

ENG 4UP

Poetry Assignment

As a child most of you loved poetry, reciting nursery rhymes and chanting limericks. What happened? I don't have the answer, but one of my goals this unit will be to rekindle your enthusiasm for, and appreciation, of poetry. (And to help you write better.)

Laurence Perrine suggests, "People have read poetry or listened to it or recited it because they liked it, because it gave them enjoyment. But this is not the whole answer. Poetry in all ages has been regarded as important, not simply as one of several alternative forms of amusement, as one person might choose bowling, another chess, and another poetry. Rather, it has been regarded as something central to existence, something having unique value to the fully realized life, something that we are better off for having and without which we are spiritually impoverished."

We will approach poetry two ways. We will study some poems in class, learning about the tools and devices poets use in their craft, talking about what a poem means or how it made you feel, or seeking answers to questions we raised while reading or studying. We might call this our *structured* or *formal study of poetry*. But we will also study poetry *informally* through poetry responses.

Your Task

You will be asked to write three poetry responses (one-page, double spaced, MLA format) over the next four weeks. Submit your responses on any three of the following dates: Monday April 14, Tuesday April 22, Monday, April 28, and Monday, May 5. Please bring a hardcopy to me and a digital copy to Turnitin.com before you arrive in class.

What Should You Write About?

You may approach this assignment several ways. You may write a critical analysis of the poem, considering such elements as tone, theme, structure, historical context, and so on. (this kind of response will simulate the AP Poetry Response on the Literature exam so you may find this most helpful). You can also begin with the theme and elaborate on that aspect, or even apply the poem to yourself by relating a personal experience and "connecting" to the poem. A credible response can also be one that uses just one line from the poem (while still maintaining the integrity of the poem). What you do with the response is up to you as long as you say something. Do not spend time telling how you could not understand the poem no matter how hard you tried. You do not need to like every poem you read or choose to write about, if you choose a poem you have strong negative feelings about, remember to support your ideas using evidence from the poem.

A suggestion to help you excel: read all the poems provided in this packages. Read them at different times, in different places, and in different moods. You will notice how the poems will reveal themselves to you. Although you are only required to write about one poem each week, please try to be acquainted with each of the poems on the list.