

**Explication: Modern Poetry**  
*American Literature*

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

**Instructions:** Simply put, explication is a brief analysis of the words, images, and other devices that make up a poem in order to establish possible meaning. Traditionally, that means discussing things like symbolism, rhyme scheme, conflict, motivation, even plot. However, there is nothing *traditional* about *modern* poetry. So, for our purposes, we're going to explicate largely by analyzing whether or not a poem fits the rules suggested by some of the early modern poets. Looking at each poem through this lens will help you when it's time to write your own.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Poet: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does the poem explore a single image, rather than many?

Identify and Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the poem use concrete, rather than abstract language (no metaphors)?

Identify and Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the poem avoid superfluous language (no extra words or adjectives)?

Identify and Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does the poem find beauty in the “everyday” (no big or fancy subject)?

Identify and Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the poem talk about the “object” itself, rather than “feelings” about the object?

Identify and Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Is the poem trying to imitate or parody another form or style (sonnet, haiku, epic, etc.), thereby releasing it to some extent from the above constraints?

Identify and Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Does the poem contain any other things or behave in any other ways that feel particularly modern to you?

Identify and Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_