

# What is TP-CASTT??

---

**TITLE**—Examine the title before reading the poem. Consider all possible meanings or connotations; write down synonyms for key words.

**PARAPHRASE**—Translate the poem *line by line* into your own words (literal/denotation). Stop at sentences rather than just the ends of lines (some authors use enjambment vs. end-stopped lines). Resist the urge to jump to interpretation; just write what happens literally at this point.

**CONNOTATION**—Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal level.

Look for: Diction (formal/informal, positive/negative word choices)

Imagery

Figurative language (symbols, metaphor, simile, personification)

Irony—paradox, understatement, hyperbole (exaggeration), oxymoron

Effect of sound devices (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, rhyme)

**ATTITUDE**—tone; Examine both the speaker's and the poet's attitudes. Remember, don't confuse the author with the person that he or she creates in the poem.

Look for: Speaker's attitude toward self, other characters, and the subject of the poem

Attitudes of characters other than the poem's speaker

Poet's attitude toward speaker, other characters, subject, and finally, toward the reader

**SHIFTS**—Note shifts in speaker (or point of view), attitudes (tone), or mood

Look for: Occasion of poem (time and place)

Key words (e.g. but, yet, although, for)

Punctuation (dashes, periods, colons. . .)

Stanza divisions

Changes in line and/or stanza length

**TITLE**—Examine the title again, this time on an interpretative level. What does it mean and how does it relate to or deepen your understanding of the poem's content?

**THEME**—First list what the poem is about (subject or subjects); then determine what the poet is saying about each of those subjects (theme). Remember, the theme must be expressed as a complete sentence.