

I Invite My Parents to a Dinner Party by Chen Chen - Working Through a Poem -

Introduction: Oftentimes students - when attempting literary analysis - fall into the unfortunate trap of “hunting” for literary devices. Though literary or poetic devices are integral to a poem’s meaning, the simple act of “looking” for those devices simplifies your understanding of the poem, thus rendering your analysis weak and insubstantial.

One way to improve your analysis - and avoid literary term scavenger hunting - is to take another approach: working through the poem chronologically, from beginning to end. In working *through* the poem, you improve your ability to arrive at a more complex, nuanced understanding of the poem, as you are able to discuss how events unfold and how that structure contributes to the holistic message.

Here are a couple more advantages to approaching a text chronologically:

1. It allows you to address parts of the text that don’t necessarily belong to a larger pattern of a specific literary device.
2. Your writing, assuming you are tasked with composing an essay, will be more “organic” and “easier to read.” This approach will prevent your analysis from being too formulaic or structurally rigid.

Well, this begs the question: Assuming I’m writing an essay, am I just writing one massive paragraph about the poem? Well, no. You obviously need to separate your ideas. Your paragraphs should be organized by the natural divisions in the passage, like by stanzas, ideas, or themes.

Directions: Follow the steps provided below:

- Read through the [poem](#) and determine the “larger message” the poet is trying to convey.
- Find three natural divisions in the poem and copy/paste them into the empty spaces of the chart provided below (entitled “Blocks of Text 1-3”)
- Break down the poem by those divisions in text. Identify at least three pieces of significant text from each paragraph and explain how they contribute in conveying the poem’s meaning.

Your discussion of your evidence must be written in at least complete sentence(s) and may not use the words “This shows.” Please try to be as articulate and insightful as possible when creating these responses!

BLOCK OF TEXT 1

Piece(s) of evidence that supports the poem's message about the complex relationship with his family.	HOW does your evidence support the poem's message? Why does the evidence matter? Explain in at least two complete sentences without using the words "This shows"

BLOCK OF TEXT 2

Piece(s) of evidence that supports the poem's message about the complex relationship with his family.	HOW does your evidence support the poem's message? Why does the evidence matter? Explain in at least two complete sentences without using the words "This shows"

BLOCK OF TEXT 3

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Piece(s) of evidence that supports the poem's message about the complex relationship with his family.	HOW does your evidence support the poem's message? Why does the evidence matter? Explain in at least two complete sentences without using the words "This shows"