

Poetry Response Paper: Guidelines and Expectations

A **Response Paper** gives the reader an opportunity to interact with and respond to a poem on different levels. The writer can respond to a poem on a personal level, a societal level, or analytically. Poems may include discussion questions to help the writer focus his/her thoughts and to help in understanding the meaning of the poem.

A **response paper** can:

- offer an interpretation of the poem's overall meaning
- analyze the poetic techniques used and how they affect the meaning of the poem
- evaluate the poem's effectiveness on you as reader (How did it make you feel? What did it make you think of?)
- identify the theme and speak about how it is developed in the poem.
- focus on the specific questions asked and connect the poem to society
- explain how the poem connects to a historical time period or to another piece of text

➤ It is important to remember that the **Response Paper** responds to the poem in some way, it **does not** summarize or paraphrase the poem unnecessarily or to take up needed space.

Response Paper Expectations

- MLA Format (heading, font, and format)
- One full page minimum to three full pages maximum
- The title of the poem and the author should be introduced at the beginning of the paper
 - The title of the poem is in quotation marks, and once mentioned in the first paragraph can be referred to as the poem, unless multiple texts are being discussed
 - After the initial introduction, the author should be referred by his or her last name
- Minimum of two direct quotes to support your discussion
 - Direct quotes must include parenthetical citations that include the line numbers from the poem from which the quote was taken. Example: (8-9)
 - Direct quotes must include line separators as needed (see poetry notes)
 - Direct quotes should not be unnecessarily extensive, rather quoting should be purposeful and weaved seamlessly into the writer's commentary
- The first paragraph should include a thesis statement.
- Formal writing, however, first person references are allowed
- Present tense must be used when speaking about the events in the poem. The poet is communicating thoughts to you in the present--so that's why the convention is to use the present tense.

Grading Rubric: District Writing Rubric (slightly modified): Available on Webpage (aliclassroom.weebly.com)

Understanding the Writing Rubric

Organization: Full Credit = Paper contains an Introductory Paragraph that introduce the poet and the author. The conclusion may be brief, but ties together the points in the essay back to the thesis. Body Paragraphs follow the claim, evidence, commentary formula.

Thesis: Full Credit = The thesis statement appears at the end of the introduction and is what focuses the content of the entire paper.

Evidence/Commentary: Full Credit = Each Body Paragraph weaves specific examples from the text within the response and expounds upon the evidence within the commentary while tying it back into the thesis.

Style: Full Credit = Paper makes complete sense and uses formal language. Paper uses vocabulary appropriate for high school. Your voice/opinions are clear in the paper.

Conventions: Full Credit = Paper is free of any major grammar, mechanics, spelling, and usage errors. Paper shows knowledge of MLA paper format as shown in example and paper set-up instructions.

Sample Response Paper

To His Coy Mistress
BY ANDREW MARVELL

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side ⁵
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews. ¹⁰
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast, ¹⁵
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate. ²⁰

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found; ²⁵
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust; ³⁰
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires ³⁵
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power. ⁴⁰
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun ⁴⁵
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Student Name
Teacher's Name
Name of Class
Date (written out)

Sample Response to "His Coy Mistress"

Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" is the charming depiction of a man who has seemingly been working very hard at seducing his mistress. This poem appeals to me especially because it seems to transcend time. Every day, in the hallways at school, on television, or social media we see the game of love played out where one party tries to seduce the other in one way or another. The entire poem is about a man trying to convince a woman about why she should give herself to him before Death steals her away while making a greater argument of the fleeting nature of time.

Marvell's use of the word "coy," tells us what kind of woman his mistress is. She has been encouraging his advances to a certain point, but then when he gets too close, she backs off, and resists those same advances. Evidently, this has been going on for quite some time, as Marvell now feels it is necessary to remind his mistress that always he hears at his back "time's wing'ed chariot hurrying near" (21-22). This lets her know gently, but in no uncertain terms that time does have a way of marching on. The remainder of the second stanza uses vivid imagery that leaves no doubt as to what the fate of the lovers will be, as well as the state of his own feelings for her if she does not succumb. He warns her that, "Then worms shall try/That long preserved virginity, /And your quaint honor turn to dust, And into ashes all my lust" (27-30). Although morbid, Marvell tells her that if she continues to resist him, it will be the worms that remove her virginity from her, as opposed to someone who really cares about her, namely him. He also reminds her that the honor that she is clinging to so tightly will mean nothing when worms know her intimately. Further, his feelings for her will be utterly gone because he too will be dead.

The second stanza ends with these lines, my favorite: "The grave's a fine and private place, / But none I think do there embrace" (31-32). This ironic statement provides the crowning argument: Marvell has just described a love that would be timeless if such a thing were allowed, however, because love does not transcend the grave, how can they let time slip through their fingers, and justify it? This also highlights an important theme in the poem which is that the lovers, and consequently we who read the poem, should use the time we have been given to the best of our advantage. In the case of Marvell and his mistress, they should use the time to clutch at the love that is there in front of them. We, the reader, may be inspired to take action and accomplish something in our own life before it is too late.

Marvell's poem may start out with the aim of seduction but it ends with a life statement that is still relevant today. Whether our aim is love or accomplishing an elusive dream, we only have the time given to us because these things will no longer matter when we are dead and the worms are feasting upon us.

Name: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Response Paper Rubric

	Does Not Meet (1)		Partially Meets (2)		Meets Standards (3)		Exceeds Standards (4)	
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to organize ideas Organization is confusing Provides no transitional words/ideas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows partial or minimal evidence of organization Organization is simplistic Provides minimal transitional words/ideas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows appropriate evidence of organization Organization is logical Provides necessary transitional words/ideas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows well-developed organization Organization is intentional and enhances the flow of ideas Provides effective transitional words/ideas 	
Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clear thesis statement Lacks focus/off-topic 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis is too broad or too narrow Focus is uneven/partially off-topic 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis provides focus for paper Paper remains on-topic 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis statement is original and insightful Focus on thesis is evident throughout entire paper 	
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support is vague or off-topic Support does not address the prompt Evidence does not support the thesis statement 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support is evident but lacks sufficient details Support partially addresses the prompt Evidence may be inappropriate, insufficient, or unconvincing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support is well-developed with specific details Support addresses most aspects of the prompt Evidence used is appropriate and sufficient 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support is insightful with logical details Support addresses all aspects of the prompt Evidence is sufficient, appropriate and convincing 	
Commentary/Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commentary/analysis is not evident Analysis does not address the prompt Commentary does not clarify the connection between the evidence, claim or thesis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commentary/analysis is vague or underdeveloped Analysis partially addresses the prompt Commentary attempts to clarify the connection between the evidence, claim or thesis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commentary/analysis is relevant and developed Analysis addresses most aspects of the prompt Commentary makes a connection between the evidence, claim or thesis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commentary/analysis is original or insightful Analysis addresses all aspects of the prompt Commentary makes multiple connections between the evidence, claim or thesis 	
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows no awareness of audience Diction and syntax are basic and show lack of variety Author's voice is not evident 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows partial awareness of audience Diction and syntax shows some skill and variety Author's voice is generic 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows awareness of audience Diction and syntax show skill and variety Author's voice is present 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows awareness of audience/ caters to the audience by using a variety of techniques Diction and syntax show skill and variety that enhance meaning Author's voice is fully developed 	
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive errors in grammar, usage and mechanics Mistakes make overall meaning confusing Shows no understanding of MLA format/citations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent errors in grammar, usage and mechanics Mistakes hinder overall meaning Shows partial understanding of MLA format/citations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some errors in grammar, usage and mechanics Mistakes do not hinder meaning Shows knowledge of MLA format/citations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few errors in grammar, usage and mechanics Grammar, usage and mechanics enhance meaning Shows complete knowledge of MLA format/citations 	
Scale	1=4%	4=17%	7=28%	10=42%	13=54%	16=67%	19=79%	22=92%
	2=8%	5=21%	8=33%	11=46%	14=58%	17=71%	20=83%	23=96%
	3=13%	6=25%	9=38%	12=50%	15=63%	18=75%	21=88%	24=100%

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