

How to annotate a poem:

1. Read it through once. Write any questions that pop into your head.
2. Circle any words that you do not understand and look them up. Write the definitions on the poem.
3. Identify the rhyming scheme using a new letter for each end rhyme within the poem.
4. Identify figurative language used within the poem. Think about the meaning of each figurative device and why the poet used it.
5. Look for sound devices such as alliteration, assonance, and consonance. How do they affect the poem?
6. Is anything repeated? Why would the poet choose to repeat this?
7. Look closely at punctuation. Does it reveal anything about the speaker of the poem? (Example: Does it make them seem rambling, confident, nervous?)
8. Circle any words that are interesting or striking. What do these words make you think of (connotations). What do these words reveal about the speaker's attitude towards the topic? (tone)
9. Reread the poem. If you are still having a hard time understanding the poem, repeat the annotation process!



Title meaning:

Identify what the title says about itself, the poem, the world and explain it briefly.

Organization:

Structure and Patterns: stanzas, lines, rhyme, meter

Setting:

When and where the story takes place

Keywords:

Essential words for understanding the poem

Literary devices:

Look for imagery, poetic devices, sound devices, figures of speech

Tone:

The poet's attitude toward the poem's speaker, reader, and subject matter, as interpreted by the reader.

Mood:

The atmosphere that is prevalent in the poem: feelings and emotions in the reader

Main idea:

What the piece is mostly about: the big picture written usually in one sentence

Themes:

The underlying message that the writer or artist wants to convey

Message to reader:

The message/teaching/advice the poet wants the reader to take out of the poem

Personal opinion:

The personal reaction to this poem: feelings, beliefs, values that were challenged or confirmed by the poem

Read and annotate the poem:

Invictus

By WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

Title meaning: _____

Organization: _____

Setting: _____

Keywords: _____

Literary devices: _____

Tone: _____

Mood: _____

Main idea: _____

Themes: _____

Message to reader: _____

Personal opinion: _____



Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____



These are suggested answers which may vary with other interpretations:

Invictus

By WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
 Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
 I am the captain of my soul.

Title meaning: unconquerable or undefeated in Latin

Organization: four rhymed quatrain stanzas, iambic tetrameter, ABAB rhyme scheme

Setting: no clear setting

Keywords: night, soul, fate

Literary devices: enjambment (lines 3-4, 9-10, 11-12), metaphor (night), personification (night), imagery (black as the pit, my heart is bloody), simile (black as the pit), assonance, consonance, alliteration.

Tone: optimistic, defiant, pessimistic (stanza 3)

Mood: resign, confident, somber, aloof

Main idea: the human spirit and its ability to overcome adversity

Themes: suffering, resilience, fate, free will, agnosticism

Message to reader: never lose hope no matter the circumstance, and how you control your fate and decide your future

Personal opinion: various responses



Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

