

AP Shakespearian Sonnet Project

To further our examination of poetry, students are asked to complete a Shakespearian Sonnet Project this quarter. Like our Poetry Project, **this assignment calls for a two-page analysis of a specific Shakespearian sonnet.** However, this project will be a bit different in its presentation—students will teach the sonnet to the class. This means that you will project the sonnet (a la overhead projector) and explain your analysis.

Your Project Must:

- ✓ **Analyze** a Shakespearian sonnet (this project is not a summary)
 - ✓ Include an annotated copy of your sonnet
 - ✓ Be 1 ½ to 2 pages in length
- ✓ Include at least one MLA citation (both within the body of the paper in parenthetical documentation AND a Works Cited at the end of the paper).

Website Citation:

Author. "Title of Web Page." Website Title. Posted Date. Web. Access Date.

Example:

Jamison, Samantha. "Sonnet 14." Shakespeare's Sonnets. 14 January 2013. Web.
15 April 2014.

Particularly helpful websites: **(remember that your assignment will fail for plagiarism if you do not cite all work).**

- shakespeares-sonnets.com
- shakespeare-online.com/sonnets
- opensourcehamlet.org/views/sonnets/sonnets.php
- william-shakespeare.info/william-shakespeare-sonnets.htm

Here is a bit of background regarding Shakespeare's sonnets:

There are 154 sonnets in all; they were published in complete form in 1609. While at this time the sonnets were not marked by controversy, modern-day critics are divided over the audience of Shakespeare's sonnets –for whom were they written?

- The first 126 are clearly addressed to a man; the first section is explicit in stating the writer's love for this young man. This section of the sonnets has led to speculation by some critics that Shakespeare might have been either homosexual or bisexual.
- The remaining sections of sonnets, numbers 127-154, are just as clearly addressed to a woman, the unknown "Dark Lady of the Sonnets," who has betrayed the poet's love by loving other men. These sonnets have led to the belief that Shakespeare might have, at some point, been in love with another woman, possibly a woman who was married.

3 Main Sonnet Forms:

Shakespearian Sonnet:

The English sonnet has the simplest and most flexible pattern of all sonnets, consisting of 3 quatrains of alternating rhyme and a couplet:

a b a b
c d c d
e f e f
g g

Spenserian Sonnet:

A variant on the English/Shakespearian form is the Spenserian sonnet, named after Edmund Spenser (c.1552–1599) in which the rhyme scheme is, *abab, bcbc, cdcd, ee*. This form is treated as three quatrains connected by the interlocking rhyme scheme and is followed by a couplet.

The Italian (or Petrarchan) Sonnet:

The Italian sonnet is divided into two sections by two different groups of rhyming sounds. The first 8 lines, called the *octave*, typically sets up a problem that the remaining portion of the sonnet answers; it rhymes:

a b b a a b b a

The remaining 6 lines is called the *sestet* and can have either two or three rhyming sounds, arranged in a variety of ways:

c d c d c d
c d d c d c
c d e c d e
c d e c e d
c d c e d c