



## How to Analyze a Poem

Here are the steps we will follow and practice in class to study poetry.

1. Read the poem silently to yourself.
2. Read the poem aloud.
3. Read it as it is punctuated. Stop when there is a period. Notice punctuation!
4. Look up the definition to any words you do not know.
5. Paraphrase exactly what is going on, or what is being described in the poem. Be very literal.
6. Look at the title of the poem? Does it give any indication of the message or focus?
7. Look at any poetic/literary devices used in the poem: similes, metaphors, imagery, hyperbole, etc... Why are they there?
8. Notice enjambment. Why might a line break occur at a particular place?
9. Notice capitalization or the use of italics. Why might certain words be capitalized or italicized?
10. Who is the speaker in the poem?
11. Notice any shifts in the poem – shifts in time, location, speaker
12. What image(s) do you see?
13. Note any particular rhyme scheme.
14. Are any words repeated? What effect does this have?
15. Notice diction. That is, the use of precise and vivid word choice. Remember, a poet uses a very small “pallet” of words. Each one is very carefully chosen for a specific effect. Some words will be very specific to meaning. What words are those?
16. How do you feel after you read the poem? That is, what is the mood of the poem?
17. What is important in this poem? What might the poet be trying to communicate or say? What is the message or theme?

### *Additional Websites to Consider on Poetry Analysis*

<http://www.enotes.com/topics/how-analyze-poem>

[http://library.thinkquest.org/23846/writing\\_guide/poetry.html](http://library.thinkquest.org/23846/writing_guide/poetry.html)

*Poetry is a story  
that is so good,  
it doesn't need  
complete sentences.*

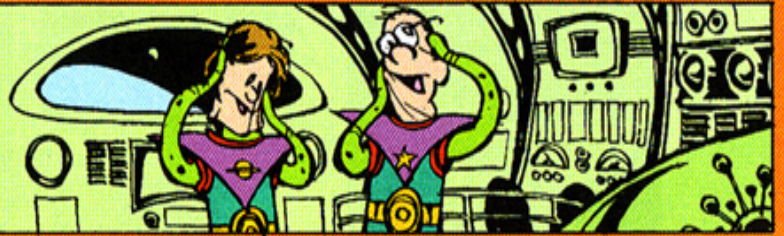
# calvin and hobbes

BY WILSON

MY MOM AND MY DAD ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM.  
THEIR DULL APPEARANCE IS PART OF THEIR SCHEME.  
I KNOW OF THEIR PLANS. I KNOW THEIR TECHNIQUES.  
MY PARENTS ARE OUTER SPACE ALIEN FREAKS!



THEY LANDED ON EARTH IN SPACESHIPS HUMONGOUS.  
POSING AS GROWNUPS, THEY NOW WALK AMONG US.  
MY PARENTS DENY THIS, BUT I KNOW THE TRUTH.  
THEY'RE HERE TO ENSLAVE ME AND SPOIL MY YOUTH.



EARLY EACH MORNING, AS THE SUN RISES,  
MOM AND DAD PUT ON THEIR EARTHLING DISGUISES.  
I KNEW RIGHT AWAY THEIR MASKS WEREN'T LEGIT.  
THEIR FACES ARE LINED - THEY SAG AND DON'T FIT.



THE EARTH'S GRAVITY MAKES THEM SLUGGISH AND SLOW.  
THEY SAY NOT TO RUN, WHEREVER I GO.  
THEY LIVE BY THE CLOCK. THEY'RE SLAVES TO ROUTINES.  
THEY WORK THE YEAR 'ROUND. THEY'RE ALMOST MACHINES.



THEY DENY THAT TV AND FRIED FOOD HAVE MUCH WORTH.  
THEY CANNOT BE HUMAN. THEY'RE NOT OF THIS EARTH.  
I CANNOT ESCAPE THEIR ALIEN GAZE,  
AND THEY'RE WARPING MY MIND WITH THEIR ALIEN WAYS.  
FOR SINISTER PLOTS, THIS ONE IS A GEM.  
THEY'RE BRINGING ME UP TO TURN ME INTO THEM!

