

NAME:

LANGUAGE ARTS

CLASS

DATE:

SCORE:

PABLO NERUDA

NEFTALI RICARDO REYES BASOALTO



**“And it was at that age...
Poetry arrived
in search of me...”**

CLASS BLOG: <http://vhspibhla.blogspot.com/>

1. About the Poet
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POETRY:

ABOUT THE POET

<http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Neruda.html>

BIOGRAPHY

Pablo Neruda was born Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basoalto in Parral, [Chile](#) on July 12, 1904. His mother died just weeks later, and his father discouraged his affinity for poetry, which he had displayed since the age of ten. His family's disapproval drove the young Basoalto to write under the pseudonym of Pablo Neruda, which he officially adopted in 1946. Neruda was married three times, although Chile did not officially recognize his second marriage. Although his published poetry was widely respected by the time he reached age twenty, Neruda found it necessary to follow his budding political career to Asia in order to make a living. In Europe in the 1930's he became involved in [Communism](#), which would influence his later political actions as well as much of his poetry. In 1946 he successfully campaigned in Chile for the regime of Gabriel Gonzalez Videla, but he soon publicly expressed displeasure with Videla's presidency and was forced to flee his homeland for several years. Neruda was able to return to Chile in 1952, finally both wealthy and widely respected. In 1971 he was awarded the [Nobel Prize for Literature](#). He died of cancer at age 69 on September 23, 1973. By that time he was recognized as a national hero and the greatest Latin American poet of the twentieth century.

LITERARY INFLUENCES

As a boy Neruda attended Temuco Boys' School; the principal of the Girls' School was [Gabriela Mistral](#). Mistral was a well-respected poet, and later became a Nobel Laureate herself, and she encouraged a young Neruda to pursue his fascination with poetry. In 1933, Neruda met Spanish poet [Federico Garcia Lorca](#) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Garcia Lorca not only befriended Neruda and introduced him to influential Communists, he also publicly supported Neruda's poetry. Neruda was interested in both national and international aspects of literature. He translated foreign works by many older authors including [William Blake](#) and [William Shakespeare](#), but he also closely read Spanish language poets like Garcia Lorca, [Jorge Luis Borges](#), and [Miguel de Cervantes](#). Throughout his career, though, Neruda credited [Walt Whitman](#) with his deepest inspiration; he once declared that "I, a poet who writes in Spanish, learned more from Walt Whitman than from Cervantes." A carpenter once helped hang a picture of Walt Whitman in Neruda's home; when he asked if this was a picture of the poet's grandfather, Neruda replied that it was indeed (Nolan, 4).



THEMES

During his lifetime, Neruda seemed to experience the spectrum of emotional highs and lows very vividly, and his poetry clearly reflected this experience. In times of inspiration he was capable of unparalleled romanticism. His passionate love affairs often provided him with a living muse; his third wife brought him such inspiration from their marriage until his death. Despite his illness, Neruda was extremely happy during his final years in Chile, and his love for his country served as an equally powerful contributor to his poetry. Neruda's capacity for joy and reverence toward life is especially evident in works such as [Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair](#) (1924) and [100 Love Sonnets](#) (1960).

Even in times of great happiness, however, Neruda tended to slip dark imagery into his poetry. Indeed, read in a different light, even his love poems can be seen as a subtle but powerful cry against life's tragedies. Neruda's periods of happiness were interspersed with times of extreme depression, which often resurfaced during his travels in Europe and Asia. Neruda was often forced by politics or financial troubles to abandon his friends, his country, and even his wives; in such times the passion he had reserved for these loves often turned inward and resulted in a gnawing loneliness. The dark undertones in Neruda's daily life also surfaced in his work. Just as he often published collections of love poems in times of joy, he sometimes composed "material" poems to exercise his affinity for the macabre. [Residence on Earth](#) (1935) is one example of a collection detailing the sinister energy Neruda was able to derive from everyday objects.

The ups and downs in Neruda's personal life led him to seek out and attempt to describe the essence of life. It was in this quest for understanding and oneness that he most closely resembled, and sometimes mimicked, Whitman. Like much of Whitman's own work, many of Neruda's poems, such as those found in his [General Study](#) (1950), were an attempt to discover and explain truths across separate themes. Such works tended to combine nature with nation, with history, and with freedom. Paradoxically, Neruda was also able to capture the intrinsic value inherent in plants, animals, and simple objects without unduly coloring the odes with emotion. His [Elementary Odes](#) (1954) also followed Whitman's lead, and were heralded for their insightful brand of simplicity. Neruda's greatest literary success was his ability to approach the grandiose and the minute, the tragic and the joyous, with equal patience and reverence.

KEY POINTS:

"THE ECSTASIST: PABLO NERUDA AND HIS PASSIONS." [FROM *THE NEW YORKER*]

MARK STRAND

http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/09/08/030908crbo_books1

Pablo Neruda was easily the most prolific and popular of all twentieth-century poets. His collected poems run in excess of thirty-five hundred pages, and his books, which have been translated into dozens of languages, have sold in the millions. His life as a diplomat, an exile, and sometimes a fugitive was not an easy one. The solitude that most writers need in order to work was something that Neruda for the most part was denied. Many of his poems reflect the shifting conditions under which he lived, and have at heart a longing for fixity, whether of place or of idea. At his best, he is among the small group of last century's great poets. Now the most comprehensive selection to date of Neruda's translated poems has been published. "The Poetry of Pablo Neruda" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; \$40), edited by Ian Stavans, a professor of Latin-American and Latino culture at Amherst College, is a weighty volume of almost a thousand pages, including an informative introduction, a bibliography of translations into English of Neruda's work, and notes on his life and his poetry.

Born Neftalí Ricardo Reyes Basoalto, in 1904, Neruda changed his name to conceal from his father, a railroad worker, the fact that he was a poet. In a memoir (translated by Hardie St. Martin), he writes movingly about an event that might have set in motion his decision, as a teen-ager, to adopt a pseudonym:

Once, far back in my childhood, when I had barely learned to read, I felt an intense emotion and set down a few words, half rhymed but strange to me, different from everyday language. Overcome by a deep anxiety, something I had not experienced before, a kind of anguish and sadness, I wrote them neatly on a piece of paper. It was a poem to my mother, that is, to the one I knew, the angelic stepmother whose gentle shadow watched over my childhood. I had no way at all of judging my first composition, which I took to my parents. They were in the dining room, immersed in one of those hushed conversations that, more than a river, separate the world of children and the world of grownups. Still trembling after this first visit from the muse, I held out to them the paper with the lines of verse. My father took it absentmindedly, read it absentmindedly, and returned it to me absentmindedly, saying: "Where did you copy this from?" Then he went on talking to my mother in a lowered voice about his important and remote affairs.

That, I seem to remember, was how my first poem was born, and that was how I had my first sample of irresponsible literary criticism.

By sixteen, Pablo Neruda was publishing poems in school magazines and in the newspapers of his home town, Temuco. At nineteen, he published his first book, "Crepusculario," and within a year he had published "Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair." The book was a sensation, and the young poet who walked the streets of Santiago in a dark broad-brimmed hat and a black cape was suddenly famous. "Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair" begins with an evocation of the beloved's physical presence and ends with acceptance of her absence. Though one can track the downward spiral of love in these poems, it is equally clear that the quality of yearning is what is most important for the poet. So long as his love is absent, he can idealize passion. Here (in a translation by W. S. Merwin) is the beginning of the twentieth poem:

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.

Write, for example, "The night is starry
and the stars are blue and shiver in the distance."

The night wind revolves in the sky and sings.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too.

Through nights like this one I held her in my arms.
I kissed her again and again under the endless sky.

She loved me, sometimes I loved her too.
How could one not have loved her great still eyes.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
To think that I do not have her. To feel that I have lost her.



The naturalness of these lines, their exuberant and youthful melancholy, their casual repetitions, their over-all simplicity mark Neruda's early style and account in some measure for the continued popularity of the book.

In 1927, Neruda's travels began. He was sent to Rangoon as consul ad honorem, staying in the Far East until 1932, when he returned to Chile. It was there, in the Far East, that Neruda got to work on his cycle of poems "Residence on Earth." The three volumes that make up the cycle contain the poems that he wrote from 1925 to 1945. In the first volume, which covers a wide range of subjects, the melancholy of his earlier poetry becomes more assertive, more colorful, more surreal, and, finally, more anguished. In the poems of the second volume, the gloom continues, but with less obliquity and considerably more charm, as in "Walking Around," which (in Robert Bly's rendering) begins:

It so happens I am sick of being a man.
And it happens that I walk into tailorshops and movie houses
dried up, waterproof, like a swan made of felt
steering my way in a water of wombs and ashes.

By the third volume, it is clear that Neruda's poetry has undergone a profound change. In 1935, he was made consul in Madrid, a post from

which he was fired a short time later, because of his involvement in Spanish politics. Neruda was a fierce supporter of the Loyalists, and his poems describe the horrors of war as Spain fell to the forces of Franco.

Neruda's political concerns were not limited to Spain. Later on in the same book, he pays homage to the Soviet Union (something he continued to do for the rest of his life) with an ode to Stalingrad, comparing—in a gesture that seems not only dated but mistaken—its battle against the Nazi onslaught with the struggles of the Spanish Loyalists. Most political poems do not enjoy a long life, and Neruda's are no exception. Their urgency turns out to be as perishable as our memory of the events that inspired them. "Residence on Earth" is a diffuse and transitional enterprise, a bridge between the precocious and unprogrammatic early work and the great works of his maturity.

In 1945, Neruda became a member of the Chilean Communist Party, which was soon outlawed. In 1947, having published scathing criticisms of Chile's President, he was charged with treason and became a fugitive, escaping through the Andes on horseback and resurfacing in France in 1949. By 1950, he was in Mexico, where his sprawling Whitmanesque epic "Canto General," written largely while he was on the run, appeared. It is a lyrical encyclopedia of the New World, proceeding chronologically through three hundred and forty poems and more than five hundred pages. It begins with the world before man arrived. Here (as rendered by Jack Schmitt) is a passage from "The Birds Arrive," a poem in the first section:

A marine mountain flies
toward the islands, a moon
of birds winging South,
over the fermented islands
of Peru.
It's a living river of shade,
a comet of countless
tiny hearts
that eclipse the world's sun
like a thick-tailed meteor
pulsing toward the archipelago.

And at the end of the enraged
sea, in the ocean rain,
the wings of the albatross rise up
like two systems of salt,
establishing in the silence
with their spacious hierarchy
amid the torrential squalls,
the order of the wilds.

The style, with its sweeping hyperboles and celebratory tone, typifies many of the early poems in the "Canto" and reaches its limit in the breathtaking section called "The Heights of Macchu Picchu," in which the poet invites the continent's victimized dead to express themselves through him. He will be their champion, speaking eloquently not only for the victims but for the continent itself. "Canto General" has rarely been matched in its range of subjects, its energy, its imaginative power. It falls down where Neruda substitutes the language of politics for the language of imagination. Even those who agree with his condemnation of the United States, say, and what he believes has been its role in a century-long regime of exploitation and despoilment, will likely feel betrayed by the cornball language of his complaint. Such criticism, however, may be beside the point. Neruda is not a philosophical or meditative poet but one of allegiances and opinions, especially in politics, always wanting us to feel that he identifies with the poor and defenseless, that he knows what is good for them and what is not.

After "Canto General," Neruda's books appeared with greater frequency. Although Chilean authorities rescinded his arrest warrant in 1952, he continued to travel: to Eastern Europe, to the Soviet Union (where he had the dubious honor of winning the Stalin Peace Prize and later served as one of its judges), to Italy (the movie "Il Postino" was inspired by one of his visits there), to Mexico (where he never ceased to feel at home), to France (where he was the Chilean Ambassador in the early seventies), and to many other countries. In the poems he wrote in those years, his largeness of spirit, which in "Canto General" was sometimes cramped by ideology, was given free rein. The "Elemental Odes," three books published between 1954 and 1957, were like nothing else people had seen. With them, Neruda hoped to reach a wider audience than he already had, and his hope was realized. The "Odes" gained immediate and universal praise. They are about the things of everyday life: a lemon, a dead carob tree, a boy with a hare, a stamp album. And they were read by people who had never before paid attention to poetry. Written in very short lines, some as short as a single word, the "Odes" tumble effortlessly down the page in chainlike sentences. Everything is seen in its best light, everything has value, everything deserves to be the subject of a poem. The rhetoric of the "Odes" is as democratic as that of Whitman's "Leaves of Grass." Here (in Margaret Sayers Peden's rendition) is the ecstatic opening of "Ode to a Stamp Album":

Album of perfect stamps!

Butterflies,
ships,
sea shapes, corollas,
leaning towers,
dark eyes, moist and
round as grapes,
album
smooth
as
a
slippery
fish,
with thousands
of glistening
scales,
each page
a
racing

charger
in search of
distant pleasures, forgotten
flowers!

[The poem concludes as breathlessly as it began]...

Insatiable
spiral,
comet's tail
of all earth's
highways,
dictionary
of the wind,
starstruck album
bulging
with noble
fruits and territories,

treasure keeper
sailing
on its treasure,
garnet
pomegranate,
nomadic
stamp album!

"Extravagaria" (1957-58), which followed the "Odes," is as different from them as they are from "Canto General." Its poems are directed inward, and the voice is more colloquial, more personal, more forgiving of others, and much more relaxed in the claims it makes for itself. There are many beautiful and moving poems in this book, but none more so than the long, valedictory "Autumn Testament," which (as translated by Alastair Reid) concludes:

From having been born so often
I have salty experience
like creatures of the sea
with a passion for stars
and an earthy destination.
And so I move without knowing
to which world I'll be returning
or if I'll go on living.
While things are settling down,
here I've left my testament,
my shifting extravagaria,
so whoever goes on reading it
will never take in anything
except the constant moving
of a clear and bewildered man,
a man rainy and happy,
lively and autumn-minded.

And now I'm going behind
this page, but not disappearing.
I'll dive into clear air
like a swimmer in the sky,
and then get back to growing
till one day I'm so small
that the wind will take me away
and I won't know my own name
and I won't be there when I wake.

Then I will sing in the silence.



In 1964, nine years before his death, Neruda published his last great book, "Isla Negra," named for the place he called home. Intensely autobiographical, it seems a continuation and amplification of "Extravagaria." Looking deep and serenely into his early and middle years, into lost loves and lost places, Neruda displays an uncharacteristic modesty. The strident rhetoric that continued to surface in much of his previous poetry is missing. Instead, the tone, as in "Extravagaria," is detached, thoughtful, even tender. A good measure of the change would be to compare "The Widower's Tango," from the first volume of "Residence on Earth," which is about an early and disastrous love affair with a woman named Josie Bliss, and the two poems about her in "Isla Negra."

The poems of the more than fifteen books that followed "Isla Negra" represent, with the exception of those of "Art of Birds," a falling off in Neruda's work. Some seem little more than notes for poems, unfinished and haphazard. It is as if he knew that he had little time left—he died of leukemia in 1973, shortly after the Pinochet coup—and were rushing to get everything down at once.

Indeed, because Neruda wrote so much he presents an anthologist with a special problem. Ian Stavans, in attempting to provide a fair representation and offer a "Neruda that is the sum of his parts," has chosen six hundred poems. Plainly, Stavans is acting more out of generosity than necessity. What might have been preferable is a Neruda who is the sum of his finest parts. By my reckoning, that would still be a big book, but with half as many poems and half as many pages as there are in Stavans's selection. Would all of Neruda's books be represented? Probably not. Would there be as much of "Residence on Earth" and "Canto General"? Probably not.

The other issue here is the one of translation. Stavans has been careful to include almost all of Neruda's major translators, and readers will encounter translation styles that range from the wooden and amusical to the fluid and finely tuned. Fortunately, Neruda's best work has attracted his most gifted translators. Without them, his best might appear to be a good deal less. Examples of clear success are W. S. Merwin's translation of "Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair," Jack Schmitt's translations of "Canto General" and "Art of Birds," Margaret Sayers Peden's translation of the three books of "Elemental Odes," and Alastair Reid's masterly translations of "Extravagaria" and "Isla Negra." These works alone would easily be enough to provide many hours of happy reading.

There is something about Neruda—about the way he glorifies experience, about the spontaneity and directness of his passion—that sets him apart from other poets. It is hard not to be swept away by the urgency of his language, and that's especially so when *he* seems swept away, as in this passage (courtesy of Alastair Reid) describing what he felt when he wrote his first line of poetry:

And I, tiny being,
drunk with the great starry
void,
likeness, image of
mystery,
felt myself a pure part
of the abyss.
I wheeled with the stars.

My heart broke loose with the wind. ♦

CONVERSATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

NAME:

SCORE:

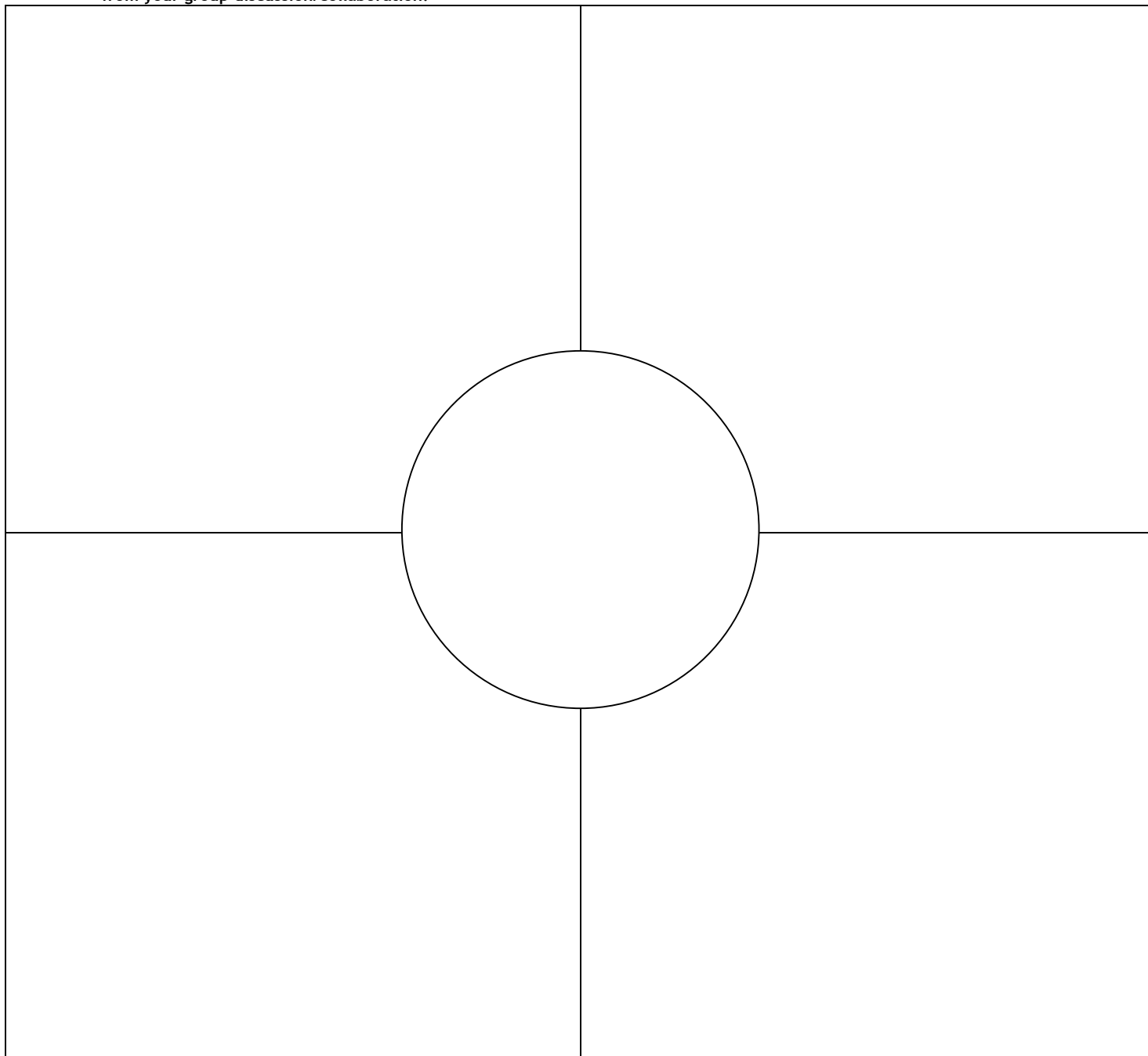
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CLASS:

DATE:

TOPIC:

DIRECTIONS: Consider 4 perspectives/aspects to the main topic in the center of the chart below. For each approach, fill in the necessary details from your group discussion/collaboration.



FINAL CONCLUSIONS:



HOW TO EXPLICATE A POEM

(BETSY DRAINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON)

A GOOD POEM IS LIKE A PUZZLE--THE MOST FASCINATING PART IS STUDYING THE INDIVIDUAL PIECES CAREFULLY AND THEN PUTTING THEM BACK TOGETHER TO SEE HOW BEAUTIFULLY THE WHOLE THING FITS TOGETHER. A POEM CAN HAVE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT "PIECES" THAT YOU NEED TO LOOK AT CLOSELY IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE POETIC "PUZZLE." THIS SHEET EXPLAINS ONE WAY TO ATTEMPT AN EXPLICATION OF A POEM, BY EXAMINING EACH "PIECE" OF THE POEM SEPARATELY. (AN "EXPLICATION" IS SIMPLY AN EXPLANATION OF HOW ALL THE ELEMENTS IN A POEM WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE TOTAL MEANING AND EFFECT.)

EXAMINE THE SITUATION IN THE POEM:

- Does the poem tell a story? Is it a narrative poem? If so, what events occur?
- Does the poem express an emotion or describe a mood?
- Poetic voice: Who is the speaker? Is the poet speaking to the reader directly or is the poem told through a fictional "persona"? To whom is he speaking? Can you trust the speaker?
- Tone: What is the speaker's attitude toward the subject of the poem? What sort of tone of voice seems to be appropriate for reading the poem out loud? What words, images, or ideas give you a clue to the tone?

EXAMINE THE STRUCTURE OF THE POEM:

- Form: Look at the number of lines, their length, their arrangement on the page. How does the form relate to the content? Is it a traditional form (e.g. sonnet, limerick) or "free form"? Why do you think the poet chose that form for his poem?
- Movement: How does the poem develop? Are the images and ideas developed chronologically, by cause and effect, by free association? Does the poem circle back to where it started, or is the movement from one attitude to a different attitude (e.g. from despair to hope)?
- Syntax: How many sentences are in the poem? Are the sentences simple or complicated? Are the verbs in front of the nouns instead of in the usual "noun, verb" order? Why?
- Punctuation: What kind of punctuation is in the poem? Does the punctuation always coincide with the end of a poetic line? If so, this is called an end-stopped line. If there is no punctuation at the end of a line and the thought continues into the next line, this is called enjambement. Is there any punctuation in the middle of a line? Why do you think the poet would want you to pause halfway through the line?
- Title: What does the title mean? How does it relate to the poem itself?

EXAMINE THE LANGUAGE OF THE POEM:

- Diction or Word Choice: Is the language colloquial, formal, simple, unusual?
- Do you know what all the words mean? If not, look them up.
- What moods or attitudes are associated with words that stand out for you?
- Allusions: Are there any allusions (references) to something outside the poem, such as events or people from history, mythology, or religion?
- Imagery: Look at the figurative language of the poem--metaphors, similes, analogies, personification. How do these images add to the meaning of the poem or intensify the effect of the poem?

EXAMINE THE MUSICAL DEVICES IN THE POEM:

- Rhyme scheme: Does the rhyme occur in a regular pattern, or irregularly? Is the effect formal, satisfying, musical, funny, disconcerting?
- Rhythm or meter: In most languages, there is a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a word or words in a sentence. In poetry, the variation of stressed and unstressed syllables and words has a rhythmic effect. What is the tonal effect of the rhythm here?
- Other "sound effects": alliteration, assonance, consonance repetition. What tonal effect do they have here?

EXPLORE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE POEM TO THE AUDIENCE:

Has the poem created a change in mood for you--or a change in attitude? How have the technical elements helped the poet create this effect?

WEBSITES:

- <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/poetry-explication.html#top>
- <https://falconfire.uwrf.edu/home/W1082838/personalweb/explcat.html>
- <http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/reading-writing/on-line/lit-poem.html>

POETRY

By Pablo Neruda

And it was at that age ... Poetry arrived
 in search of me. I don't know, I don't know where
 it came from, from winter or a river.
 I don't know how or when,
 no they were not voices, they were not
 words, nor silence,
 but from a street I was summoned,
 from the branches of night,
 abruptly from the others,
 among violent fires
 or returning alone,
 there I was without a face
 and it touched me.

I did not know what to say, my mouth
 had no way
 with names,
 my eyes were blind,
 and something started in my soul,
 fever or forgotten wings,
 and I made my own way,
 deciphering
 that fire,
 and I wrote the first faint line,
 faint, without substance, pure
 nonsense,
 pure wisdom
 of someone who knows nothing,
 and suddenly I saw
 the heavens
 unfastened
 and open,
 planets,
 palpitating plantations,
 shadow perforated,
 riddled
 with arrows, fire and flowers,
 the winding night, the universe.

And I, infinitesimal being,
 drunk with the great starry
 void,
 likeness, image of
 mystery,
 felt myself a pure part
 of the abyss,
 I wheeled with the stars,
 my heart broke loose on the wind.

STEPS FOR CLOSE READING OR EXPLICATION DE TEXTE: PATTERNS, POLARITIES, PROBLEMS, PARADIGM, PUZZLES, PERCEPTION

Janice E. Patten

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<http://theliterarylink.com/closereading.html>

An explication de texte (cf. Latin explicare, to unfold, to fold out, or to make clear the meaning of) is a finely detailed, very specific examination of a short poem or short selected passage from a longer work, in order to find the focus or design of the work, either in its entirety in the case of the shorter poem or, in the case of the selected passage, **the meaning of the microcosm, containing or signaling the meaning of the macrocosm** (the longer work of which it is a part). To this end "close" reading calls attention to all dynamic tensions, polarities, or problems in the imagery, style, literal content, diction, etc.

By examining and thinking about opening up the way the poem or work is perceived, writers establish a central pattern, a design that orders the narrative and that will, in turn, order the organization of any essay about the work. Coleridge knew about this method when he referred to the "germ" of a work of literature (see *Biographia Literaria*). Very often, the language creates a visual dynamic as well as verbal coherence.

Close Reading or Explication de texte operates on the premise that literature, as artifice, will be more fully understood and appreciated to the extent that the nature and interrelations of its parts are perceived, and that that understanding will take the form of insight into the theme of the work in question. This kind of work must be done before you can begin to appropriate any theoretical or specific literary approach. Follow these instructions so you don't follow what Mrs. Arable says about the magical web of Charlotte's in Charlotte's Web, "I don't understand it, and I don't like what I don't understand."

Follow these steps before you begin writing. These are pre-writing steps, procedures to follow, questions to consider before you commence actual writing. Remember that the knowledge you gain from completing each of the steps is cumulative. There may be some information that overlaps, but do not take shortcuts. In selecting one passage from a short story, poem, or novel, limit your selection to a short paragraph (4-5 sentences), but certainly no more than one paragraph. When one passage, scene, or chapter of a larger work is the subject for explication, that explication will show how its focused-upon subject serves as a **macrocosm** of the entire work—a means of finding in a small sample **patterns** which fit the whole work.

If you follow these **12 STEPS TO LITERARY AWARENESS**, you will find a new and exciting world. Do not be concerned if you do not have all the answers to the questions in this section. Keep asking questions; keep your intellectual eyes open to new possibilities.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE. Examine the passage carefully for similes, images, metaphors, and symbols. Identify any and all. List implications and suggested meanings as well as denotations. What visual insights does each word give? Look for multiple meanings and overlapping of meaning. Look for repetitions, for oppositions. See also the etymology of each word because you may find that the word you think you are familiar with is actually dependent upon a metaphoric concept. Consider how each word or group of words suggests a pattern and/or points to an abstraction (e.g., time, space, love, soul, death). Can you visualize the metaphoric world? Are there spatial dimensions to the language?

DICTION. This section is closely connected with the section above. Diction, with its emphasis on words, provides the **crux** of the explication. Mark all verbs in the passage, mark or list all nouns, all adjectives, all adverbs etc. At this point it is advisable that you type out the passage on a separate sheet to differentiate each grammatical type. Examine each grouping. Look up as many words as you can in a good dictionary, even if you think that you know the meaning of the word. The dictionary will illuminate new connotations and new denotations of a word. Look at **all** the meanings of the key words. Look up the etymology of the words. How have they changed? The words will begin to take on multistable meanings. Be careful to always check back to the text, keeping meaning contextually sound. Do not assume you know the depth or complexity of meaning at first glance. Rely on the dictionary, particularly the Oxford English Dictionary. Can you establish a word web of contrastive and parallel words? Do dictionary meanings establish any new dynamic associations with other words? What is the etymology of these words? Develop and question the metaphoric, spatial sense of the words. Can you see what the metaphoric words are suggesting?

LITERAL CONTENT: this should be done as succinctly as possible. Briefly describe the skeletal contents of the passage in one or two sentences. Answer the journalist's questions (Who? What? When? Where? Why?) in order to establish character/s, plot, and setting as it relates to this passage. What is the context for this passage?

STRUCTURE. Divide the passage into the more obvious sections (stages of argument, discussion, or action). What is the interrelation of these units? How do they develop? Again, what can you postulate regarding a controlling design for the work at this point? If the work is a poem, identify the poetic structure and note the variations within that structure. In

order to fully understand "Scorn Not the Sonnet," you must be knowledgeable about the sonnet as a form. What is free verse? Is this free verse or blank verse? What is the significance of such a form? Does the form contribute to the meaning? How does the theatrical structure of Childress's young adult novel, *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich*, enhance the narrative?

STYLE. Look for any significant aspects of style—parallel constructions, antithesis, etc. Look for patterns, polarities, and problems. Periodic sentences, clause structures? Polysyndeton etc.? And reexamine all postulates, adding any new ones that occur to you. Look for alliteration, internal rhymes and other such poetic devices which are often used in prose as well as in poetry. A caesura? Enjambment? Anaphora? Polysyndeton? You need to look closely here for meanings that are connected to these rhyme schemes.

CHARACTERIZATION. What insight does this passage now give into specific characters as they develop through the work? Is there a persona in this passage? Any allusions to other literary characters? To other literary works that might suggest a perspective. Look for a pattern of metaphoric language to give added insight into their motives and feelings which are not verbalized. You should now be firming up the few most important encompassing postulates for the governing design of the work, for some overriding themes or conflicts.

TOPE. What is the tone of the passage? How does it elucidate the entire passage? Is the tone one of irony? Sentimental? Serious? Humorous? Ironic?

ASSESSMENT. This step is not to suggest a reduction; rather, an "close reading" or explication should enable you to *problematize* and expand your understanding of the text. Ask what insight the passage gives into the work as a whole. How does it relate to themes, ideas, larger actions in other parts of the work? Make sure that your hypothesis regarding the theme(s) of the work is contextually sound. What does it suggest as the polarity of the whole piece?

CONTEXT: If your text is part of a larger whole, make brief reference to its position in the whole; if it is a short work, say, a poem, refer it to other works in its author's canon, perhaps chronologically, but also thematically. Do this expeditiously.

TEXTURE: This term refers to all those features of a work of literature which contribute to its meaning or signification, as distinguished from that signification itself: its structure, including features of grammar, syntax, diction, rhythm, and (for poems, and to some extent) prosody; its imagery, that is, all language which appeals to the senses; and its figuration, better known as similes, metaphors, and other verbal motifs.

THEME: A theme is not to be confused with thesis; the theme or more properly themes of a work of literature is its broadest, most pervasive concern, and it is contained in a complex combination of elements. In contrast to a thesis, which is usually expressed in a single, argumentative, declarative sentence and is characteristic of expository prose rather than creative literature, a theme is not a statement; rather, it often is expressed in a single word or a phrase, such as "love," "illusion versus reality," or "the tyranny of circumstance." Generally, the theme of a work is never "right" or "wrong." There can be virtually as many themes as there are readers, for essentially the concept of theme refers to the emotion and insight which results from the experience of reading a work of literature. As with many things, however, such an experience can be profound or trivial, coherent or giddy; and discussions of a work and its theme can be correspondingly worthwhile and convincing, or not. Everything depends on how well you present and support your ideas. Everything you say about the theme must be supported by the brief quotations from the text. Your argument and proof must be convincing. And that, finally, is what explication is about: **marshaling the elements of a work of literature in such a way as to be convincing.** Your approach must adhere to the elements of ideas, concepts, and language inherent in the work itself. Remember to avoid phrases and thinking which are expressed in the statement, "what I got out of it was. . . ."

THESIS: An explication should most definitely have a thesis statement. Do not try to write your thesis until you have finished all 12 steps. The thesis should take the form, of course, of an assertion about the meaning and function of the text which is your subject. It must be something which you can argue for and prove in your essay.

CONCLUSION. Now, and only now are you ready to **begin your actual writing.** If you find that what you had thought might be the theme of the work, and it doesn't "fit," you must then go back to step one and start over. This is a trial and error exercise. You learn by doing. **Finally, the explication de texte should be a means to see the complexities and ambiguities in a given work of literature, not for finding solutions and/or didactic truisms.**

“TONIGHT I CAN WRITE THE SADDEST LINES”

1 Tonight I can write the saddest lines.

Write, for example, 'The night is shattered
and the blue stars shiver in the distance.'

The night wind revolves in the sky and sings.

5 Tonight I can write the saddest lines.

I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too.

Through nights like this one I held her in my arms
I kissed her again and again under the endless sky.

She loved me sometimes, and I loved her too.

10 How could one not have loved her great still eyes.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.

To think that I do not have her. To feel that I have lost her.

To hear the immense night, still more immense without her.
And the verse falls to the soul like dew to the pasture.

15 What does it matter that my love could not keep her.

The night is shattered and she is not with me.

This is all. In the distance someone is singing. In the distance.
My soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

My sight searches for her as though to go to her.

20 My heart looks for her, and she is not with me.

The same night whitening the same trees.
We, of that time, are no longer the same.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but how I loved her.
My voice tried to find the wind to touch her hearing.

25 Another's. She will be another's. Like my kisses before.

Her voice. Her bright body. Her infinite eyes.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but maybe I love her.
Love is so short, forgetting is so long.

Because through nights like this one I held her in my arms

30 my soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

Though this be the last pain that she makes me suffer
and these the last verses that I write for her.

“PUEDO ESCRIBIR LOS VERSOS MÁS TRISTES ESTA NOCHE”¹¹

Puedo escribir los versos más tristes esta noche.

Escribir, por ejemplo: "La noche está estrellada,
y tiritan, azules, los astros, a lo lejos."

El viento de la noche gira en el cielo y canta.

Puedo escribir los versos más tristes esta noche.

Yo la quise, y a veces ella también me quiso.

En las noches como esta la tuve entre mis brazos.
La besé tantas veces bajo el cielo infinito.

Ella me quiso, a veces yo también la quería.
Cómo no haber amado sus grandes ojos fijos.

Puedo escribir los versos más tristes esta noche.
Pensar que no la tengo. Sentir que la he perdido.

Oír la noche inmensa, más inmensa sin ella.
Y el verso cae al alma como al pasto el rocío.

Qué importa que mi amor no pudiera guardarla.
La noche esta estrellada y ella no está conmigo.

Eso es todo. A lo lejos alguien canta. A lo lejos.
Mi alma no se contenta con haberla perdido.

Como para acercarla mi mirada la busca.
Mi corazón la busca, y ella no está conmigo.

La misma noche que hace blanquear los mismos
árboles.
Nosotros, los de entonces, ya no somos los mismos.

Ya no la quiero, es cierto, pero cuánto la quise.
Mi voz buscaba el viento para tocar su oído.

De otro. Será de otro. Como antes de mis besos.
Su voz, su cuerpo claro. Sus ojos infinitos.

Ya no la quiero, es cierto, pero tal vez la quiero.
Es tan corto el amor, y es tan largo el olvido.

Porque en noches como esta la tuve entre mis brazos,
mi alma no se contenta con haberla perdido.

Aunque este sea el último dolor que ella me causa,
y estos sean los últimos versos que yo le escribo.

POETRY ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

STUDENT NAME:

CLASS:

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

STEP 1: Gather Evidence- Read the poem several times and make notes in each of the following sections based on the guide "HOW TO EXPLICATE A POEM" [in your packet].

1	SITUATION:	RELEVANCE:
2	STRUCTURE:	RELEVANCE:
3	LANGUAGE:	RELEVANCE:
4	MUSICAL DEVICES:	RELEVANCE:

OPTIONAL--STEP 2: Oral Presentation of Analysis- Using the evidence gathered above, prepare a 2-3 minute oral presentation with your literature circle members. Select only relevant details and examples and consider the influences and style of the poet. Use these elements to explain the total meaning of the poem.

“ODE TO THE SEA” (A TRANSLATION OF PABLO NERUDA’S ODA AL MAR)

Here on the island
the sea
and so much sea
overflowing,
relentless,
it says yes, then no,
then no, no, no,
then yes, in blue,
in foam, with gallops,
it says no, again no.
It cannot stay still,
my name is sea, it repeats
while slamming against rocks
but unable to convince rocks,
then
with seven green tongues
of seven green dogs,
of seven green tigers,
of seven green seas,
it smothers rocks, kisses rocks,
drenches rocks
and slamming its chest,
repeats its name.
O sea, you declare yourself,
O comrade ocean,
don’t waste time and water,
don’t beat yourself up,
help us,
we are lowly
fishermen,
men of the shore,
we’re cold and hungry
and you’re the enemy,
don’t slam so hard,
don’t scream like that,
open your green trunk
and give all of us
on our hands
your silver gifts:
fish every day.

Here in each house,
we all crave it
whether it’s of silver,
crystal or moonlight,
spawn for the poor
kitchens on earth.
Don’t hoard it,
you miser,
coldly rushing like
wet lightning
beneath your waves.

Come, now,
open yourself
and leave it
near our hands,
help us, ocean,
deep green father,
end one day
our earthly poverty.
Let us
harvest your lives’
endless plantation,
your wheat and eggs,
your oxes, your metals,
the wet splendor
and submerged fruits.

Father sea, we know already
what you are called, all
the seagulls circulate
your name on the beaches:
now, behave yourself,
don’t shake you mane,
don’t threaten anyone,
don’t smash against the sky
your beautiful teeth,
ignore for a moment
your glorious history,
give to every man,
to every
woman and to every child,
a fish large or small
every day.
Go out to every street
in the world
and distribute fish
and then
scream,
scream
so all the working poor
could hear you,
so they could say,
sticking their heads
into the mine:
“Here comes the old man sea
to distribute fish.”
And they’ll go back down
into the darkness,
smiling, and on the streets
and in the forests,
men and the earth
will smile
an oceanic smile.

But
if you don’t want it,
if you don’t care for it,
then wait,
wait for us,
we must worry, first
we must try to solve
and straighten out
human affairs,
the biggest problems first,
then all the others,
and then
we’ll enter you,
we’ll chop the waves
with a knife made of fire,
on an electric horse
leaping over foam,
singing
we’ll sink
until we touch the bottom
of your guts,
an atomic thread
will guard your shank,
we’ll plant
in your deep garden
trees
of cement and steel,
we’ll tie
your hands and feet,
on your skin man will walk,
spitting,
yanking in bunches,
building armatures,
mounting and taming you
to dominate your spirit.
All this will occur
when us men
have straighten out
our problem,
the big,
the big problem.
We’ll slowly
solve everything:
we’ll force you, sea,
we’ll force you, earth
perform miracles,
because in our very selves,
in the struggle,
is fish, is bread,
is the miracle.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY LINH DINH

POETRY ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

STUDENT NAME:

CLASS:

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

STEP 1: Gather Evidence- Read the poem several times and make notes in each of the following sections based on the guide "HOW TO EXPLICATE A POEM" [in your packet].

1	SITUATION:	RELEVANCE:
2	STRUCTURE:	RELEVANCE:
3	LANGUAGE:	RELEVANCE:
4	MUSICAL DEVICES:	RELEVANCE:

OPTIONAL--STEP 2: Oral Presentation of Analysis- Using the evidence gathered above, prepare a 2-3 minute oral presentation with your literature circle members. Select only relevant details and examples and consider the influences and style of the poet. Use these elements to explain the total meaning of the poem.

“LEANING INTO THE AFTERNOONS”

Leaning into the afternoons I cast my sad nets
towards your oceanic eyes.

There in the highest blaze my solitude lengthens and flames,
its arms turning like a drowning man's.

I send out red signals across your absent eyes
that smell like the sea or the beach by a lighthouse.

You keep only darkness, my distant female,
from your regard sometimes the coast of dread emerges.

Leaning into the afternoons I fling my sad nets
to that sea that is thrashed by your oceanic eyes.

The birds of night peck at the first stars
that flash like my soul when I love you.

The night gallops on its shadowy mare
shedding blue tassels over the land.

POETRY ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

STUDENT NAME:

CLASS:

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

STEP 1: Gather Evidence- Read the poem several times and make notes in each of the following sections based on the guide "HOW TO EXPLICATE A POEM" [in your packet].

1	SITUATION:	RELEVANCE:
2	STRUCTURE:	RELEVANCE:
3	LANGUAGE:	RELEVANCE:
4	MUSICAL DEVICES:	RELEVANCE:

OPTIONAL--STEP 2: Oral Presentation of Analysis- Using the evidence gathered above, prepare a 2-3 minute oral presentation with your literature circle members. Select only relevant details and examples and consider the influences and style of the poet. Use these elements to explain the total meaning of the poem.

"IF YOU FORGET ME"

I want you to know
one thing.

You know how this is:
if I look
at the crystal moon, at the red branch
of the slow autumn at my window,
if I touch
near the fire
the impalpable ash
or the wrinkled body of the log,
everything carries me to you,
as if everything that exists,
aromas, light, metals,
were little boats
that sail
toward those isles of yours that wait for me.

Well, now,
if little by little you stop loving me
I shall stop loving you little by little.

If suddenly
you forget me
do not look for me,
for I shall already have forgotten you.

If you think it long and mad,
the wind of banners
that passes through my life,
and you decide
to leave me at the shore
of the heart where I have roots,
remember
that on that day,
at that hour,
I shall lift my arms
and my roots will set off
to seek another land.

But
if each day,
each hour,
you feel that you are destined for me
with implacable sweetness,
if each day a flower
climbs up to your lips to seek me,
ah my love, ah my own,
in me all that fire is repeated,
in me nothing is extinguished or forgotten,
my love feeds on your love, beloved,
and as long as you live it will be in your arms
without leaving mine.

"SI TU ME OLVIDAS"

Quiero que sepas
una cosa.

Tu sabes como es esto:
si miro
la luna de cristal, la rama roja
del lento otoño
en mi ventana,
si te toco
junto al fuego
la implacable ceniza
o el arrugado cuerpo de la leña.
Todo me lleva a ti,
como si todo lo que existe,
aromas, luz, metales,
fueran de pequeños barcos
que navegan
hacia las islas tuyas que me aguardan.

Ahora bien,
si poco a poco dejas de quererme,
dejare de quererte poco a poco.

Si de pronto
me olvidas
no me busques
que ya te habre olvidado.

Si consideras largo y loco
el viento de banderas
que pasa por mi vida
y te decides
a dejarme a la orilla
del corazon en que tengo raices,
piensa
que en ese dia,
a esa hora
levantare los brazos
y saldrán mis raices
a buscar otra tierra.

Pero
si cada dia
cada hora
sientes que a mi estas destinada
con dulzura implacable.
Si cada dia sube una flor
a tus labios a buscarme,
ay amore mio, ay mia,
en ti todo ese fuego se repite,
en mi nada se apaga ni se olvida,
mi amore se nutre de tua amor, amada,
y mientras vivas estara
en tus brazos sin salir de los mios.

POETRY ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

STUDENT NAME:

CLASS:

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

STEP 1: Gather Evidence- Read the poem several times and make notes in each of the following sections based on the guide "HOW TO EXPLICATE A POEM" [in your packet].

1	SITUATION:	RELEVANCE:
2	STRUCTURE:	RELEVANCE:
3	LANGUAGE:	RELEVANCE:
4	MUSICAL DEVICES:	RELEVANCE:

OPTIONAL--STEP 2: Oral Presentation of Analysis- Using the evidence gathered above, prepare a 2-3 minute oral presentation with your literature circle members. Select only relevant details and examples and consider the influences and style of the poet. Use these elements to explain the total meaning of the poem.

POETRY ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

STUDENT NAME:

CLASS:

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

STEP 1: Gather Evidence- Read the poem several times and make notes in each of the following sections based on the guide "HOW TO EXPLICATE A POEM" [in your packet].

1	SITUATION:	RELEVANCE:
2	STRUCTURE:	RELEVANCE:
3	LANGUAGE:	RELEVANCE:
4	MUSICAL DEVICES:	RELEVANCE:

OPTIONAL--STEP 2: Oral Presentation of Analysis- Using the evidence gathered above, prepare a 4-5 minute oral presentation with your literature circle members. Select only relevant details and examples and consider the influences and style of the poet. Use these elements to explain the total meaning of the poem.

POETRY PROJECT MENU

- ☐ SELECT A PABLO NERUDA POEM AND EXPLICATE IT USING THE POETRY ANALYSIS WORKSHEET [FOUND ON THE LAST PAGE OF YOUR PACKET]
 - Go to any one of the following websites:
 - <http://www.poemhunter.com/pablo-neruda/>
 - <http://www.poets.org>
 - Conduct a search for Pablo Neruda
 - Peruse through online listings of Neruda's poetry
 - Select your favorite Neruda poem
- ☐ SELECT ANY ONE ACTIVITY FROM THE CHART BELOW. YOU WILL BE EVALUATED ON THE CONTENT OF YOUR ASSIGNMENT, THE CREATIVITY OF YOUR PROJECT, AND THE THOROUGHNESS/DEPTH WITH WHICH YOU COMPLETE YOUR WORK.
- ☐ YOU MAY TEAM UP WITH OTHER CLASSMATES [NO MORE THAN 3 TO A GROUP]
- ☐ MOST PROJECT RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND ON MR. CHUNG'S VHSTIGERS.ORG TEACHER WEBSITE [GO TO "LA2 NERUDA"]
- ☐ DUE DATE:

WRITING: Take on a literary theory. Consider historical, social, economical, political, & geographical factors or influences. Complete a 2-3 page literary criticism on a Neruda poem. Word-Processed, MLA	WRITING: Consider theme and author's style. Complete a 2-3 page interpretive essay on a Neruda poem. Word-Processed, MLA	WRITING: After explicating a Neruda poem, create one on your own by mimicking that poem with its structure, use of language, devices, & situation.
ART: Think of an unusual and creative way to illustrate or make a visual representation of one of the poems by Neruda. The artwork can be your own or a collage/collection of different images and/or artifacts	ON YOUR OWN! CREATE AN ACTIVITY OF YOUR OWN AND DEVELOP IT. THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE A COMBINATION OR VARIATION OF ANY OF THE LIST ACTIVITIES ON THIS MENU. (TALK WITH ME/EMAIL ME FIRST FOR APPROVAL)	ART [PERFORMANCE]: Memorize and present to the class a Neruda poem. In your presentation, be sure to give background info on the poem based on your explication. Presentations/performances will be completed on the day of the final [as time permits]
WRITING: Take a Neruda poem and use it as the basis for a short story you will create. Word-Processed	MEDIA: Take a Neruda poem and present your explication on PowerPoint. You will present your analysis to the class on the day of the final [as time permits]	MEDIA: Take a Neruda poem and create a video poem. Use PowerPoint, Movie Maker, or iMovie along with a song and images that appropriately convey the main theme of Neruda's poem. Website resources are available on Chung's webpage.