

# A Guide for Poetry Analysis to Guide Your Emulation

Directions: Complete steps 1-7. Please put all responses in **RED**. **BLACK** is for analyzing your chosen poem, and **BLUE** is for developing your own emulative poem. This outline must be completed before you begin your own poem.

**STEP 1: TITLE. TOPIC.** Write the title and author of the poem. Then write the topic of the poem.

Title: "Still I Rise"

Author: Maya Angelou

Topic: Resilience and determination of marginalized communities. It's powerful, uplifting, and empowering.

**STEP 1A: TITLE. TOPIC.** Write the title you want your poem to have. Then, write the topic of your poem.

Title: "Yet I Soar"

Topic: Having big ambitions and being strong while overcoming adversity.

**STEP 2: PARAPHRASE.**

Silently read your poem a few times. Then, restate its *literal meaning* in your own words. What is the poem about? *Try to write at least one sentence for each stanza of the poem*, capturing all of its literal ideas.

Although everyone lies about her and puts her down, she will continue to persevere. She doesn't care if her confident attitude upsets people. The one constant in her life will be her endless determination.

**STEP 2A: PARAPHRASE YOUR POEM.**

Explain your original poem's *literal meaning* in your own words. *Try to write at least one sentence for each stanza of your poem*, capturing all of your literal ideas. (If you have 4 stanzas, 4 sentences is fine. You can begin by saying "the first stanza is about... the second stanza is about...")

Despite facing all sorts of daunting adversity, I will continue to persevere through. I'll continue to have mighty aspirations despite what the people around me say. My perseverance will allow me to tackle any challenge like a warrior, and give me the power to explore the universe like an astronaut.

**STEP 3: PERSPECTIVE.** Read the poem you chose and state its *point of view*.

Who is narrating the poem?: Maya Angelou

Is it in first, second, or third person?: First Person

**STEP 3A: PERSPECTIVE.** State the *point of view* you wish to use for your own poem:

Who is narrating the poem?: Me

Is it in first, second, or third person?: First Person

#### STEP 4: TONE AND CONNOTATION.

While all words have a literal meaning or denotation, most words also have a connotation. A connotation is the emotion or association a word has beyond its literal meaning. Poets use connotation in poetry to help create mood and tone, as well as control how a reader will think of a person, place, thing, or concept. Some words have negative connotations, while other words have positive connotations. In some cases, two words can have the same literal meaning, but strikingly different connotations. Both “home” and “house” refer to places where people live, but the word “home” can make a reader think of a place of warmth and family, while many see the word “house” as more cold and impersonal. The words “strong” and “powerful” have similar literal or denotative meanings, but the word “strong” can make one think of a person who has fortitude and strength of character, while the word “powerful” can make a reader think of a person who has wealth and social influence. Look for **connotative meaning** in your chosen poem that can help you identify what the tone or attitude of the poem is. Then, look for especially **significant or unusual words** in the poem. Why were they included? What meaning do they convey?

Connotative language in the poem: “Pumping”, “Moons”, “Tides”, “Springing”

What it connotes: “Pumping” and “Springing” are especially powerful action verbs. “Moons” and “Tides” are huge, heavenly forces in the universe.

How it leads to a specific tone/what it makes you think of: It emphasizes the power and might of Angelou.

The poet's tone is their attitude toward the poem's speaker, reader, and subject matter, as interpreted by the reader. What is the tone or mood in your mind?: Uplifting

#### STEP 4A: TONE AND CONNOTATION.

You will need some **connotative meaning** in the poem that you write, which will help capture the tone you wish.

Connotative language you plan to use in the poem (even one): “Thunder”, “Howl”, “Charging”

What it connotes: “Thunder” and “Howl” make the reader feel scared. “Charging” is a powerful action verb.

How it leads to a specific tone/what it makes you think of: “Thunder” and “Howl” thus emphasize the adversity faced by the poet. And “Charging” shows his large resilience.

Your tone as the poet is your attitude toward the poem's speaker, reader, and subject matter, as interpreted by the reader. What is the tone or mood in your mind/How do you want your reader to feel?: Inspiring

#### STEP 5. RHYME PATTERN AND METER

Reread your chosen poem, looking for **rhyming patterns** and **meter**. Some poems are in ABAB pattern, while others are in ABBA, or ABCB. Shakespeare works in iambic pentameter most frequently.

What is the rhyme pattern, if any?: In each of the three stanzas, the ending word of the second and fourth lines rhyme.

#### STEP 5A. RHYME PATTERN AND METER

Your poem must match the overall **rhyming patterns** and **meter**.

What is the rhyme pattern, if any, that you will be imitating?: In each of the three stanzas, the ending word of the second and fourth lines rhyme.

## STEP 6. RHETORICAL DEVICES AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

Look for examples of *rhetorical devices* and *figurative language* in your chosen poem.

What rhetorical devices do you see? (rhetorical questions, repetition, etc): Repetition of the title in the final lines of the first and third stanzas. There are rhetorical questions in the first and second lines of the second stanza.

How do such devices aid the poem in achieving its poetic effects?: The repetition demonstrates the poet's resilience regardless of what she faces. The rhetorical questions emphasize how she doesn't care about what the people around her do or say.

What figurative language do you see? (metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, personification): I see four similes. "But still, like dust, I'll rise", "Cause I walk like I've got oil wells Pumping in my living room", "Just like moons and like suns", "Just like hopes springing high."

How does such language aid the poem in achieving its poetic effects?: The similes create images in the audience's mind that make this poem even more uplifting.

## STEP 6A. RHETORICAL DEVICES AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE (click for help).

You must include *rhetorical devices* and *figurative language* in your poem that your chosen poem includes. If it includes a metaphor, you need a metaphor there. If it has personification throughout the entire poem, you need it in yours too.

What rhetorical devices will your poem have? (rhetorical questions, repetition, etc): Repetition of the title in the final lines of the first and third stanzas. There are rhetorical questions in the first and second lines of the second stanza.

What figurative language will you use? (metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, personification): I will use four similes. "But still, like birds, I'll soar", "Cause I fly like a kite on a string Soaring in excitement at my role", "Just like Neil and Yuri", "Just like a warrior charging forward"

## STEP 7. THEME AND SYMBOLISM.

Now, *reread the poem* again, this time for possible symbolic meanings and an overall theme. Explain *the theme of the poem* in a complete sentence. (Topic = love. Theme = Love can blind us to the truth). Then identify a symbol used in your poem *as well as its meaning* (maybe a tree, a mirror, a knife, the sun, the wind, a person, a name, a ship, etc).

Theme of the poem: Regardless of what life throws at you or how people around you treat you, don't give up.

Symbol in the poem: Tides

What it stands for: Tides are an unstoppable force in our world, just like her.

## STEP 7A. THEME AND SYMBOLISM.

As you write your own poem, you must develop your own theme and symbol, but you can choose if they appear in the same exact way as your poet, or if you want them to be your own. So you can have the same theme or same symbol, or choose new ones. Your poem will most certainly have both, so you will need both. However, they are both open to interpretation and you can develop both as you see fit.

Theme of my poem: Even if you face significant adversity, do not let go of your dreams and keep persevering.

Symbol in my poem: Kite

What it stands for: Kites fly even during storms, just like how I will keep soaring even when face with adversity.