

Another method of analyzing poetry is the TP-CASTT method of analysis (a close cousin of the method we have been using.) The following is a breakdown of this method:

- Title:** Ponder the title before reading the poem
- Paraphrase:** Translate the poem into your own words
- Connotation:** Contemplate the poem for meaning beyond the literal level
- Attitude:** Observe both the speaker's and the poet's attitude (tone).
- Shifts:** Note shifts in speakers and attitudes
- Title:** Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level
- Theme:** Determine what the poet is saying

1. Look at the title and attempt to predict what the poem will be about.
2. Paraphrase the literal meaning or "plot" of the poem. A true understanding of the poem must evolve from comprehension of "what's going on in the poem."
3. For poetry, connotation indicates that students should examine any and all poetic devices, **focusing on how such devices contribute to the meaning, the effect, or both of a poem.** Students may consider imagery (especially simile, metaphor, personification), symbolism, diction, point of view, and sound devices (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, and rhyme).
4. Having examined the poem's devices and clues closely, you are ready to explore the multiple attitudes that may be present in the poem.
5. Rarely does a poet begin and end the poetic experience in the same place. Discovery of a poet's understanding of an experience is critical to the understanding of a poem. Trace the feelings of the speaker from the beginning to the end, paying particular attention to the conclusion.

Look for the following to find shifts:

1. Key words (but, yet, however, although)
2. Punctuation (dashes, periods, colons, ellipsis)
3. Stanza division
4. Changes in line or stanza length or both
5. Irony (sometimes irony hides shifts)
6. Effect of structure on meaning
7. Changes in sound (rhyme) may indicate changes in meaning
8. Changes in diction (slang to formal language)

6. Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.
7. Identify the theme by recognizing the human experience, motivation, or condition suggested by the poem.

First summarize the plot (in writing or orally); next, list the subject or subjects of the poem (moving from literal subjects to abstract concepts such as war, death, discovery); then, to determine what the poet is saying about each subject and write a complete sentence.

Janet Waking By [John Crowe Ransom](#)

Beautifully Janet slept
Till it was deeply morning. She woke then
And thought about her dainty-feathered hen,
To see how it had kept.

One kiss she gave her mother,
Only a small one gave she to her daddy
Who would have kissed each curl of his shining baby;
No kiss at all for her brother.

“Old Chucky, Old Chucky!” she cried,
Running across the world upon the grass
To Chucky’s house, and listening. But alas,
Her Chucky had died.

It was a transmogrifying bee
Came droning down on Chucky’s old bald head
And sat and put the poison. It scarcely bled,
But how exceedingly

And purplely did the knot
Swell with the venom and communicate
Its rigour! Now the poor comb stood up straight
But Chucky did not.

So there was Janet
Kneeling on the wet grass, crying her brown hen
(Translated far beyond the daughters of men)
To rise and walk upon it.

And weeping fast as she had breath
Janet implored us, “Wake her from her sleep!”
And would not be instructed in how deep
Was the forgetful kingdom of death.

Example:

Plot: In "Janet Walking" Janet awakens one morning and runs to greet her pet chicken only to discover that a bee had stung and killed the bird. The discovery desolates Janet to such a degree that her father cannot comfort her.

Subjects: 1. A child's first experience of death

2. loss of a pet

3. innocence

Themes: 1. Children become aware of the inevitability of death and are transformed by the knowledge.

2. The death of innocence is inevitable