

Poetry Critical Response Essay

Due (beginning of class): Tuesday, April 11, 2006 **FIRM**
Late assignments will not be accepted.

Purpose: To approach poetry with a critical mind in order to better understand and explain how certain language creates powerful poetry.

Length: 750 – 800 words (3 typed pages, 5-7 handwritten pages).
 Use blue or black ink if you are writing by hand.

Details: Double-space your essay, type in either Times New Roman or Arial 12-point font, include page numbers in the bottom right-hand corner. Include the word count at the end of your paper (if you are word-processing your essay). You must include a cover page (essay title, your name, date, class, teacher's name). You **MUST** include draft copies.

Guidelines for Marking: please see "ELA 10-1" salmon-coloured guideline. Major areas of consideration are: thought and detail, organization, matters of choice, matters of correctness.

You will write on the following poem from the Sunburst anthology:

- "Do Not Go Gently Into That Good Night" *Dylan Thomas* (142)

Using the topic below, plan and create a **critical response** essay.

- Once you have selected a poem, discuss its major themes, motifs, and symbols.
 - **themes** (fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a piece of literature),
 - **motifs** (recurring structures, images, contrasts, or literary devices that can help develop an inform the text's major themes), and
 - **symbols** (objects, characters, figures, or colours used to represent abstract ideas or concepts).

We will have **one** class period in the computer lab. This time will be used to peer-edit and word-process the final copy.

There is no excuse for spelling errors in essays completed on a word processor, but note that spell-checkers are not infallible:

"Spellbound: An Owed to the Word Processor"

*I love my new spell-checker; it came with my PC
 It plainly marx four my revue mistakes I cannot sea
 I've run this poem threw it, I'm sure your pleased to no
 Its holy perfect in every weigh – my checker tolled me sew.*

Handling Quotations

Because literary works are available in different editions, you need to include information that will help your readers locate the reference in their particular edition. For poems, use quotation marks to distinguish your words from the poet's words, and forward slashes ("/") to separate lines in the poetry. Stick to original punctuation and spelling. Indicate the line numbers quoted, as shown below.

In Robert Frost's poem, "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening," the speaker is torn between staying and enjoying the "lovely, dark, and deep" (13) woods, and leaving the area because he/she "has promises to keep" (140). This decision illustrates a person versus self conflict situation. The speaker elects to continue on his/her way, stating: "And miles to go before I sleep, / And miles to go before I sleep" (15-16), suggesting that their prior commitments are more important.

Essay Checklist

Content

- ❑ Meets length requirements (750-800 words), and word count is printed at the end of the essay (if you have word-processed the document).
- ❑ Essay is written in the present tense.
- ❑ The essay has a title that makes reference to the poems being examined. It is not simply titled "English Essay."
- ❑ First paragraph contains the title(s) of the poem(s) and name of the author.
- ❑ Essay contains an introduction, 3 body paragraphs, and conclusion.
- ❑ Essay contains a thesis statement at the end of the introductory paragraph.
- ❑ Any reference to the poem in the essay is made in quotation marks ("Invictus" not Invictus).
- ❑ I have completed "The Afterword" for my essay using guidelines set out below.

Structure

- ❑ Essay is word-processed or neatly produced in blue or black ink.
- ❑ Essay is double-spaced.
- ❑ Essay is typed in Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font.
- ❑ Cover page is included and meets requirements set by the teacher.
- ❑ Page numbers are listed in the bottom right-hand corner.
- ❑ Paragraphs are indented. There are no extra spaces between paragraphs.
- ❑ Essay is stapled in the top left-hand corner.
- ❑ One other person has proof-read my essay. This person has signed their name on the first page.

The "Afterword"

Attach to your assignment a short "afterword" in which you reflect upon your writing and creating process. In no more than 1 page, write about:

1. What you learned or discovered while writing your essay;
2. What you wanted to do (and what you actually did);
3. What you want me (the marker) to comment on;
4. What did you find difficult? What did you find easy;
5. What did you enjoy about writing and producing this assignment;
6. What grade do you feel you deserve, based on the marking criteria for this essay?