

Poetry Analysis Template

You need to be able to answer all of these questions about your poem. After you have gathered all of this information, you will be ready to write a script that you will be able to use to explain your poem to the audience.

Introduction:

1. What is the name of your poem?
2. What is the name of your poet?
3. What is the date (or approximate date) of your poem's publication?
4. What other relevant background information can you tell us? This could include details about the author, details about the time period the poem was written in, or any other interesting tidbits of information. You should have at least one or two things to say.

Form:

1. What is the *overall form* of the poem. That is, what genre or type of poetry is your poem? If you have no idea what *form* of poem you are studying, a good list of different forms is found at http://www.poemofquotes.com/articles/poetry_forms.php
2. What is the structure of your poem? That is, how many stanzas does it have? How many lines does it have? Is there a pattern to the line and stanza structures?
3. What is the rhyme scheme of your poem?

Meaning

1. Discuss what the overall meaning of your poem is. Avoid one sentence answers. You need to expand on your answer. Most poems make several interesting points and you need to explain as many of them as you can.
2. Discuss how this poem relates to your life, and/or to life in general.

Figurative Language and Poetic Techniques:

1. Identify several (four would be the bare minimum – you can likely find more) examples of figurative language and poetic techniques in your poem. Explain why these are significant to the poem's meaning. Examples could include: alliteration, irony, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, repetition, imagery. They could also include symbolism, contrast, paradox, oxymoron, assonance, consonance, and many more that we have not studied in class).

Poetry Analysis Template

Sample

Name: Mr. Williams

Group Theme: Aging

Introduction:

Name of poem:	<i>Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night</i>
Name of poet:	Dylan Thomas
Date of publication:	1951
Other relevant background info:	Dylan Thomas watched his father grow old and weak. Thomas wrote this poem to urge his father on in the fight against sickness and death. Ironically, Thomas himself lived a hard, reckless life full of excess drinking. Thomas died just two years after this poem was written, in 1953 at the age of 39.

Form:

Form of poem:	<i>Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night</i> is a type of poem called a villanelle.
Structure of poem:	As in all villanelles, this poem has six stanzas. Each of the first five stanzas has three lines, while the final stanza has four lines. In addition, the first and third line of the first stanza must be repeated in other stanzas. Line one of the first stanza is repeated as line three of the second, fourth and sixth stanzas. Line three of the first stanza is repeated as line three of the third and fifth stanzas, and line four of the sixth stanza. This common pattern is what makes a poem a villanelle.
Rhyme scheme:	The rhyme scheme in each stanza is ABA except for the final stanza, which is ABAA.

Meaning:

Overall Meaning:	The poem basically urges people not to give up easily. Though death is inevitable, and part of the natural cycle of life, people need to fight, claw, scrape and do whatever must be done to stay alive – especially in the face of impending death.
How the poem relates to life in general, and/or my life	The poem suggests that life is a precious gift and one must wring every drop out of it before dying. Not living life fully makes death a sad event. On the other hand, living a full, meaningful life allows one to find that eventual “good night” – a peaceful afterlife. This makes the poem a reminder to everyone to live every day to its fullest potential. The poem relates to my life because it is a reminder never to give up. I am not facing death right now, nor is anyone close to me, but I still have other challenges to face. This poem is a reminder to “rage” against defeat, and to never stop doing my best.

Figurative Language and Poetic Techniques:

Device/Technique	Quote(s)	Meaning/Significance
Repetition	Lines 1, 6, 12 and 18 are all the same. Lines 3, 9, 15 and 19 are all the same	By repeating the lines “Do not go gentle into that good night” and “Rage, rage against the dying of the light”, the poet calls our attention to the most important message of the poem. The poet <i>insists</i> by repeating these lines over and over that the fight for life be continued no matter what.
Metaphor	“Do not go gentle into that good night”	“Good night” is a metaphor for death. Therefore, going gentle into that good night is a metaphor for passively accepting death.
Metaphor	“Rage, rage against the dying of the light”	“dying of the light” is another metaphor for death. Therefore, the poet is encouraging his audience to “rage” against death – that is, to fight and resist it passionately.
Metaphor	“Words had forked no lightning”	This is a metaphor that compares “words forking lightning” to words having power and drawing attention, the way that lightning does. This means that men whose words who have not drawn enough attention – men who have more to say – should resist death for there is more to accomplish in life.
Simile	“Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay”	This simile compares blind, unseeing eyes to fiery meteors travelling through space. The speaker means that blind people who cannot see can still enjoy life by imagining what is around them.
Personification	“Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay”	Of course, “frail deeds” cannot dance like humans. But the poet is saying that old men can still perform deeds that “dance” – that is, that excite people and make other people happy.

Poetry Analysis Template

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Group Theme:

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Name of poet:	
Date of publication:	
Other relevant background info:	

Form:

Form of poem:	
Structure of poem:	
Rhyme scheme:	

Meaning:

Overall Meaning:	
How the poem relates to life in general, and/or my life	

