



POETRY ANALYSIS: TPCASTT

Using TPCASTT

Sometimes the biggest obstacle in understanding a poem is finding a point of entry. Don't let the anxiety of literary devices or rhyme scheme keep you from analyzing meaning. TPCASTT examines the elements of a poem in order to discuss its effect as a whole. Use the questions below to guide your annotations.

Title

Before reading the poem, examine the title on its own. Determine preliminary meaning based on your own knowledge and the context provided to you.

Questions to consider:

- What meaning does the poem's title have? Speculate.
- Is there a double meaning, metaphor, pun, or anything else of significance? Identify.

Paraphrase

Begin by putting the poem's content into your own words. It can help to write a line by line paraphrase. Starting with the literal allows you later move into more literary discussions later.

Questions to consider:

- What action is occurring?
- What characters exist?
- What argument is offered?

Connotation

Identify literary devices or language of importance. Determine the meaning or purpose.

Questions to consider:

- How does this "device" contribute to meaning? Explain.
- Why does the author choose this device to create meaning? Explain.

Attitude

Use your findings from connotation and paraphrase to determine the speaker's attitude. Remember that you want to find a way to describe the complexity of emotion conveyed.

Questions to consider:

- What is the speaker's perspective and emotion towards their subject?
- What elements of the poem prove their attitude? How?

Shift

Examine the poem for shifts in a speaker's point of view. Consider the poem to be a written journey towards the speaker's realization/epiphany.

Questions to consider:

- Where does the speaker gain larger insight? Identify.
- What elements change or vary (punctuation, stanzas, line length, organization or rhyme)?
 - How do they signify a change in thought? Explain.

Title

Examine the title again in light of your exploration of the poem. Determine how the title makes meaning in regards to your findings.

Questions to consider:

- Why does the author choose this title based on your knowledge of the poem?
- What insight does the title offer?

Theme

Identify the big picture implications of the poem. Consider the poet's motivation.

Questions to consider:

- What subject or issue is addressed in the poem
- What does the poem suggest about human nature?