

We will begin our work this fall with an exploration of poetry. To help you start thinking about poetry, you will need to select three poems and write a poetry response journal for each. **You MUST choose your poems from [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)**, where you can click “Poems” and then select “teens.” You may then browse by subject or genre for poems that interest you.

You will find poems that require careful thought and consideration to appreciate them fully. Remember that one of the most useful tools for understanding poetry is paraphrasing. Take the time to put every line of the poem into your own words. If you don’t know a word, look it up. If you find a poem that is difficult to understand with your first reading, reread it. The lines that are the most difficult to understand when reading a poem for the first time are often integral to your understanding of the poem and its themes. The enjoyment of poetry often lies in the pleasure of discovering new meanings or connotations as you reread and reconsider each word, line, and stanza. Relax and have fun! Enjoying poetry can often be more about appreciating the beauty of language itself than “getting” a poem’s meaning.

Your Poetry Response Journal should convince me that you have read and thought carefully about your chosen poems. To a limited extent, it is true that a poem means what the reader thinks it means; you must, however, explain your interpretation with specific references to the poem. If your understanding of the poem is “wrong,” yet your journal proves that you read the poem and that you thought about it very carefully, you may still receive full credit. Your grade is based on what you say about the poem and how well you say it -- your reaction to the poem and your explanation of the logic that led to your interpretation.

**TO RECEIVE CREDIT you MUST complete BOTH of the following for EACH of your three poems for a total of three Poetry Response Journals. It is all or nothing.**

- A. *Choose any one of the following topics. You must pick a different topic for each poem, but complete only one topic for each poem.*
1. your opinion of the poem, good or bad, supported by specific references from the poem
  2. an analysis of the poet’s persona, i.e., the poem’s speaker
  3. a discussion of the title’s significance
  4. a detailed response to a specific line or lines
  5. a comparison to another poem, song, story, movie...
  6. an examination of poetic techniques used, such as rhyme, rhythm, simile, metaphor, personification, allusion...
  7. a close analysis of the poet’s diction, perhaps noting specific word choices, or connotation and denotation

8. a transformation of the poem to another form, such as a cartoon, a news story, a letter, a play, a soap opera, a commercial, perhaps a different form of poetry. Graphic forms of this option still require the paragraph length explanation described in "A" above.
9. an original poem developing in some way from the poem you chose.
10. a paraphrase of the poem
11. a discussion of the writer's life and its relevance to the poem
12. a statement relating the poem to your experience or ideas
13. an explanation of problems you had in understanding the poem and how you overcame them, citing specific lines,
14. A description of an aspect of theme or language that was challenging to you and how you rose above this challenge, citing specific lines.

B. To be accepted, *your journal must begin with a paragraph length description of the poem and a brief rationale for why you chose the topic above. This must include:*

- the poem's title in quotation marks
- the author's name
- a quote, paraphrase, or summary from the poem -- integrated within your sentences, correctly punctuated, and commented upon as necessary to show why you cited that line: no evidence without explanation!
- specific references to the poem
- careful thought

**Length:** Approximately one and a half to two pages for each PRJ.

**Format:** All submissions must be **typed in MLA**. Use those MLA templates, folks! There must be a properly formatted works cited entry for each poem. Properly formatted MLA in-text citations are required for all references to the texts. Except for graphic versions of option #8, I'll accept digital submissions only.

**Due:** The first day of class.

Please submit all inquiries regarding this assignment to Mr. Marine at [colin.marine@saas.k12.de.us](mailto:colin.marine@saas.k12.de.us)