



# Lesson Activity: Anatomy of a Sonnet

## AP<sup>®</sup> English Literature and Composition

**Duration** Approximately 45 minutes

### Materials Needed

- UWorld “Anatomy of a Sonnet” and student copies of the UWorld “Sonnet Activity” page:

Anatomy of a Sonnet		
The lines of a Shakespearean sonnet often follow a strict structure and rhyme scheme and incorporate a sequence of metaphors or ideas, one in each quatrain. The final couplet typically offers either a summary or a different perspective on the preceding images or ideas, and stanzas may occur after the first two quatrains or in the couplet.		
Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare		Main Idea
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	A	Quatrain 1 The speaker's lover is more beautiful and pleasant than a summer's day.
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:	B	
Rough winds do shake and darling buds of May,	A	
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:	B	
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Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,	C	Quatrain 2 Summer's is often hot, and it eventually fades into autumn.
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;	D	
And every fair from fair sometime declines,	C	
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;	D	
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But thy eternal summer shall not fade,	E	Couplet BUT, the lover will not fade or die. She will live on
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;	F	

  

Sonnet Activity	
1. Label the rhyme scheme and paraphrase the poem by rewriting by line or sentence. It does not have to look like a poem.	
Sonnet	Paraphrase
That time of year thou mayst in me behold	_____
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang	_____
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,	_____
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.	_____
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In me thou see'st the twilight of such day	_____
As after sunset fadeth in the west,	_____
Which by and by black night doth take away,	_____
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.	_____
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In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire	_____
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,	_____
As the death-bed whereon it must expire	_____

*(full-size pages included at the end of the lesson activity)*

- Pencils/pens
- Optional: countdown timer

### College Board<sup>®</sup> Standards

- STR-1.E:** The arrangement of lines and stanzas contributes to the development and relationship of ideas in a poem.
- STR-1.F:** A text's structure affects readers' reactions and expectations by presenting the relationships among the ideas of the text via their relative positions and their placement within the text as a whole.
- STR-1.U:** Closed forms of poetry include predictable patterns in the structure of lines, stanzas, meter, and rhyme, which develop relationships among the poem's ideas.



## Lesson Activity: Anatomy of a Sonnet

### Activity Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to **describe** the characteristics of sonnets, **analyze** the structure of sonnets, and **communicate** how a sonnet's structure affects its meaning.

### Activity Instructions

1. Using the UWorld “Anatomy of a Sonnet” page as a reference, **ask** students to label the rhyme scheme and **paraphrase** the poem on the “Sonnet Activity” page.
2. With a partner or small group, have students **discuss** and **answer** the remaining questions on the “Sonnet Activity” page.

### Possible Variations (requires a countdown timer)

- After independently completing step 1 of the activity, **discuss** the remaining questions using an inner-outer circle rotation with the class.
- **Discuss** the remaining questions on the “Sonnet Activity” page using a “speed-dating” format, in which half of the class rotates among the remaining students at their desks for 3 minutes at a time.

### Lesson Extension

The following UWorld learning platform poem with accompanying questions can be used for additional practice, a quick formative assessment, homework, or small group interventions:

- “Sonnet 73” by William Shakespeare

### Guiding Questions

**What** is a sonnet?

**How** does analyzing the structure of a sonnet help in understanding the poem?



## Anatomy of a Sonnet

The lines of a Shakespearean sonnet often follow a strict structure and rhyme scheme and incorporate a sequence of metaphors or ideas, one in each quatrain. The final couplet typically offers either a summary or a different perspective on the preceding images or ideas, and shifts may occur after the first two quatrains or in the couplet.

Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare			Main Idea
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	A	Quatrain 1	The speaker's lover is more beautiful and pleasant than a summer's day.
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;	B		
Rough winds do shake and darling buds of May,	A		
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;	B		
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,	C	Quatrain 2	Summer's is often hot, and it eventually fades into autumn.
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;	D		
And every fair from fair sometime declines,	C		
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;	D		
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,	E	Quatrain 3	<b>BUT</b> , the lover will not fade or die. She will live on through these lines.
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;	F		
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,	E		
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:	F		
So long as men can breathe or eye can see,	G	Couplet	As long as there are people to read these lines, the lover will live on.
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.	G		



# Lesson Activity: Anatomy of a Sonnet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sonnet Activity

1. **Label** the rhyme scheme and **paraphrase** the poem by line or sentence. It does not have to look like a poem.

### Sonnet

### Paraphrase

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
 In me thou seest the twilight of such day  
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
 Which by and by black night doth take away,  
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
 Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.  
 This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

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2. **Who** is the speaker and to **whom** is the poem addressed?

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### Sonnet Activity cont.

3. **What** is the occasion of the poem? **What** prompted the speaker to say these words?

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4. **Identify** the main idea in each quatrain and the couplet, then **identify** and **explain** the devices used to convey each idea.

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5. **Identify** the tone(s). Is there a shift? **If** a shift exists, **where** and **how** does the poem shift?

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6. **What** universal theme or message does the poem convey? **Write** this in sentence form.

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7. **Explain** how the poem relates to something outside of the poem, such as a situation, story, novel, drama, song, painting, movie, etc.

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