

One Page Concept Review: the Q1 Essay

Q1 Prompts Grouped into Types of Questions

Determining speaker's attitude toward something	63%
Comparing parts of the poem and how they relate to the whole	15%
Analyzing a specific poetic or literary technique	11%
Analyzing methods of characterization	7%
Other	4%

As You Read:

- Ask yourself, "How is the tone of the poem being created?" Even if in a first reading, these impressions are more about the mood created in you, you are probably going to have to show some awareness of tone in order to complete the task.
- Ask yourself, "Is this poem mostly serious in tone, or is there some degree of whimsy, humor, or even irony?" If it is a double poem prompt, it is common for the second poem to be a more whimsical, humorous, or ironic take on the ideas that are treated seriously in the first poem.
- Ask yourself, "Are there any obvious complexities, ambiguities, or even paradoxes?" You will want to use any and all contradictions as evidence in your essay. Do not flatten or over-simplify.
- Look for poems structured around either an extended metaphor or a paradox.

Annotation:

- Mark the break or tone shift that is present in most Q1 poems. Even if you don't end up using it for a structure, it is still important to understand why it is there.
- If you are going to spend more than two or three minutes marking up a text, the Q1 poem is the place to do it. Even if you are doing other things, for this essay you are typically still looking for patterns of diction and imagery, so it's not wasted time to look at words and images in more detail for shared or contrasting connotations.
- If this goes on for more than ten minutes, though, it has gone on too long. As always, keep track of your time. Taking the time to annotate needs to actually save you time on the back end.

Intro and Thesis:

- Intros for this essay are typically short. The reader has the text right in front of him or her, so there is no need to spend a lot of time setting up the text.
- Do not use the language of the prompt. Put it in your own words.
- Prompts are two parts: How does Concept X lead to some bigger idea in the text.
- There is zero reason to list the literary devices you plan on using in your thesis unless you are writing about just one. (Example: an essay breaking down an extended metaphor or one pattern of repeated imagery-- both of which are solid Q1 essay types)
- You can narrow the prompt, particularly if you do limit yourself to an examination of one approach to the text. However, your conclusion must demonstrate an understanding of the text as a whole.
- Like the Q3 essay, you should default to trying to make this a theme analysis. Even if the selection is an excerpt from a larger poem, College Board will typically choose a text that is self-contained. The theme (or other larger idea) that you are engaging should be identified in your thesis.

Best Structures:

- **Before/After** [I. Intro and thesis; II. Up until X moment, Y is true (Y=an interpretation, not an event); III. After X moment, Z is true (Z=an interpretation, not an event); IV. Change shows something important in the text (from thesis)]
- **Cause/Effect** [I. Intro and thesis; II. X is true; III. X causes Y; IV. Y shows something important in the text (from thesis)]
- **Contrast** [I. Intro and thesis; II. Concept X; III. Contrasts with Concept Y; IV. Difference/Preference for X or Y shows something important in the text (from thesis)]
- **Idea/Qualification** [I. Intro and thesis; II. Idea/Expectation/Appearance; III. Idea/Expectation/Appearance is qualified/contradicted/reversed; IV. The gap between the two shows something important in the text (from thesis)]

If you do something else, you want a structure where body paragraph one sets up body paragraph two. Look at the Sample Structures for Four Paragraph Papers in the AP Writing sub-section of my web-page for more ideas. You are free to write more than four paragraphs, just do not run out of time.

Do NOT structure your essay by device (e.g., a paragraph about diction and a paragraph about metaphor).

Body Paragraphs:

- You must have topic sentences. This is non-negotiable.
- There is zero reason to suck up to the author (this is such a high school thing). It's just diction. Not *powerful*, *strong*, or *well-chosen* diction. The only adjective attached to a literary term should be a tone word.
- Evidence should generally be chronological and work its way through the text.
- The "I" in a poem is the speaker-- not the *narrator* or the *author*.
- Set up evidence. Do not drop quotes or write things like *For example*, "*We hate home*"
- Indicate line breaks in quotes with a /. (Example: "*We all hate home / And having to be there*")
- Use only the part of the quote you need. Do not over-quote.
- Do not string a bunch of snippet quotes together and call it analysis. This is usually just summary.
- You can't just say the evidence shows something. You have to *explain why* it shows something. Remember you are teaching the piece to the reader.
- Forbidden topics: details/devices are there to make the work come alive, help the reader to picture something, or make a character or situation seem more real. Every single fiction author who ever lived is including every detail to do these things, so pointing this out is accomplishing nothing.
- Instead, your point should be something that helps the reader to understand the piece. Why is the author making these choices to communicate his or her ideas?

Conclusion:

- Sum up what you have proved. Be specific when doing this.
- Then transition into a discussion about how this fits into the larger picture of the work as a whole. This is easiest if you are discussing a particular theme.
- See the Writing About Theme in the AP Writing sub-section of my web-page for more information about how to conclude with a thematic statement.