. Identify the tone of the poem (or tones if there is a shift). Write the tone word(s) in the margin and draw arrows to elements of the poem that support the tone. Use your tone chart for precise vocabulary.
8. Read the poem again, aloud, preferably to someone else. Then, complete this sentence at the bottom of the page: *The poem "[title]" by [poet] is about [abstract topic], and it reveals [observation about humanity or human condition].*

### **Part II: Personal Response**

Compose a minimum of one paragraph that expresses your personal response to the poem. Be precise in writing about how the poem's theme, focus, and/or details connect to your own personal experience.

### **Part III: Explication of Poem:**

Compose a 1 to 2 page typed response (longer if hand-written) in which you explain *what* the poem means and *how* it means.

- Incorporate a minimum of four vocabulary words (which you must underline).
- Focus on your central task throughout the essay.
- Clearly state the theme of the poem early in your explication as well as include the name of the poem (in quotation marks) and the poet. In your introduction, you may choose to include a brief summary of the narrative or situation described in the poem.
- Explain how the theme is developed through significant literary devices and the poem's structure (if applicable) with multiple, specific examples from the text in each paragraph. Choose focused quotations instead of quoting multiple lines to which you refer only ambiguously.
- Organize your ideas logically and organically so that each paragraph is unified around a specific idea. Do not organize according to literary device. Do not write one giant paragraph!
- Only discuss literary elements that enhance the meaning of the poem; if an element is irrelevant to the theme, leave it out. Do not mention literary devices and then fail to explain them with supporting evidence.
- Don't forget the power and significance of the title. However, if the title is simply the first line or a number (as in Dickinson's poems and many sonnets), don't discuss it in your analysis.
- End your explication with a conclusion that suggests what this poem teaches you about humanity.

### **Part IV: Recitation**

#### *Rubric*

- *Accuracy*: reciting the exact words with correct pronunciation and in proper order
- *Fluency and Pace*: reciting at appropriate speed; speaking without pausing or being prompted
- *Delivery*: using appropriate volume, body language, and gestures while maintaining eye contact with audience
- *Understanding*: conveying the theme and revealing meaning of the poem

#### *Memorization Tips*

- Rewrite the poem by hand over and over. Each time, try to write more and more of it from memory.
- Read your poem aloud before going to sleep at night and repeat it when you wake up.
- Carry around a copy of your poem with you all day. You'll find several moments throughout the day to reread it or recite it.
- Practice your poem aloud by reading and reciting to family and friends.
- Rehearse with a partner who checks your accuracy.
- Recite your poem in the mirror, working on gestures, pace, and body language.