

How to Analyze a Poem: One Strategy: TP-CASTT

T: Title

- Consider the title.
 - What ideas/images does it evoke?
 - What do you think it means before you read the poem?

P: Paraphrase

- Put the poem into your own words. Get the surface “meaning”: what is the poem about?
 - Write your paraphrase next to the poem
 - Highlight or underline words, phrases, images that stand out to you

C: Connotation

- Consider what you highlighted/underlined. What could those images/words tell you?
- Look for:
 - Sound devices (alliteration, rhyming pattern, etc.)
 - Point of view
 - Language choices (diction)
 - Figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification)
 - Symbolism
 - Tone
 - Irony
 - Comparisons / contrasts

A: Attitude

- What is the speaker’s attitude? What is the tone of the poem?
- What is the author’s attitude/tone? Does it differ from the speaker?

S: Shift

- Is there a shift or progression from one idea to another in the poem? Look for:
 - shifts in speakers and in attitudes/tone.
 - key words (but, yet, however, although)
 - punctuation (dashes, periods, colons, ellipsis)
 - stanza divisions
 - changes in line or stanza length or both
 - irony (sometimes irony hides shifts)
 - changes in diction

T: Title, again

- Consider the title again.
 - Has your interpretation of it changed after reading the poem?

T: Theme

- What is the poem saying? What message or idea is the author getting across?