

Poem and Poet Name Here

Your Name Here

Literary Elements (2-4 sentences each) – Identify two specific examples of literary elements that the poet used in the piece, and discuss HOW each element contributes to the overall theme(s) of the poem.

- **EXAMPLE:** In this poem, Joy Harjo tries to capture the wide range of human emotions and experiences that take place around kitchen tables. At one point, she says, “Babies teeth at the corners. They scrape their knees under it.” These *details* (literary element) are carefully chosen to capture some of the small pains that are part of our growth and development as human beings. Using these specific details contrasts with some of her warmer imagery and drives home the point that growth requires some pain and hardship.

1.

2.

Tone (3-6 sentences) – Please discuss the attitude and tone of voice that the poet communicates in the piece. Identify at least one point in the poem where the author’s tone changes, softens, or intensifies. Why do you think the tone changed at that moment?

- **EXAMPLE:** In this poem, Harjo opens with a warm and reflective tone. She achieves this by discussing the small joys and pains of life side by side. In line 12, her tone becomes a bit darker and existential when she expands her view from a single home to society as a whole. She says that, “wars have begun and ended at this table,” before finishing off the poem with sets of contrasting images of life and death.

Big Idea (4-8 sentences) – What is the central idea or message at the heart of your poem? Be sure to discuss at least two specific details in your answer.

- **EXAMPLE:** In this poem, Joy Harjo is trying to capture the joys and pains of a universal human experience that transcends race, religion, and culture. She opens her poem by saying, “we must eat to live.” This is objectively true and helps her establish the concept of a “kitchen table.” While this terminology wouldn’t transcend all cultures on its own, the experiences that she describes throughout the piece DO exist across all cultures. For instance, she talks about babies teething, families teaching their children to become adults, and even gossiping about enemies and past lovers. From there, Harjo zooms out to discuss war, burial, and even the end of the world. By gathering these major human experiences together in one poem, and reminding us of our need to gather together, she encourages readers to see beyond their own experiences and be more open to understanding others. In the end, we are all fighting our own battles.