Understanding a Poem #1

Purpose: Upon completion of this activity, students will have practiced interpreting a poem. This DLA should take approximately 45 minutes to one hour to complete.

1. Read the following poem:

“Stop All the Clocks” by W.H. Auden

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let the aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky He is Dead,
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

2. Answer the following questions on a separate sheet:

A. What is the speaker’s situation?
B. What are some examples of unreasonable commands? List out at least five.
C. Why do you think the author has the speaker use such extreme commands?

3. Take this sheet and meet with an instructor or tutor to go over your answers and discuss the poem. Have that person sign below.

Attach a confirmation sheet or get a signature below:

Instructor Signature: ____________________________ Date: _________________________