

English 10  
Explication Checklist

I. Basics

- Name, MLA heading, page numbers, and spacing
- Use of the numbered sections given on the assignment sheet
- Paper (without copied poem) is 3+ pages; 4-5 pages is an appropriate length
- Paragraphs are indented

II. Composition

- Paper includes an introduction
  - orients the reader
  - sets forth the purpose of the poem in a thesis statement
- Topic sentences link the current paragraph/section to the thesis
- Paper includes a conclusion

III. Poetry-specific usage/issues

- Paper uses “the speaker” as distinct from the poet
- Paper uses the poet’s last name
- Paper describes the effects and analyzes the work itself; it does not presume to know the poet’s intentions
- Paper does not evaluate the poem except to build on what the poem does especially effectively
- Paper never suggests that a professional poet writing an acclaimed poem has done anything “randomly”

IV. Usage

- Read for the Unlucky 13 errors
  - Each five instances of these errors in the final version of this paper will cost one letter grade
  - Be sure you can quote and cite properly in MLA style
    - For poetry, use slashes for line breaks
    - Give line numbers to cite

V. Source use

- Source use for this paper is unnecessary
- If you use a scholarly source to gloss or explain something for you, cite it in MLA style
- Do not use any commercial summary, plagiarism source (duh), or blog