

Poetry Explication Paper Checklist

Argument/Thesis: Do you articulate an arguable and specific claim about the poem, drawn from your close reading?

Interpretation: Does your argument proceed by way of textual analysis and careful close readings? Do you take into account other possible interpretations? Do you incorporate textual evidence that is followed by your own analysis? (Incorporating small chunks rather than block quotes is often more helpful for ensuring that you provide adequate analysis.)

Organization: Do you develop your argument logically over the course of your paper? Do you use transitions to guide your reader? (Use the technique of "Reverse Outlining" to help you with structure.)

Suggested structure:

- A brief introduction that provides context/introduces the poem to your reader
- Thesis statement at the end of the introductory paragraph
- Body paragraphs that provide textual evidence and analysis. Consider how your topic sentences and concluding sentences guide your reader and reinforce your overarching argument
- A conclusion that ties together your essay

Clarity: Do you express yourself in concise and clear language?

Citation and formatting: Have you followed the formatting guidelines outlined in the assignment sheet as well as MLA guidelines? Does your paper have a title?

Some notes on formatting poetry quotations from the [The Purdue OWL's](#) website:

1) For quotations that are more than four lines of prose or three lines of verse, place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the left margin; maintain double-spacing.

2) When short (fewer than three lines of verse) quotations from poetry, mark breaks in short quotations of verse with a slash, (/), at the end of each line of verse (a space should precede and follow the slash). Example:

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).