

## Poetry Analysis with TP-CASTT

- Title** Examine the title before reading the poem. Consider connotations.
- Paraphrase** Translate the poem into your own words (literal/denotation). Resist the urge to jump to interpretation. A failure to understand what happens literally will lead to interpretive misunderstanding.
- Look for:
- Syntactical units (complete sentences rather than line by line)
  - Enjambment vs. end-stopped lines
- Connotation** Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal.
- Look for:
- Diction
  - Imagery (particularly metaphor, simile, personification)
  - Symbolism
  - Irony (paradox, understatement, oxymoron)
  - Allusions
  - Effect of sound devices (alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance, consonance, rhyme)
- Attitude** Tone: examine both the speaker's and the poet's attitudes. Don't confuse the author with the persona of the speaker.
- Look for:
- Speaker's attitude toward self, other characters, and the subject
  - Attitudes of characters other than the speaker
  - Poet's attitude toward the speaker, other characters, subject, and the reader
- Shifts** Note shifts in speaker, attitudes
- Look for:
- Occasion of poem
  - Key words (but, yet)
  - Punctuation (dashes, periods, colons, etc.)
  - Stanza divisions
  - Changes in line or stanza length/structure
  - Irony (sometimes irony hides shifts)
  - Effect of structure on meaning
- Title** Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level
- Theme** First list what the poem is about (subjects); then determine what the poet is saying about each of those subjects (theme). Remember, theme must be expressed as a complete sentence.