

English 521 Poetry Explication Worksheet

The purpose of this short activity is for students to practice finding and analysing the poetry elements required in a poetry explication. Using the five poems from *Inside Poetry* (listed below), make notes on this worksheet for each of the categories. When you have gone through the poem and discovered all of the elements below, write a one-page (informal cover page and good copy) analysis of what you have discovered. Each analysis should be approximately 400-500 words and should be typed or neatly handwritten. This exercise is good practice for the major poetry explication activity.

Due Date: Tuesday, October 6

Assessment: Each section below shall be assessed on a scale of 4 (Outstanding) to 1 (Weak). The Figurative Language/Imagery section will be double-weighted (8).

Inside Poetry Poems: Cigarettes (18); My Mind (30); Brain (196); The Listeners (199); The Poem (224)

FIRST IMPRESSIONS & SURFACE INTERPRETATION

(Upon first reading, what does the reader think and what does the poem seem to be about before we look into it too deeply?)

POET AND POETIC VOICE

(Remember, many poems aren't written from the poet's POV. Who is the voice & why?)

AUDIENCE

(This is tied to poetic voice; not just 'people'; who might be the intended recipient of this piece of writing?)

EXAMINATION OF TITLE

(Look for interesting words in the title. Be able to explain how the title relates and contributes to the poem)

CONTEXT

(Tied to what you learned about your poet. What circumstances in your poet's life inspired him/her to create this piece?)

POSSIBLE CONFLICTS

(Can you pick up any conflicts in this poem: person vs person; person vs nature; person vs self; etc)

TONE & MOOD

(Poet's attitude towards the subject matter and how readers are supposed to feel; look for examples to support your claims)

TYPE OF POEM

(which of the popular forms does this poem resemble?)

LANGUAGE & DICTION

(how do the language and the word choices make the poem more compelling? Why were they chosen? Offer examples.)

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE & IMAGERY

(Identify the strongest figures of speech (must mention at least three) and explain them within the poem's context; also, what images come to mind, based on the figures of speech created in the poem? Is there evidence of symbolism? Does something symbolize something else?)

STRUCTURE

(Open or closed? Free Verse or Blank Verse? Rhymed or unrhymed? Rhyme Scheme? Line Length? Stanza Length?)

THEME

(Is there an underlying message? What is the dominant message revealed in the poem? Is the poet trying to teach a lesson?)

EVALUATION (Offer a judgement (as the reader) of the work. Does it link to your life or modern life?)