



ALMOST EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT
AP[®] POETRY ANALYSIS

English IV Honors
Oualline/Strawn

OBJECTIVE:

1. ANALYZE AP[®] POETRY PROMPTS AND RUBRICS
2. CALIBRATE SCORING FOR AP[®] POETRY ANALYSIS ESSAYS

“The Black Walnut Tree” (Prompt from 2013)

Carefully read the following poem by Mary Oliver. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Oliver conveys the relationship between the tree and family through the use of figurative language and other poetic devices.

1 My mother and I debate:
2 we could sell
3 the black walnut tree
4 to the lumberman,
5 and pay off the mortgage.
6 Likely some storm anyway
7 will churn down its dark boughs,
8 smashing the house. We talk
9 slowly, two women trying
10 in a difficult time to be wise.
11 Roots in the cellar drains,
12 I say, and she replies
13 that the leaves are getting heavier
14 every year, and the fruit
15 harder to gather away.
16 But something brighter than money
17 moves in our blood – an edge
18 sharp and quick as a trowel
19 that wants us to dig and sow.
20 So we talk, but we don't do
21 anything. That night I dream
22 of my fathers out of Bohemia
23 filling the blue fields

24 of fresh and generous Ohio
25 with leaves and vines and orchards.
26 What my mother and I both know
27 is that we'd crawl with shame
28 in the emptiness we'd made
29 in our own and our fathers' backyard.
30 So the black walnut tree
31 swings through another year
32 of sun and leaping winds,
33 of leaves and bounding fruit,
34 and, month after month, the whip-
35 crack of the mortgage

“The Black Walnut Tree”

by Mary Oliver

In your groups, discuss the poem and highlight examples that show the relationship between the tree and the family.

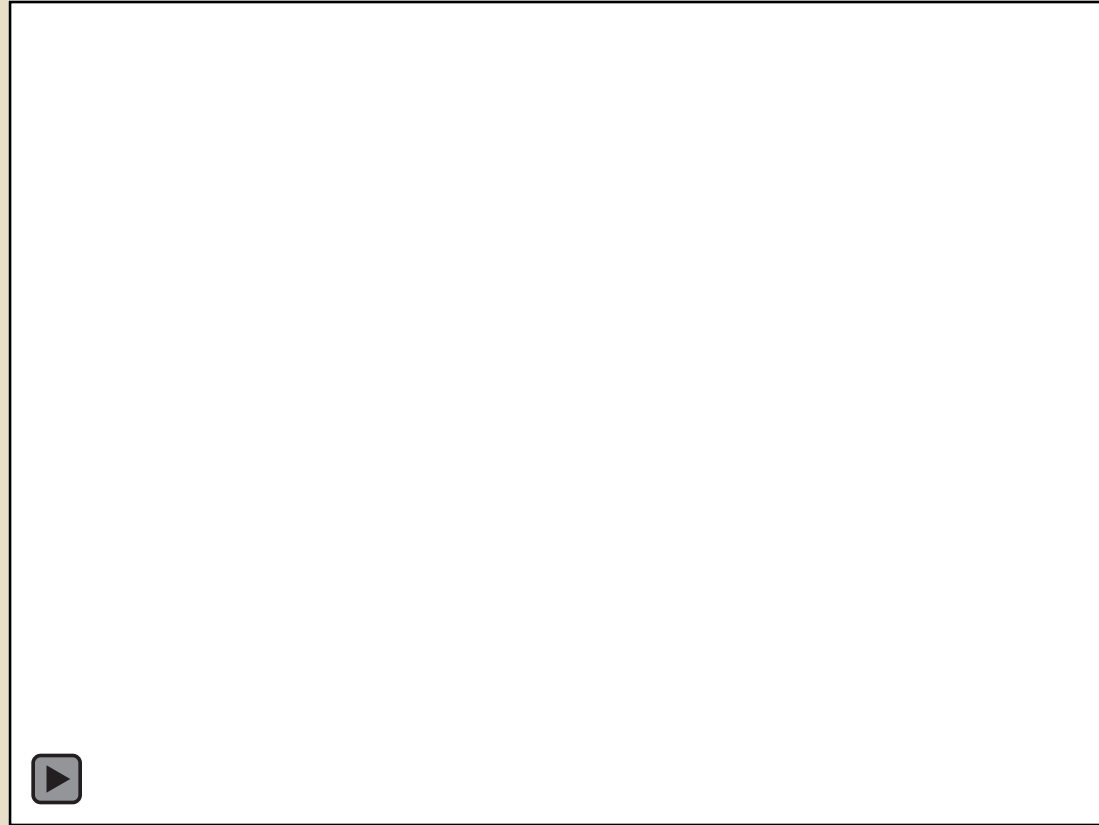
Also look for examples of figurative language and other poetic devices that you notice.

The Rubric

- Now take a few minutes to **read through** the rubric.
- Highlight **key phrases** for each score range.



HEFTY or *Wimpy* ?



Sample Essays



- Read through the sample essays quietly.
- For each essay, determine whether you think the essay is **HEFTY** or *wimpy*.
 - **HEFTY** = upper half score (9-8, 7-6)
 - *Wimpy* = lower half score (4-3, 2-1)
 - 5 = responds to the prompt but superficial, surface-level response (neither upper-half nor lower-half)
- Compare and discuss with your group to determine the numerical score for each essay.

The Big Reveal



A. 8 **HEFTY**

E. 5

B. 6 **HEFTY**

F. 3 *wimpy*

C. 4 *wimpy*

G. 7 **HEFTY**

D. 9 **HEFTY**

H. 2 *wimpy*

Reflection

- What made the 9-8 and 7-6 essays **HEFTY**?
- What made the 4-3 and 2 essays *wimpy*?



OBJECTIVE:

CREATE YOUR OWN
AP-STYLE POETRY
ANALYSIS PROMPT.

Creating Your Own Prompt and Rubric

Single Poem Option

The following poem is by Rachel M. Harper. Read the poem carefully. Then, considering such elements as imagery, form, and tone, write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the relationship between music and the speaker's complex memories of her family. (2017)

Read carefully the following poem by Richard Wilbur, first published in 1949. Then, write an essay in which you analyze how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. You may wish to consider poetic elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone. (2016)

Read carefully the following poem by Robert Pack, paying close attention to the relationship between form and meaning. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the literary techniques used in this poem contribute to its meaning. (2011)

Creating Your Own Prompt and Rubric

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Creating Your Own Prompt and Rubric

Comparison Option

Each of the two poems below is concerned with a young man at the age of twenty-one, traditionally the age of adulthood. Read the two poems carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you compare and contrast the poems, analyzing the poetic techniques, such as point of view and tone, that each writer uses to make his point about coming of age. (2010)

The poems below, published in 1789 and 1794, were written by William Blake in response to the condition of chimney sweeps. Usually small children, chimney sweeps were forced inside chimneys to clean their interiors. Read the two poems carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the two poems, taking into consideration the poetic techniques Blake uses in each. (2005)

The poems below are concerned with darkness and night. Read each poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the poems, analyzing the significance of dark or night in each. In your essay, consider elements such as point of view, imagery, and structure. (2004)

These two poems present encounters with nature, but the two poets handle those encounters very differently. In a well-organized essay, distinguish between the attitudes (toward nature, toward the solitary individual, etc.) expressed in the poems and discuss the techniques that the poets use to present these attitudes. Be sure to support your statements with specific references. (1985)

Creating Your Own Prompt and Rubric

Comparison Option

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Look at the S of your FRACTIONS analysis

Example (“Nothing Gold Can Stay”)

- Which poetic devices did you include?

These should be the broader terms that you were able to connect to meaning (theme).

imagery, figurative language, tone

- What is the topic of the poem (beyond the surface level)?

the relationship between nature and change

Teacher Model Prompt:

The following poem by Robert Frost explores the relationship between nature and change. Read the carefully. Then, considering such elements as imagery, figurative language, and tone, write a well-organized essay which you analyze how Frost explores the relationship between nature and change.

AP² ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
SCORING GUIDELINES
Robert Frost, “Nothing Gold Can Stay”

The score should reflect the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, style, and mechanics. Reward students for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by 1 point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a 3.

- 9 – 8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how Frost explores the relationship between nature and change through elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone. The writers of these essays offer a range of interpretations; they provide convincing readings of the meaning of the poem related to the relationship between nature and change and Frost’s use of elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone. They demonstrate consistent and effective control over the elements of composition in language appropriate to the analysis of the poetry. Their textual references are apt and specific. Though they may not be error-free, these essays are perceptive in their analysis and demonstrate writing that is clear and sophisticated, and in the case of a 9, especially persuasive.
- 7 – 6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how Frost explores the relationship between nature and change through elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone. They are less thorough or less precise in their discussion of the meaning of the poem related to the relationship between nature and change and Frost’s use of elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone. Their analysis of the relationship and the use of elements is less convincing. These essays demonstrate the student’s ability to express ideas clearly, making references to the text, although they do not exhibit the same level of effective writing as the 9-8 papers. Essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.
- 5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible analysis of how Frost explores the relationship between nature and change through elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone, but tend to be superficial or pedestrian in their analysis of the relationship between meaning and the use of elements. They often rely on paraphrase, which may contain some analysis, implicit or explicit. Their analysis of the meaning of the poem related the relationship between nature and change or of Frost’s use of such elements as imagery, figurative language, and tone may be vague, formulaic, or minimally supported by references to the text. There may be minor misinterpretations of the poem. These students demonstrate some control of language, but their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7-6 essays.
- 4 – 3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant, or may ignore the way Frost explores the relationship between nature and change or Frost’s use of literary elements. Evidence from the poem may be slight or misconstrued, or the essays may rely on paraphrase only. The writing often demonstrates a lack of control over the conventions of composition: inadequate development of ideas, accumulation of errors, or a focus that is unclear, inconsistent, or repetitive. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.
- 2 – 1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the student’s ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the passage.

Creating a Rubric

- Three **model rubrics** on the website—pick the one that works best for your prompt
- The **bolded information** should be changed to reflect YOUR prompt
- The language should be **consistent throughout** the rubric