

**General Assignment:** In this essay, I am asking you to consider how poetry can be valuable. You can look at the question from a very broad or a very narrow perspective. For instance, you may decide to discuss the value of poetry from a strictly personal point of view. How is poetry valuable for just you? On the other hand, you may wish to consider the value of poetry in terms of what it can contribute to society today or what it has contributed in the past. Another possibility is to identify an environment or a situation in which poetry could be valuable.

### Components of the Essay:

1. **Introduction:** Begin with a short discussion of the concept of value. What do we mean when we say something is valuable? Remember that I am not looking for a dictionary definition. I want you instead to think about value in general and then come up with some categories of value that you want to apply to poetry in the course of your essay, such as monetary or economic value, moral values, artistic values, spiritual values, or educational value.
2. **Thesis:** Once you have identified the values you want to discuss in relation to poetry, summarize those values in a thesis statement.
3. **Support:** The type of support you will present in the body of your essay will depend, of course, on the breadth of your approach. If you’re writing from a strictly personal point of view, then you will use examples from your own experience. If your approach is more general, then you may use historical events or social trends as evidence. I also expect you to document any secondary sources that you use. Everyone, however, must use at least three poems as evidence and examples to illustrate your main points. Please use our textbook as your first source for illustrative poems. If you use other poems not in the text, please point this out when we go over your draft.
4. **Conclusion:** Finish up by connecting the values for poetry that you have been discussing with your personal goals for this course. If you have been taking a personal approach all along, this will come naturally, but if you have engaged in more general discussion, you may have to “pull back” and consider the implications of poetic value for what you are trying to accomplish through a university education.

**Draft:** I will give over one class period to going over drafts of the essay. I prefer that the essay draft be as complete as possible. My suggestions will be more helpful to you that way.

**Manuscript Requirements:** The final essay should be 400-600 words, typed or word processed with double spacing. You need not have a cover page. If you clearly indicate where you have used secondary sources in the text of the essay, you need not have a formal Works Cited page. I will penalize your grade for turning in the final draft late.