

PARAPHRASE -- THE DEADLY SIN

(all these remarks are based on a familiar story):

This is a **PARAPHRASE** (roughly, a "translation" of the specific words of the poem into your own language) --

It was a pretty dark day for the home team -
they were behind by two runs,
and it was the last of the ninth.
The star slugger *might* get one last swing -
but it didn't look promising. Two outs
happened quickly, and then two bozos were
due to come up before the hero himself.

This is a **SUMMARY** (roughly, a recapitulation of the information contained in a particular poem):

Improbably, the local team *nearly* scored a come-from-behind win, with two out in the last of the ninth. But, sadly, the hero everyone was pinning their hopes on struck out on three pitches.

This is an **ARGUMENT**, which would then need development and proof in the body of an essay. It states its position and gives some indication about what sorts of evidence, or rather what aspects of the poem, it will go on to consider. The one thing that might improve this argument is to reshape it in the form of questions, rather than propositions:

"Casey at the Bat" has been interpreted as a study in heroism and failure (two ideas that are linked more often than we think; Beowulf dies in his poem, Sir Lancelot never gets to find the Holy Grail, and John Wayne, more often than not, is dead at the end of his movies). The title gives Casey center stage; but the poem itself spends at least as much time and energy looking at the crowd of fans. In the end, the poem may well be one of the most astute and complex studies of the capacity for self-delusion that gives rise to sports fandom, and not just in Boston or just for baseball, either.