

The Chair

by Pete Mullineaux

A quiet man, unobtrusive;
once tucked in he became invisible.
And though we might occasionally
sink into the worn upholstery,
it was only for my father
the chair agreed to work its special charms,
wrapping him in snug arms
offering safe harbour.

My mother in contrast was everywhere:
perpetual motion, like a fish.
'Your supper's on the table.'
'I think I'll eat it on my lap,' he'd reply,
heading for his retreat.

Sundays: the doldrums,
metallic skies of dull chrome.
The family dinner over, I'd sneak out,
leaving him in his usual place,
her for once becalmed, sprawled
on the settee like Eartha Kitt* –
watching the box, doped on tedium.

When the cat got in and peed
all over Dad's chair,
my mother took the excuse
to have the thing thrown out.

That evening, gathered like porpoises,
or sharks around a raft,
we witnessed a rare moment;
akin to a death, or the sighting of land,
when he seemed for once
wholly visible, hesitating –
as if expecting the world to right itself,
before paddling sideways
to the bare rock
where my mother
lay like a siren* in her best Carmen curlers – waiting.

BEFORE YOU READ:

*Eartha Kitt was a famous actress and singer in the 1950s and 60s, known for her distinctive style.



*A siren is a mythical mermaid who was said to sit on dangerous rocks and call out to passing sailors, luring them to their deaths.



Read The Chair by Pete Mullineaux. Activate your prior knowledge to look for surface meaning.

PLOT – What is happening?

PURPOSE – What is the purpose and audience for this text?

SETTING – Where and when is the action happening?

Where	When
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Effect	Effect
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STRUCTURE – How does the way the text is structured affect its meaning?

THEMES – What ideas or messages does the poem communicate to you?

Idea:	Quote that gives you this idea:
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NARRATION – Who is telling the story? From whose point of view? What is the effect of that?

CHARACTERS – Who is involved in the text?

The STEEL Paragraph

When you READ unfamiliar text remember to look for MAPT

Message M
Audience A
Purpose P
Techniques T

Hi, I'm the MAPT!
Let MAPT help you
with unfamiliar texts!



“Techniques” are the tools used to communicate the MESSAGE to the AUDIENCE for a PURPOSE.

When writing a paragraph about an unfamiliar text:

1. Read the text to get an overall idea of its meaning/message.
2. Ask yourself: **M** -WHAT is it saying? **A** -To WHO? **P** -WHY? **T** -HOW?
3. Read the QUESTION carefully, taking special note of key words in the QUESTION.
4. Read the text carefully again, looking for the aspects asked for in the question.
5. Annotate the unfamiliar text using MAPT. *Find the Techniques that help create the M, A, or P and that answer the question.*

Now you are ready to write a STEEL paragraph.

1. Choose one or more of the techniques you have found in the text that help ANSWER the question.
2. **S** STATE the question as the beginning of your answer.
3. **T** Identify/name the TECHNIQUE that supports your answer.
4. **E** Prove you know what you're talking about by quoting an EXAMPLE from the text, of that technique.
5. **E** Explain the EFFECT of that technique and how it helps us understand the M, A, P, etc... as per the question. Add more TEEs as needed.
6. **L** Explain how these all LINK back to answer the question.

S Statement

T Technique

E Quote an Example of it

E Explain its Effect

L Link it back to question



Read the poem The Chair by Pete Mullineaux. *Activate your prior knowledge as you read>>>>>>*
After reading ask yourself these MAPT questions:

Message/Meaning – What is this poem about?

- What message or meaning do we get from this poem?
- What idea(s) does it make us think about?
- What is described first? Most? Least? Last?
- What imagery does it use?
- What are some features of the poem that stand out?
- What effect does it have on us as a reader?

Write one sentence stating what you think this poem is essentially about:

Audience- who is the audience for this poem?

- Who might find some of the ideas in the poem familiar? Funny? Interesting? Can you relate?
 - Who can imagine a father, mother or household like the ones in the poem? Can you relate?
 - Who can picture the images of the sea that the poet is using?
- Write one sentence describing the kind of **person** the poet might be wanting to communicate with through this poem:

Purpose- why has the poet chosen to write about this situation/incident/reality ?

- Why has he chosen to describe the way various members of the family move around the home?
- Why has he not mentioned the real first names of anyone in the poem?
- Why has he called the poem “The Chair”?
- Why has he structured the poem the way he has?
- Why has he used the images he has?
- Why has he used the language features he has?

Write one sentence outlining what you think the **purpose** of the poet might have been in writing this poem:

Techniques – How has the the poet created the ideas, the connection and the effects he has?

Write answers to each of the following questions:

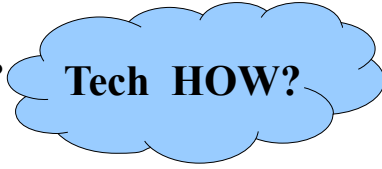
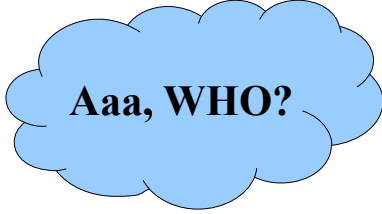
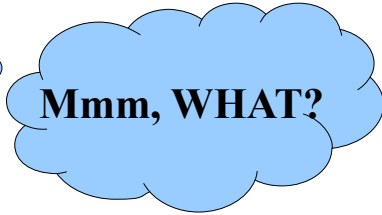
How did the poet communicate the **M**essage of the poem effectively, using techniques?

How did the poet communicate to the **A**udience effectively, using techniques?

How was the poet able to fulfill the **P**urpose of getting us to: Think about his ideas, ask questions, make connections, by using techniques?

TECHNIQUES - LANGAUGE FEATURES, AHOY!

Structure, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, alliteration, assonance, sibilance, oxymoron, setting, statistics, listing, personal pronouns, enjambement, stanza, refrain, rhyme, rhythm, anecdotes, anaphora, repetition, slang, colloquial language, jargon, personification, minor sentences, rhetorical questions, juxtaposition, irony, quotations, verbs, adjectives, emotive language, sensory language, imagery, tone, mood, voice, narrator, tense, connotation, onomatopoeia, symbolism, imperative, antithesis, nominalising, formal language, cliché, neologism and humour.





NOW: Read the question carefully, underlining key words.

THEN: Annotate the text using MAPT .

Make it colourful and clear.

Highlight techniques that help you answer the question.

NEXT: Answer question 3 with a STEEL paragraph.

QUESTION:

- (1) (i) Identify ONE language feature the writer uses to describe the father's relationship with the chair.

- ii) Provide an example of this language feature from the text.

- (2) Explain how this language feature helps you to understand the father's feelings about the chair.

- (3) Explain how the writer helps us to understand the father's relationship to his family and his place in his household **throughout the text**.

Support your answer with reference to **techniques**, including language features.

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