

English 11/AP English Language and Composition
Emily Dickinson Write-Up

There is no hot seat for this paper, though see below for meeting opportunities

Paper length: 2–3 double spaced pages

Paper due: Tuesday, February 6, by 11:59 p.m.; see below for submission requirements

The Emily Dickinson presentations, while they achieved the goal of having you work with/work through a poem, can now, through this paper, move to a more sophisticated expression of your ideas for an academic audience.

- I. The Copytext.
- II. The Poem: Its Form, Style, and Meaning
- III. The Poem in Context
- IV. Conclusion: Workbook or Collection?

(I have included the section-by-section breakdown, for you to review, at the end of this handout; it's the same one you used for the presentation.)

Your grade on this project will reflect:

- 1. The presentation: Its competence, preparation, and the degree to which it lines up with the ideas discussed in class.

****General notes are given today to help bridge the presentation and the write-up, to avoid repeated mistakes. If you have missed this class, you must sign up for an appointment to meet with me about missed ideas—if you are out Monday, January 29, and do not meet with me, I will not accept your paper.****

Anyone concerned about her specific presentation is welcome to meet with me before attempting the paper—if you missed classes in January in the run up to the presentations, it is especially important for you to spend 5 minutes with me going over the presentation you gave.****

- 2. The paper:

- a. Include all sections and develop your ideas with specific references to text. You should number the sections and need not have an introduction or thesis, but rather you may begin with your copytext and explanation of your choices. Your conclusion will be the last section, where you speculate about the purpose of the fascicles.
- b. Meet standards for rigor and honesty

Rigor

Your work should show a thorough and careful look at your poem. You should have occasion to quote from your poem or fascicle poems in each section of the exploration; these uses of text, along with any summaries or paraphrases, should be well blended and carefully analyzed, in light of the questions we have discussed. Your writing should reflect the usage standards we have discussed, especially those listed on the Q3 handout.

Honesty

You should not go looking for interpretations of your poem on the web. If you turn to a source to supplement your thinking or to work out a definition of a non-standard word, you need to cite that source, and the source should be credible. Use Google Scholar or myJSTOR when you search so that you can find a credible source you would not mind citing. Commercial summaries or blogs are not appropriate sources.

I would rather read a non-standard interpretation of your poem that shows an understanding of the ideas we have discussed than a more sophisticated interpretation that is outside our assignment and overly influenced by uncited web sources.

- c. Hand in your paper electronically through Jupiter as a PDF. Handle technical difficulties in advance. Google Docs will enable you to export as a PDF. We will do a practice document this week so you can demonstrate your savvy before you have to submit your paper. Students who need to type at school may use the computers in the teachers' lounge after school; Mr. Hawley has also permitted use of the desktop in his office during the school day and after school (see him to make an appointment).

If you recited last week, you will receive up to 5 points of extra credit.

Here's that section-by-section breakdown for the presentations again; I have only changed the numbers to omit the recitation, since you've already done that.

- I. Present your copytext. Your copytext is the typewritten version of the poem as you would present it in a reader's edition of the poems of Emily Dickinson. Think about line, punctuation, capitalization, and variant words. Be able to talk intelligently about your choices in terms of your aesthetic judgment as an editor and/or the initial or final intentions of the poet. With some poems, the copytext is complex; with others, this portion of the presentation will be straightforward.
- II. Discuss the poem itself: poetic devices and the way the craft of the poem contributes to its meaning. Begin with a general statement about the poem's meaning. Then ground your idea (theme statement) in the poem's diction and syntax. Look up any unfamiliar words. Think about formal elements—syllabics (number of syllables per line) and meter (iambic?)—as well as true or slant rhyme and its effects, imagery, and so on. How do the poem's formal choices relate to the poem's meaning?
- III. Place the poem in context. Discuss the poem's tone and content in conjunction with the poems before and after it. For the reader of the fascicle, how does the poem fit in—thematically and formally—with the poems around it?
- IV. Decide whether you think the fascicle is a collection, a workbook, or something else. Remember the history of publication and role of Ralph Franklin in the re-assembling of the fascicles. What would you look for in a collection of poetry (remember: narrative or emotional arc)? Do you see an arc across the poems here when you read the fascicle end to end? Do you see some streaks of continuity thematically, tonally, formally? Draw a conclusion about the way this fascicle works.

If you need to include a Works Cited or Works Consulted page, please include that as the last page of the same document.