

EN142 Intro to Poetry Student Prompts

Week 1: Poetic Manifesto:

Before we launch into this course, let's first pause to think about what exactly poetry might be--to the world, to other writers, and ourselves. Thoughtfully answer the following prompts in complete sentences.

1. What is poetry in a general sense? What do poems do? What first comes to mind when you think about poetry? Cite one example (even vaguely) and discuss what it is and why it's considered poetry. (100+ words)
2. What is poetry to you? Discuss your personal history with poetry of any kind, including forms, authors, ideas, etc. (100+ words)
3. What are your personal goals for this class? What do you aim to learn or practice? What do you feel are your strengths and weaknesses going into this course? (100+ words)

Poetry Analysis & Prompt I

Each week you will have the opportunity to closely analyze and discuss a poet of your choice in a guided prompt. These exercises help us practice asking good questions and developing ideas about the poetry we read. Part of this prompt includes writing a poem of your own based on a prompt more or less relevant to the reading.

Analysis Question I: Pick one of the narrative poems we have read this week and identify 2 key themes (for example, one of the themes of Beowulf is bravery). Use at least two quotations to support these observations: how the poem emphasizes these ideas. Next, think about why the narratives are written as such: What kinds of people are represented and why? Who is praised? Who is put down? (150+ words)

Poetry Prompt I: Write a narrative poem. Retell a short fictional or nonfictional story in poetic form, imitating one of this week's poets' styles, word choices, and structures. The poem must be at least 250 words long and include the markers of narrative--a beginning, middle, and end; a problem or conflict followed by a resolution; and characters. It need not have rhyme or meter, but I encourage you to experiment with that.

Poetry Analysis & Prompt II

Analysis Question II: Evaluate the short excerpt from Pope's "An Essay on Criticism." How does he delineate between a good critic and a bad one? What does Pope's ideal methodology look like? Use at least one quotation to support your analysis. Next, try to practically apply Pope's methodology to one of this week's poems, placing yourself as the critic, and imagining what they might say. (150+ words)

Poetry Prompt II: Write either 1) a concrete poem after the manner of Herbert in 100+ words, or 2) a sonnet after Shakespeare in iambic pentameter. If you choose a concrete poem, the

poem's content should be related to its formal shape in some manner, and be sure to take a screenshot or convert the document to PDF format to preserve the formatting.

Poetry Analysis & Prompt III

Analysis Question III: This analysis prompt is a task in artful summary. Write a 25-word critical précis of one of this week's or last week's poems (other than Wheatley's "On Virtue"). A précis is an abstract or summary of another text; your task is to compose one in exactly 25 words. Choose them wisely! This should be in complete sentence(s), and you might begin by identifying keywords or ideas in the poem. Next, in 100+ words, explain why you chose those words, including at least 1 direct quotation from the original poem.

Poetry Prompt II: Write a 25-word précis poem about poetry. This might include what poetry is, what your experience reading it has been, or another angle. As with the above prompt, it must be exactly 25 words. You might start with "Poetry is/is not..."

Poetry Analysis & Prompt IV

Analysis Prompt IV: Select 1 poem from the syllabus and provide a thorough annotation, including scansion, figurative language, repetition, punctuation, and anything else of note. Refer to relevant handouts for what to look for, including identifying rhyme, meter, rhythm, metaphors, similes, personification, etc. This should look messy with annotation; complete sentences aren't expected, but detailed observations are. You might copy the poem into a Word Doc and use different colors, or print it out for ease of annotation. A successful exercise will be thorough and show invested time. I highly encourage you to select a poem/poet that you plan to write about for Assignment 1! This will be useful!

Poetry Prompt IV: Write an ode to an everyday object in 150+ words, roughly imitating Keats' "Ode to a Grecian Urn." What makes this mundane thing interesting? What's its history? Try to use figurative language in your writing.

Poetry Analysis & Prompt V

Analysis Question V: Refer back to our Emily Dickinson reading. Her use of pacing and punctuation is quite unique. In 200+ words, describe what it feels like to read her poetry and answer the following questions: What is your sense of her musicality, sound, rhythm, and use of space? What is the effect of her style of capitalization and punctuation? Use at least 2 quotations from Dickinson as examples, cited properly.

Poetry Prompt V: Write your own nonsense poem in the manner of Carroll's "Jabberwocky" in 150+ words. It doesn't necessarily need a plot, but you should invent new words, phrases, creatures, etc., and provide a dictionary of definitions after the poem. Let your imagination run wild!

Poetry Analysis & Prompt VI

Analysis Question VI: Which Frost poem is your favorite and why? What are your favorite line(s)? What do you think makes Frost such an iconic and memorable poet in American culture? Answer these questions in 200+ words.

Poetry Prompt VI: Rewrite "The Road Not Taken" in your own words. Use Frost's first line, but complete the poem with your own words in about 100 words. Try to mirror the form and rhyme scheme of the original poem.

Poetry Analysis & Prompt VII

Analysis Prompt VII: Reread Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" on Perusall. Highlight and discuss at least 2 lines that are difficult or confusing in some way and at least 2 lines you like in some way. Explain why.

Poetry Prompt VII: Write your own version of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" with your own subject. In other words, write "Thirteen Ways of Looking at ____." Try to follow Steven's form and structure in 100+ words.

Poetry Analysis & Prompt VIII

Analysis Prompt VIII: Select two poems from our recent modernist readings. Briefly compare and contrast them (analyzing their subject matter, theme, form, figurative language, etc.) and consider how both of them illustrate modernist poetics in 250+ words. Use at least one quotation from each poem.

Poetry Prompt VIII: Select one sonnet from our pre-Spring Break readings (see Shakespeare, Donne, Blake, Shelley, E. B. Browning, Rossetti, etc.) and visually rearrange the lines and words into a modernist form (see Cummings, Williams, Stevens, Pound, Moore, etc.). Play with phrases, syllables, indentation, etc., and think about how your new formal changes affect the meaning or impression of the original poem.

Poetry Analysis & Prompt IX

Analysis Prompt IX: Compare and contrast O'Hara's "Why I Am Not a Painter" and Ashberry's "The Painter" in 150+ words. Both poems discuss the process of artistic creation. How are painting and writing different and/or similar? Use at least one quote from each poem.

Poetry Prompt IX: For this prompt, compose a poem of any form, style, etc. of at least 100 words. This is your blank canvas to write. If you're struggling for inspiration, reuse a previous prompt.

Poetry Analysis & Prompt X

Analysis Prompt X: Write your own "Antagonism" piece after the manner of Kay Ryan. Choose a poet we've read in this class and write a short playful mockery or critique. What's your hot take on them? Why? Feel free to use first-person pronouns and speak your opinions and impressions in hyperbole (200+ words).

Poetry Prompt X: Compose and upload a second black-out poem (we will complete one example in class on Friday 4/15!)

Poetry Analysis & Prompt XI

Analysis Prompt XI: Imagine hypothetically that each of this week's poems was about to be erased from human memory forever (roll with me on this!). You have the chance to preserve only one. Which do you pick and why? What's your runner-up and why? (200+ words).

Poetry Prompt XI: Write an Alexie "monosonnet." Imitate how he plays with and deconstructs the traditional form in at least 150 words.

Poetry Analysis & Prompt XII

Analysis Prompt XII: In about 250 words, discuss your personal journey with poetry throughout the semester. Which poems have stuck out to you (positively or negatively)? Why? What have you learned about language, expression, literature, analysis, etc. broadly? If you were to answer again "What is poetry?" what would you say?

Poetry Prompt XII: Develop a poetry prompt for yourself and respond to it. Add a creative twist to the previous prompt, or simply find one on Google that you like. Note the prompt alongside the final poem, which should be at least 100 words.