**Sonnets- Summative Assessment: Directions & Example**

For your summative assessment, you will be given a Shakespearean sonnet with which you will provide a brief summary, identify a theme (or central idea), describe how that theme emerges and is shaped by specific details (using textual evidence), and then you will analyze how Shakespeare uses ideas from Petrarch’s approach to sonnets- using the three Petrarchan sonnets we’ve looked at as example texts.

Follow the rubric below and look at the example provided to see what you are expected to do.

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| **Expectation** | **1-Level** | **2-Level** | **3-Level** | **4-Level** |
| Provide a one-paragraph summary of the Shakespearean sonnet | -Inaccurate summary, vital misunderstandings,  may be of un-substantial length or may go too long | -Summary is fairly accurate with a few mis-understandings, may be of sparse length, or go too long | -Summary is accurate, few, if any, mis-understandings, appropriate one-paragraph length | -Summary is accurate, shows in-depth understanding, appropriate length |
| Identifies a theme (or central idea) of a Shakespearean sonnet and supports that assertion with three or more appropriate quotes | -Theme is off-base or unsubstantiated  -May have fewer than three quotes to support  -Quotes may be irrelevant to theme | -Theme is sensible and student made an attempt at supporting with quotes  -May have fewer than three quotes to support  -Some quotes may be irrelevant to theme | -Theme is sensible and adequately supported with quotes  -Has three quotes to support  -At least two quotes are relevant to theme | -Theme is sensible and substantially supported with quotes  -Has at least three quotes to support  -Quotes are relevant to theme  -Discussion is substantial and eloquent |
| Comments on connection to Petrarch using two or more quotes from Petrarch | -Connection is unsubstantial or poorly articulated  -May have fewer than two quotes  -Quotes may be irrelevant to connection | -Connection is sensible and student made an attempt at supporting with quotes  -May have fewer than two quotes  -Some quotes may be irrelevant to theme | -Connection is sensible and adequately supported with quotes  -Has two quotes to support  -Quotes are relevant to connection | -Connection is sensible and substantially supported with quotes  -Has at least two quotes to support  -Quotes are relevant to connection  -Discussion is substantial and eloquent |
| Student uses appropriate citations | -Student makes little to no attempt at citations | -Student attempts to cite quotes or text references, but lacks accuracy | -Student makes adequate attempt to cite quotes and text references | -Student deftly cites quotes and text references |

**Sample Essay from Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18**

In Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18”, Shakespeare begins with a proposition, asking his beloved: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” (1). Shakespeare goes on to say that his beloved is incomparably better than a summer day, showing his audience how nature lacks. He ends by asserting that, unlike the summer, his beloved will never go away (9).

The theme of this poem is that Shakespeare’s beloved transcends the beauty of nature. Again, after the first line coyly proposes: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” (1), Shakespeare responds by saying, essentially, “No, you’re better”- in his words: “Thou art more lovely and more temperate” (2). From here, Shakespeare lists the ways in which nature lacks- summer is too short (4), the sun is too hot (5), the sun is blocked by clouds and therefore not always so illustrious (6). Shakespeare then goes on to say that, while summer is short and every natural beauty fades “every fair from fair sometime declines” (7), his beloved will live on in the “eternal lines” of his poetry (12), concluding by assuring his beloved that “this [poem] gives life to thee” (14).

In Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18”, he continues on one theme seen in Petrarch’s “Sonnet 159”, while bringing a more confident tone than Petrarch does in Petrarch’s “Sonnet 18”. In Petrarch’s “Sonnet 159”, the poet compares nature and his beloved to make the point that nature’s role is to praise his beloved, writing that: “verdant turf, and flowers of thousand hues / Beneath yon oak’s old canopy of state, / Spring round her feet to pay their amorous duty” (9-11). Here, the green grass, colorful flowers, and stately oak tree present themselves to show off for his beloved. Certainly, this is in line with Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18”, as his beloved is placed above nature- in this case a summer’s day, as she is not only “more lovely and more temperate” (2), but also she will live forever through Shakespeare’s poetry.

While Shakespeare’s theme is in line with Petrarch’s in Petrarch’s “Sonnet 159”, Shakespeare takes a different approach in his “Sonnet 18” than Petrarch does in his sonnet of the same number. Petrarch doubts his power as a poet in his “Sonnet 18”, writing that he lacks the “strength to try the task sublime”- the sublime task being accurately reflecting his beloved through poetry (6). On the other hand, Shakespeare feels confident that his poetry is good enough to make his beloved immortal- that her presence will be felt “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see” (13).

**Shakespeare’s Sonnet 27**

Weary[[1]](#footnote-1) with toil[[2]](#footnote-2), I haste me to my bed,

The dear repose[[3]](#footnote-3) for limbs with travel tired;

But then begins a journey in my head[[4]](#footnote-4)

To work my mind, when body's work's expired[[5]](#footnote-5):

For then my thoughts--from far where I abide[[6]](#footnote-6)--

Intend a zealous pilgrimage[[7]](#footnote-7) to thee,

And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,

Looking on darkness which the blind do see:

Save that my soul's imaginary sight

Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,

Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,

Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.

Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,

For thee, and for myself, no quiet[[8]](#footnote-8) find.

1. weary= worn out, exhausted [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. toil= work [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. repose= rest [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. journey in my head= thoughts of the beloved [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. expired= is finished [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. far where I abide= far away from where he is [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. zealous pilgrimage= intense/enthusiastic journey [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. quiet= peace [↑](#footnote-ref-8)