

Landon's Teacher's Comments

I wanted the students in my class to analyze an accessible but challenging poem. I didn't want to hand them "themes" and "meanings" but to have them uncover the meaning for themselves. So we took a slightly different approach.

First, I had the entire class brainstorm elements of a poem that might be useful in supporting an analysis of the poem's meaning. This was a refresher; we'd covered these terms and so had their previous teachers. I made a big list on the board for reference of terms such as *simile* or *personification*.

Then, I put the students in pairs and had each do a think-pair-share where they worked with a particular poem and annotated it with their own thoughts and interpretations. We transferred those ideas to a graphic organizer.

When it was time to write, we talked about how to quote lines and what to do about line breaks, though I stressed that the most important part of the assignment had to do with the quality of the evidence, not how it was formatted—that could be fixed in later drafts. Finally, we talked about drawing bigger conclusions based on the notations students made, and I had each pair discuss their thesis statements at length, both with each other and with me. Then we were ready to write.

1. Plan

Landon's teacher allowed students to recall useful terms, prompting them to look for certain elements with each poem.

2. Collect

This pairing activity served as a chance for students to gather evidence.

3. Organize

The graphic organizer allowed students to add structures to the information they found in the poem.

4. Cite

Though the conversation is brief, Landon's teacher helps students think about how evidence will be incorporated into their essays to support their arguments.

5. Discuss

Landon works on a thesis statement, preparing to use the evidence as support for a larger argument about the poem.