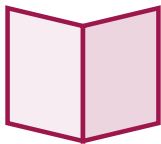


Poetry II

AP English Literature ■ Unit 5

AP English Literature



A poem, evidence, and an argument

- 1 **Read the complete text.** Track form, wording, imagery and comparison.
- 2 **Test an interpretation.** Connect precise evidence to a claim about control and loss.
- 3 **Write and revise.** Build a thesis, commentary and transitions; check what the text leaves uncertain.

1

The Function of Structure in a Text

Read first: The Account, lines 1–4

Original teaching poem; not an AP extract

1 At dawn the tide asks softly at the door.
2 I stack our chairs above the chalk-white shore.
3 “A little inconvenience,” Father said;
4 the water lifted boards beneath his bed.

Continue through all three stanzas before proposing an interpretation.

The Account, lines 5–8

Second stanza

5 By noon it sends its silver fingers through
6 the garden where our winter carrots grew.
7 I count the rows as columns in a book;
8 it signs each page with what its currents took.

The Account, lines 9–12

Final stanza

9 At dusk it takes what I had called my own.
10 The house is one dark window, water, stone.
11 I write “still standing” by the rising sea;
12 the words stay dry. No doorway shelters me.

The written claim remains; the speaker has lost physical shelter.

Your turn: form and movement

Attempt before advancing

Identify the time marker in each stanza and one repeated formal feature. Explain how the arrangement shapes the account of the flood.

Use two line references. Do not invent a death, a rescue or a final recovery.

A regular pattern can carry meaning

- 1 **Time sequence.** Dawn, noon and dusk organise the increasing intrusion.
- 2 **Formal evidence.** Three four-line stanzas and paired rhymes: door/shore, said/bed, own/stone.
- 3 **Interpretation.** The ordered telling contrasts with the loss of control and shelter.
- 4 **Limit.** Do not infer a named traditional form or fully regular metre from rhyme alone.

Closed and open forms

Closed forms 格律诗体

Use established patterns of lines, stanzas, metre or rhyme. Both regularity and a departure may contribute to meaning.

Open forms 自由诗体

Do not follow a fixed traditional pattern. Repetition and arrangement can still be deliberate.

Establish the pattern before interpreting its function.

2

Literal and Figurative Meaning

Test the meaning of rows and columns

Literal detail

“the garden where our winter carrots grew” gives “rows” a literal garden reference.

Figurative connection

“columns in a book” and “signs each page” turn the garden into an account of losses.

The wording supports accounting associations; it does not establish an actual loan or a deserved punishment.

3

The Function of Specific Words and Phrases

Understatement: test the gap

Read the two lines together

“A little inconvenience,” Father said;
the water lifted boards beneath his bed.

- 1 Scale.** “Little” minimises the event; lifted floorboards suggest substantial danger.
- 2 Possible effect.** The contrast can suggest attempted calm or inadequate recognition of danger.
- 3 Limit.** Father's private motive is not reported.

Hyperbole and understatement

Hyperbole 夸张

Invented mini example: “I waited a thousand years.” For a short wait, the exaggeration amplifies felt duration.

Understatement 低调陈述

“A little inconvenience” minimises the flood. Its effect depends on the dangerous scene that follows.

Neither device is universally stronger; analyse the specific contrast.

A descriptive word in its surroundings

Line 5

“By noon it sends its silver fingers through”

- 1 Sensory wording.** “Silver” gives the water a bright visual quality.
- 2 Connection.** “Fingers” turns that brightness into part of an invading human-like presence.
- 3 Interpretation.** The delicate appearance contrasts with the later taking of possessions. Silver has no fixed universal meaning here.

4

The Function of an Image or Imagery

Definitions begin the analysis

	What it is	What it DOES to the reader
Hyperbole	exaggerates	may amplify a feeling; check the scale and context
Understatement	minimises	a small word for a large event may suggest restraint or irony
Imagery	sensory description	a detail or pattern can shape a view of the subject
Extended metaphor	a developed comparison	trace transferred qualities; a change is not required
Personification	a human trait given to a nonhuman subject	explain the specific trait in its passage
Allusion	a reference to another source	connect supported source associations to the new text

Definitions start the analysis. Explain the particular wording with textual evidence.

Use the actual wording to explain a device's contribution.

Trace the domestic images

- 1 **Early objects.** Chairs and a bed locate the flood in daily life.
- 2 **Wider space.** The garden adds threatened food and work; the house gathers the loss into a whole home.
- 3 **Final image.** “No doorway shelters me” connects a concrete structure with lost security.

A pattern may develop an idea; one well-placed image can also matter.

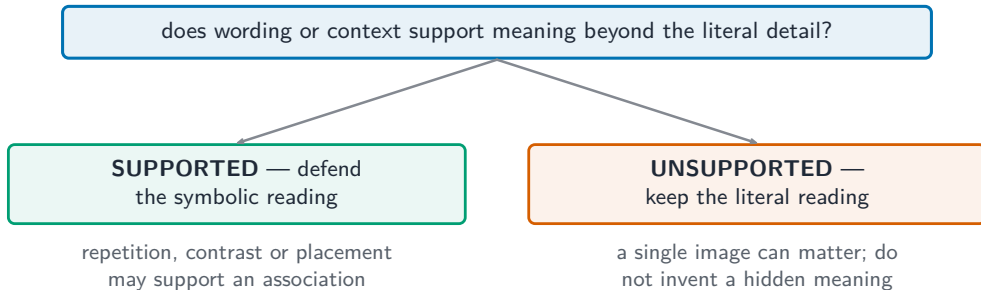
Your turn: image and symbolic meaning

Evidence task

The word “doorway” appears once. Can it still support a reading about security? Quote the wording and distinguish the physical detail from the proposed association.

A repeated object is not automatically symbolic either.

A symbolic reading needs evidence



Imagery and symbolism can overlap. Repetition is one possible clue.

Check: the doorway and shelter

- 1 **Literal.** The doorway is part of the damaged home.
- 2 **Context.** “No doorway shelters me” explicitly links it to protection.
- 3 **Supported reading.** The detail can represent lost security, despite occurring once.
- 4 **Boundary.** It does not prove a death, a permanent exile or a universal meaning for every doorway.

5

The Function of a Metaphor

Follow the accounting comparison

- 1 **Main subject.** The speaker's experience of the flood and its losses.
- 2 **Comparison details.** Garden rows become book columns; the currents sign pages and take possessions.
- 3 **Transferred quality.** Loss appears recorded and collected, making ownership less secure.
- 4 **Limit.** No literal creditor is identified. The comparison need not change or break to be extended.

6

The Function of Personification

From asking to taking

Dawn

“the tide asks softly” represents the intrusion as a seemingly polite visitor.

Noon and dusk

“sends its silver fingers” then “takes” makes the visitor increasingly intrusive.

Personification 拟人 gives the tide human traits. It does not make the physical tide literally intentional or morally responsible.

Questions for analysing personification

POSSIBLE FUNCTION	WORDING TO CHECK	QUESTION TO ASK
gives a thing INTENTION	it now acts, rather than merely happening	does the context suggest intention or blame?
makes a setting FEEL	the landscape may reflect or contrast with a mood	whose perspective shapes the description?
makes an abstraction ACT	an abstract idea receives a human trait	which human quality is being transferred?
sets the scale	a small thing given a will can dominate a passage	what has been made large, and what small

Identify the specific human trait before explaining its function.

7

The Function of an Allusion

Read the complete allusion source pack

Two original mini texts; source supplied

Song, Both Banks: “Build us a bridge; let both banks share the rain.” The bridge connects two communities.

New mini poem: “She paints ‘both banks share the rain’ upon our gate; / then turns the key and asks the guests to wait.”

The quotation deliberately recalls the invented song. No outside source knowledge is required.

Your turn: source and new context

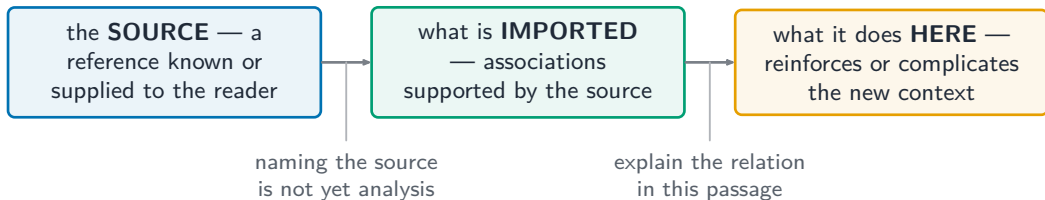
Attempt before the model

What association does the song supply? How do the locked gate and waiting guests complicate the welcome announced by the painted words? State one thing the mini poem does not establish.

Check: an announcement and a boundary

- 1 **Source association.** The bridge and shared rain suggest connection between communities.
- 2 **New context.** The painted quotation announces that openness, while a locked gate limits access.
- 3 **Interpretation.** The allusion exposes tension between the public welcome and the controlled entrance.
- 4 **Limit.** The text does not tell us why the gate is locked or whether the delay is permanent.

Relate the reference to the new passage



Use recognised or supplied context; do not invent source associations.

8

Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

Your turn: build a defensible thesis

Original practice prompt

Explain how structure and figurative language convey the speaker's changing sense of control in *The Account*.

Write an interpretation rather than a device list. Select evidence from two different moments.

A device list and a literary thesis

A starting inventory

“The poem uses rhyme, imagery and personification.” These are features, but what interpretation do they support?

A defensible interpretation

As the tide changes from a visitor that “asks” to a force that “takes”, the orderly account exposes how little control words and ownership give over the loss of home.

A thesis may preview the reasoning. This example guarantees no score.

9

Developing Commentary

Evidence becomes commentary

Worked paragraph: follow the changing verbs

The speaker first presents the tide as a visitor that “asks”, making the intrusion seem negotiable. By dusk it “takes what I had called my own”, and the earlier claim of ownership has become uncertain. This change in verbs makes the speaker's control appear increasingly fragile.

The paragraph explains the relation between the two quoted actions and the claim.

Connect the ending to the argument

Continue the worked paragraph

The ending preserves the written words “still standing” but leaves the speaker without a sheltering doorway, so the account can record a claim it cannot make physically true.

This supports a tension between words and shelter. It does not prove that the speaker has accepted the loss.

10 Selecting Relevant and Sufficient Evidence

Revise a claim that overreaches

Too certain

“The speaker calmly accepts the flood.” This ignores the chairs being stacked and the final insistence on “still standing”.

Better bounded claim

The poem contrasts efforts to preserve order with the loss of physical shelter. “Still standing” may suggest persistence, denial or both.

Interpretation is recursive: reread, test and revise. A fixed quotation count cannot replace relevant evidence.

11 Control Over the Elements of Composition

Make the transition express the relation

A supported contrast

At dawn, “asks” makes the intrusion seem negotiable. **By contrast**, the dusk verb “takes” gives the speaker no apparent choice.

- 1 Why this connector?** The two actions contrast.
- 2 Why not automatically therefore?** A change in time does not by itself establish causation.

Write, then check against the model

Independent practice

Write a thesis and a short paragraph answering the prompt. Use two moments, explain a tension and state a limit on the interpretation.

- 1 Check evidence.** Are the quotations accurate and relevant?
- 2 Check commentary.** Does each inference follow from the wording?
- 3 Check the conclusion.** Have you invented an event, motive or certain resolution?

12 **Recap**

Check yourself

- 1 **Form.** How can a regular rhyme pattern contribute without any broken rhyme?
- 2 **Words and images.** What supports the accounting comparison and the doorway reading?
- 3 **Personification.** How do asks and takes shape the visitor representation?
- 4 **Allusion.** What does the supplied song add to the locked-gate mini poem?