

Poetry Explication

Assignment Description:

An explication is a paper in which you closely analyze each line and even specific words in a poem to illustrate how a poem's smaller parts contribute to its overall meaning. For this assignment, you will explicate *one* of the poems (all are available online), which are also songs:

- "Disarm" by The Smashing Pumpkins
- "Fortunate Son" by Creedence Clearwater Revival
- "I am the Highway" by Audioslave
- "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac
- "Skinny Love" by Bon Iver
- "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel
- "Wish You Were Here" by Pink Floyd

To explicate a poem, consider the following:

- Why did the author write this poem?
- What universal idea or main point was the author trying to make through the poem?
- What poetic devices does the author use to make the theme evident? Consider the following poetic devices:
 - Figures of Speech: Metaphor, Simile, Personification, Hyperbole, Apostrophe.
 - Words that have different connotations.
 - Words that have multiple denotations.
 - Sound devices that bring attention to certain words or phrases like alliteration, assonance, euphony, cacophony, and rime.
 - The speaker of the poem.
 - The type of poem (narrative, lyric, didactic, dramatic).
 - The imagery in the poem.
 - The tone of the poem.

Consider the questions outlined above to develop a strong thesis statement that states what you think the overall meaning of the poem is. Then analyze each line of the poem, explaining the meaning of each line AND how each line contributes to the meaning of the poem as a whole. Note: you don't need to answer all of the above questions in your paper. These questions should just help with your brainstorming.

Audience:

For this assignment, you will be writing to a scholarly audience; therefore, the tone of your paper should be formal.

Requirements:

- Your essay must have an appropriate introduction, body, and conclusion.
 - Your introduction must include a brief overview of the poem and a thesis statement which explains the overall meaning of the poem.
 - The body of your paper must include detailed explanations of each line in your poem and should also analyze how each line shows the meaning as a whole.
 - Your conclusion should sum up your main ideas, reiterate your thesis statement, and leave the reader with something to think about.
- Your essay needs to be as grammatically and mechanically correct as possible.
- Your essay should be written in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins.
- Your essay should be 2-3 pages in length.
- Include a copy of the poem text at the end of the essay.

More Tips for Writing an Explication:

- Make sure that you mention the title and author of your poem in your introduction.
- Make sure that your thesis statement clearly states what you think the overall meaning of the poem is.
- Make sure that you consistently refer to the poem in the present tense.
- Make sure you write a line citation after each paraphrase, summary, or direct quote from the poem.
- Make sure you explain each piece of textual evidence you use.
- Quotes that are more than 3 lines long should be written in block quote format.
- Don't just "drop" quotes into your essay; make sure you introduce them with some kind of context.