

Poetry Essay Rubric

- 9-8** These well-organized and well-written essays clearly demonstrate an understanding of how the speaker / author in _____ uses _____ to convey _____. In their references, they are apt and specific. Though not without flaws, these papers will offer a convincing interpretation of the poem, as well as consistent control over the virtues of effective composition, including the language unique to the criticism of poetry. They demonstrate the writer's ability to read perceptively and to write with clarity and sophistication.
- 7-6** These essays also demonstrate an understanding of _____'s poem; but, compared to the best essays, they are less thorough or less precise in their analysis of how the speaker / author uses _____ to convey _____. In addition to minor flaws in interpretation, their analysis is likely to be less well-supported and less incisive. While these essays demonstrate the writer's ability to express ideas clearly, they do so with less mastery and control over the hallmarks of mature composition than do papers in the 9-8 range.
- 5** While these essays deal with the assigned task without important errors, they have little to say beyond what is easiest to grasp. Their analysis of how _____ conveys _____ may be vague. As a critical explanation, they deal with the poem in a cursory way. Though the writing is sufficient to convey the writer's thoughts, these essays are typically pedestrian, not as well conceived, organized, or developed as upper-half papers. They may reveal simplistic thinking or immature writing.
- 4-3** These lower-half essays often reflect an incomplete or over-simplified understanding of the poem. Typically, they fail to respond adequately to part of the question. Their analysis may be weak, meager or irrelevant, inaccurate or unclear. The writing demonstrates uncertain control over the elements of effective composition. These essays usually contain recurrent stylistic flaws and/or misreadings, and they often lack persuasive evidence from the text. Essays scored 3 exhibit more than one of the above infelicities; they are marred by a significant misinterpretation, insufficient development, or serious omissions.
- 2-1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. Writers may seriously misread the poem. Frequently, these essays are unacceptably brief. They are poorly written on several counts and may contain many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. While some attempt may have been made to answer the question, the writer's observations are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Essays that are especially inexact, vacuous, and/or mechanically unsound should be scored 1.
- 0** This is a response with no more than a reference to the task or no response at all.