

Title: "Richard Cory"

By: Edwin Arlington Robinson

P: When Richard Cory came into town everyone stopped to look at him;
He had all the looks of a gentleman: he was well-groomed, practically prince-like.
He always looked good but wasn't too flashy, and he was always friendly
to everyone.
Just getting to see him was exciting for us: his "Good Morning" made us swoon
and he practically glimmered as he glided by.
The guy was loaded—the richest man in town—and charming and well-
mannered in every way.
The bottom line is we thought had it all and we gladly would have traded our lives
with his.
But we couldn't trade, so we kept at our menial jobs, day after day, doing without
much, and sometimes hating what little we did have;
And then on one nice summer night, Richard Cory killed himself.

L: Extremely direct language, using some British language ("pavement" for sidewalk, etc.), with very little figurative language; the words used to describe RC make him sound royal—"imperially slim," "gentleman from sole to crown," and "richer than a king"—this is in direct CONTRAST to the kind of life the townspeople live, where they "worked," "waited," "went without," and "cursed." There are some comparisons—richer than a king, and "glittered" describes his walking.

O: The organization is 16 lines, divided into 4 four-line stanzas, with regular rhyme scheme--ABAB CDCD EFEF GHGH.

T: The tone of this poem helps create the shocking and ironic effect of the final line of the poem. The speaker reveals all information in a **direct**, and **matter-of-fact** yet **adoring** way, which helps enhance the surprise, with a **reluctant** manner in revealing the final detail.

T: The pressure to seem perfect often conceals and increases immense pain or dissatisfaction;
The perception of others can become a burden too heavy for some individuals to bear;
The discrepancy between appearances and reality (the public self and the inner self), when discovered, frequently causes confusion and disappointment;
All the good fortune the world can offer is meaningless to a discontented soul;
The burden of perceived perfection can become painfully isolating;
Adoration is not an adequate substitute for genuine interaction and acceptance.

S: Context—Richard Cory Subtext—appearances & perceptions

S: The speaker is a citizen of the town, and one of RC's many admirers, who is probably shocked by his final act.

Assigned paragraph format. Yes, you must follow this format.
Not following the format=not earning credit.

TS—Topic Sentence (Title, author, genre, and device must be mentioned)

E1—First example sentence (cite several examples of the device)

Comm 1.1—First commentary statement for E1 (reflect on the significance of the selected examples in the poem)

Comm 1.2—Second commentary statement for E1 (reflect on the significance of the selected examples as they relate to the thematic issue)

E2—Second example sentence (cite more examples of the SAME device)

Comm 2.1—First commentary statement for E2 (again, reflect on the significance of the selected examples in the poem)

Comm 2.2—Second commentary statement for E2 (reflect on the significance of the selected examples as they relate to the thematic issue)

TO—Thematic Observation (Close with a sentence that includes a full statement of one of the poem’s themes, as revealed by the device & its examples you selected)

And now, a properly-formatted example paragraph about how the use of **diction** reveals a theme:

Edwin Arlington Robinson employs contrasting **diction** in “Richard Cory” to reveal the poem’s meaning (TS). The speaker refers to Cory as “gentlemanly,” “imperially slim,” “clean favored,” “richer than a king,” and “always human” (E₁). The descriptive word choice indicates Cory is not only privileged, but also beloved (Comm₁₋₁). The word choice elevates Cory’s status to that of a local idol—they believe he lives a perfect life (Comm₁₋₂). However, words categorizing the townspeople’s way of life provides a sharp contrast to Cory’s perceived perfection, as they “worked,” “waited,” “went without,” and “cursed” (E₂). The townspeople’s socio-economic status appears vastly lower than Cory’s, and the words used illustrate their struggle to provide and survive (Comm₂₋₁). The striking difference and distance between who Cory is and who the townspeople are, sheds some light on their infatuation with Richard Cory: they adoringly study him as an escape from the repetitive drudgery of their daily lives (Comm₂₋₂). The townspeople’s fixation adds greater shock to the revelation of Cory’s suicide, and these contrasts underscore the idea that adoration of a person based on perceptions alone can create a pressure too heavy for that person to maintain or endure (TO).