

How to write a critical appreciation

A poem's **critical appreciation** is the process of evaluating, comprehending, and interpreting a literary work from a DISCERNING perspective. The critical reading or appreciation includes the meaning of the words, the rhyme scheme, the speaker, **figures of speech**, references to other works (intertextuality), the style of language, the poet's general writing style (if mentioned), the genre, the context, the speaker's tone, and other elements. It does not imply that you are critiquing the poem. A critical appraisal aids in the comprehension of the verse.

Identify the Author's Thesis and Meaning

Thesis is the main idea of a poem. To begin with, every piece of art has a fundamental topic or idea, and reading the poem several times might help you find it.

Understanding the perspective better requires a deeper understanding of the writer's life and background. Read the poem several times to understand what the speaker is attempting to express. In a thesaurus, look up the definitions of difficult or odd words. The poem's title serves as a guide to the overall meaning and summary of the ideas addressed.

Rhyme Scheme

Look for words that rhyme. Each line has them at the end. Rhyming words could also be found in the midst of the line. Take note of the rhyme scheme. In a poem with four lines, for example, if rhyming words appear at the end of each line alternately, the rhyme scheme will be *a b a b*.

Speaker

Determine who the poem's speaker is. A youngster, an elderly person, a shepherd, a swordsman, a student, a milkmaid, a sailor, an animal, or even an object such as a chair or a location such as a house or a mountain can all be examples. Each speaker will provide a unique message.

Language and Style

Describe the writer's style of writing (figurative or non-figurative). Give details about the poem's speaker, as well as the poem's style, mood, and tone. It's always a good idea to provide the poem's rhyme system.

Intertextuality

We observe another poetry is alluded to or looked back on while composing the critical appraisal of a poem. This is known as reference or intertextuality. In its framework of people delivering stories during a voyage, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* refers to Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

In Ancient Literature, the use of intertextuality (the interaction between comparable or related works of literature that reflects and influences an audience's interpretation of texts) is quite widespread. Giving a brief overview of the relevant texts and offering a related story might increase your appreciation and demonstrate your analytical understanding.

Context

The context provides us the time and location of the poetry. It was this that inspired the poem. The context could be a major political event, such as the French Revolution. P.B. Shelley's famous *Ode to the West Wind* was inspired by it. The poem brilliantly encapsulates the revolution's spirit and heralds the advent of a new era.

Genre

The term "genre" refers to the poem's classification. Each genre has its own set of rules and traits. Epic poetry, for example, is a long narrative poem with thousands of lines dealing with divine characters, demi-gods, or great generals from the past and detailing a horrible conflict or extraordinary voyage on which humanity's fate relies. For example, Homer's *Iliad*, J. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and other poetry. A sonnet is a 14-line poetry that expresses intimate feelings. For example, Shakespeare's sonnet "Let me not to the marriage of genuine minds" extols sincere love and loyalty. Satire, mock-epic, ballad, lyric, ode, parody, and other genres are among them.

Sonnet 18 is the 18th lyrical sonnet in William Shakespeare's long sequence of 154 sonnets. The poem is one of Shakespeare's greatest sonnets. It's also called "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?" after the first line. This lovely poetry is about eternal love for a beloved friend and fair youth. Here, William Shakespeare contrasts a summer's day with his friend, arguing that his friend is superior. Some speculate that Sonnet 18 was written for the Earl of Southampton.

Sonnet 18 as a Sonnet

Shakespeare's sonnet "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?" Shakespeare composed a large number of sonnets during his lifetime. One of the best sonnets is Sonnet 18.

It has fourteen lines separated into three quatrains and a couplet. The poem's rhyme scheme is "abab cdcd efef gg."

The concept of variety is presented in the first two quatrains, while immortality is declared in the third. At the end, the couplet "gg" also denotes immortality. In Sonnet 18, the main topic of all three quatrains is "Time."

Analysis of Sonnet 18

"Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?" Shakespeare asks at the start of the verse, maintaining the poem's topic. The narrator wishes to make a comparison between his friend and a summer day. But he quickly realizes that his friend is more attractive. He conjures up a scene of a hot summer day with brisk breezes snuffing out the budding roses. Furthermore, summer is a rather brief season. So, in the opening quatrains, the narrator wants to compare his friend to summer, but he abandons the idea after considering summer's negative aspects.

The narrator tries to persuade his listeners of his point of view in 5-8 lines. He concentrates on the summer's more negative repercussions. The sun is hotter in the summer, and cloudy skies can make the sky appear dark.

According to Shakespeare, not just the sun, but all things on the planet are subject to change. They may lose their attractiveness inadvertently or organically. Not everything is the same as it was previously. "Untrimm'd" refers to the natural shapes changing.

The narrator returns to the subject (his friend) in the third quatrain and claims eternity for him through his inscription. He equated man's youth to eternal summer, claiming that it would never fade away and would never alter. The narrator clarifies in the last line of the quatrains that this poem will transcend death and grow his friend's eternity with eternal lines.