

Analyzing a Poem: Structure and Meaning

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The student will annotate a poem to identify structure, theme, and literary devices, then diagram its organization.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- printed or copied poem (student may hand-copy a public domain poem, e.g., a Robert Frost or Langston Hughes poem)
- colored pencils
- ruler
- paper

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

1. Copy out (or print) a short poem of 12-20 lines by a poet of your choice; number every line in the margin.
2. Annotate the poem: circle the theme word(s), underline any figurative language, and bracket the stanza breaks.
3. Draw a simple diagram on a separate page showing the poem's structure as boxes (one box per stanza) with a one-sentence summary inside each box.
4. Write a 3-sentence paragraph stating the poem's theme and citing one specific line as evidence.
5. Draw an arrow diagram showing how the tone shifts (if it does) from the first stanza to the last.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the theme of the poem you chose, in one sentence?

2. Give one line of evidence that supports the theme you identified.

3. How many stanzas does the poem have, and does the tone change between them?

4. Why do poets organize ideas into stanzas instead of one continuous block of text?
