

MODERN/POSTMODERN POETRY ANALYSIS PROJECT: The Steps

DIRECTIONS: Follow the steps below in order to build a deeper understanding of your selected poem. I expect you to take notes that are categorized under each step. I will collect these notes with your final draft. Your final draft and presentation should include your conclusions for each of these categories.

1. Read the poem aloud twice.
2. Do a brief, preliminary rhetorical analysis by identifying anything you can already discern at first reading about the:

Persona
Audience
Purpose
Argument

3. Identify the **literal level of meaning** to the best of your ability.
 - a. Paraphrase aloud
 - b. Consider implication of title
4. Identify key examples of **diction**:
 - a. Look up any unfamiliar words.
 - b. Identify any ambiguous words or phrases.
 - c. Check for allusions (e.g. to mythology, history, etc.) and look them up if you do not know them.
 - d. Describe/categorize the diction for the poem as a whole.
5. Identify **syntactic patterns**:
 - a. Identify rhetorical devices (**schemes and tropes**), especially any you see used more than once or twice. Review our schemes and tropes handout or go here for help regarding schemes and tropes: <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/figures/Schemes%20and%20Tropes.htm>
 - b. Identify patterns of emphasis and repetition.
6. Consider **sound**:
 - a. Mark any examples of heavy use of alliteration (tends to create a harsh or cacophonous sound) and assonance (tends to create a pleasant or euphonious sound).
 - b. Is the sound of the language overall euphonious (soft, pleasant or flowing) or cacophonous (harsh or grating)? Or is there an alternation between the two?
 - c. Consider rhyme and repetition. Does the poem use regular rhyme? Is there a break in the rhyme scheme? If it shifts or changes, mark these places in the text.
 - d. Is the rhythm, or meter of the poem, consistent? If it shifts or changes, mark these places in the text.
 - e. Consider what effect shifts in sound, rhyme, and rhythm have on the overall meaning or tone.
7. Identify **imagery**:
 - a. Identify repeated and/or extended images. Consider what senses they engage.
 - b. Describe/categorize the imagery for the poem as a whole.

MODERN/POSTMODERN POETRY PROJECT

STEP 1: Select any poem that appeals to you from one of the following poets. You may also choose a poet that is not listed, but you must get my approval first:

Robert Frost	Wallace Stevens	Marianne Moore
Ezra Pound	H.D.	Richard Wilbur
William Carlos Williams	Amy Lowell	Adrienne Rich
E.E. Cummings	Sylvia Plath	Carl Sandburg

Here are some suggested resources for finding poems & background information:

1. www.poetryfoundation.org	2. www.poets.org
3. Destiny – Poetry for Students	4. LMC Book Cart

STEP 2: Get my approval on your poem. 1st come, 1st serve!

STEP 3: Do some research on your author. Then, you should follow the instructions and complete all of the sections on the back of this page.

STEP 4: Write a 4-5 paragraph analysis essay about your poem, incorporating the information on your author as well as what you found in Step 3. You must be specific – quote lines, explain rhetorical & poetic devices, etc. Overall, be sure that your essay answers these questions:

- What is the poem about?
- What is the speaker's message or argument?
- How does the speaker feel about the subject matter, and how do we know?
(Diction creates tone.)
- What was it about this poem that originally appealed to you? How did your view of the poem change after this deeper analysis?

STEP 5: Hand in a copy of your selected poem to me a day before your presentation.

STEP 6: On _____, you will read your selected poem to the class and then orally present a summarized version of your analysis paper.

GRADING CRITERIA:

- In-class work ethic – Are you using class time efficiently? Are you on-task while in the computer lab? (10 points)
- Poetry reading – Did you effectively read your poem with proper voice & tone? (5 points)
- Oral presentation – Do you explain the significance of the poem and answer the required questions? (10 points)
- Analysis Essay & Notes – Is your final essay in MLA format? Is there a works cited page? Are all questions answered using specific examples and support? Did you hand in your notes? (25 points)