

TPCASTT PLUS

**UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF
POETRY**

WHAT IS TPCASTT?

- An acronym to prompt students to systematically examine a poem by attending to different features.
- Pre-AP College Board strategy
- Leads students through the thinking prior to developing a thesis for an analysis of a poem

T	Title
P	Paraphrase
C	Connotation
A	Attitude
S	Shift
T	Title
T	Theme

IT'S JUST AN ACRONYM!

- Each element can (and should) be taught throughout a K-12 education.
- Many standards are supported within these elements.
- Some lessons work at any age!
- All ages can learn
- TPCASTT assures that attention is given to many aspects of a poem.
- I add a few things to TPCASTT: **Dictation, Performance, Writing, and Author/Occasion**
- Also I occasionally use a Pre-Reading Activity on my website
- Here's what lessons look like.

TPCASTT FOR HONORS ENGLISH 11

- All Juniors used the TPCASTT strategy to analyze a poem, but I taught only Honors
- Each student would select a poem from the *Poetry 180* Collection (67 students) and provide a TPCASTT Analysis, plus complete a dictation, spoken performance, poetic response and author/occasion research.
- No two students could analyze the same poem.
- *Poetry 180* Collection was a strategic choice, but required some assistance at times pairing poems with students.
- BUT – I've taught most of these elements to students much younger. MUCH!

DICTATION EXERCISE

- Read poem aloud.
- Spell any words.
- Indicate all caps, punctuation, line endings.
- Students hand write the poem.
- Listen.
- “What do you notice?” (Ask many times.)
- “What is the most important word? (Collect many answers. Ask students to defend choices.)
 - ALL words are important. Poets are wordsmiths. Every word matters.
 - Defense of word chosen is argument and evidence! Young students can do this!

TITLE

- Students are prompted to attend to the Title of the poem TWICE.
- The first time, students can examine a title only and free-write all their associations with just the title.
- They make predictions.
- Strategy: Write an original poem using that title – before experiencing the poem.
- Envelope Prompt: Variation includes title and first line.
- Titles are essential! Some students are naturally inclined to skip over them! Withhold titles from a few key poems and let them experience the confusion!

PARAPHRASE

- Students put all the words of the poem into “other” words. (Side-by-side Shakespeare)
- A great time to distinguish between paraphrase and summary.
 - Summary answers the question: What is the poem about? Or, What happens in the poem?
 - Paraphrase prompts the reader to retell the poem in their own words!
- Paraphrase might involve changing sentence structure.
- Sentences and paragraphs! They are NOT trying to duplicate poetic style.
- An effective paraphrase can be used as a good formative assessment to determine if the student can capture the literal level of the poem.
- Lessons about plagiarism, citing sources (for direct and indirect quotes), capturing the author’s intent are important conversations beyond poetry!

CONNOTATION

- Time to Annotate!
- This is the stage of analysis when all the non-literal elements can be identified and named.
- Kindergarteners can do this! (A heart-breaking realization for HS Juniors!)
 - As students get older, we have to move beyond the mere “naming” of devices.
 - What effect does XX have on the poem/line/tone?
- Dictation, suitable for grades 5 and above, can help students attend to both literal and figurative details.
- Demo Dictation
 - What do you notice?
 - What is the most important word?

ATTITUDE (TONE)

- Younger students often pick up on the “feelings” in a poem before they understand what they are communicating.
- “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost
 - Kindergarten reaction
- Tone Word List is helpful.
- Helps students to hear their poem aloud: 1) Dictation, 2) Performance

SHIFT

- Probably the most neglected feature of a poem.
- A shift is a change in the speaker or the attitude.
- Can be signaled by:
 - Key words, particularly transition words
 - Time change
 - Punctuation
 - New Stanza

TITLE

- Here we are again!
- Take into consideration all you've gleaned from the poem through each stage and discuss the title again.

THEME

- Themes in poetry can be subtle.
- Make sure students can find the theme in a picture book or a familiar fairy tale or film before attempting to uncover the theme in a poem.
- Bumper Sticker Themes – Slogans to go along with a story
- List of TOPICS
 - What does the author/poet/speaker/character believe about those topics?

PRE-READING STRATEGY

- “Playing with Poetry” App
- Grades 5 (or so) and up
- Purpose: To get students to focus at the word level and make connections about vocabulary before meeting the poem itself.
- Demo:



QUESTIONS?

MRSKANZINGER@GMAIL.COM