

How to Read a Poem

Based on the TEKS and Student
Expectations for Grade 8



What does the reader look for in a poem?

Forms of Poetry

narrative poetry - a poem that tells a story

lyrical poetry - short poems expressing personal feelings and emotions that may be set to music

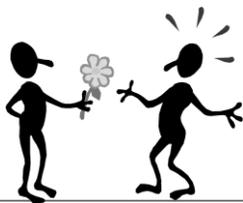
humorous poetry - poetry that is written to entertain and amuse the reader

free verse - a form of poetry that does not have a fixed pattern, so the words can be put together however the poet wants

epic poetry – a long narrative poem, usually chronicling the deeds of a folk hero and written using both dramatic and narrative literary techniques

Elements of Poetry

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FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE - language not intended to be taken literally but layered with meaning through the use of

- **hyperbole** - an intentional and extreme exaggeration for emphasis or effect (e.g., *this book weighs a ton*)
- **imagery** - poets use words to create a picture in the mind of the reader
- **metaphor** - a subtle comparison in which the author describes a person or thing using words that are not meant to be taken literally (e.g., *time is a dressmaker specializing in alterations*)
- **mood** - the atmosphere or feeling created by the writer in a literary work or passage
- **personification** - figurative language in which nonhuman things or abstractions are represented as having human qualities (e.g., *necessity is the mother of invention*)
- **sensory language** - words that appeal to one or more of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste
- **simile** - a comparison of two things that are essentially different, usually using the words *like* or *as* (e.g., *O my love is like a red, red rose from Robert Burns's "A Red, Red Rose"*)

SOUND EFFECTS OF POETRY - poets can incorporate the sound qualities of words through the use of

- **alliteration** - the repetition of the same sounds at the beginning of two or more adjacent words
- **internal rhyme** - a rhyme within the same line of verse (e.g., *And as we grew, I ran with you.*)
- **meter** - the basic rhythmic structure in verse, composed of stressed and unstressed syllables
- **onomatopoeia** - the use of words that sound like what they mean (e.g., *buzz* and *purr*); a poetic device to produce this effect
- **repetition** - the repetitions of sounds, syllables, words, phrases, lines used to enhance the rhythm and rhyme or to emphasize a particular theme
- **rhyme** - two or more words which match in the same last sound
- **rhyme scheme** - the pattern of rhyming lines (e.g., ABAB, ABBA)
- **rhythm** - the beat of poetry which may be fast or slow

GRAPHIC/STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF POETRY - poets create the "shape" of a poem through the use of

- **line break** - the place where the poet chooses to end a line, often used to indicate rhythm or to represent meaning
- **line length** - the use of lines of different length according to a regular scheme or irregular scheme as in free verse
- **punctuation and capital letters** - poets play with these rules, using them as they choose for their own purposes
- **refrain** - a repeated part of a poem, particularly when it comes either at the end of a stanza or between two stanzas
- **stanza** - a group of lines of poetry that convey an idea
- **word position** - the way in which words in poetry are placed on the page; word position shows relationships between words and ideas



How to Read a Poem

1. Read the whole poem. Read it out loud if you can.

What is the title of the poem?

What is the poem about?

Who is the speaker? Is the speaker also the poet?

What is the speaker doing in the poem?

Does the poem rhyme?



2. Look at the poem. What do you see?

Which lines from the poem rhyme?

Are there any internal rhymes?

Why does the poet use

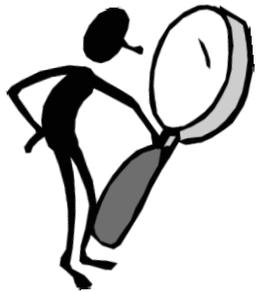
- capital letters,
- punctuation marks
- line lengths, and/ or
- line breaks

- white space between words or lines
- word position
- dialogue/ quotation marks
- stanzas and/ or refrains
- italics

What words or lines does the poet use to create imagery in the mind of the reader?

What figurative language does the poet use to tell the reader how the speaker feels?

Why does the poet repeat particular words or lines?



3. Read the poem again. Read it out loud if you can.

What is the main message or theme in the poem?

What is the feeling that the poet creates in the poem?

How does the speaker feel throughout the poem?

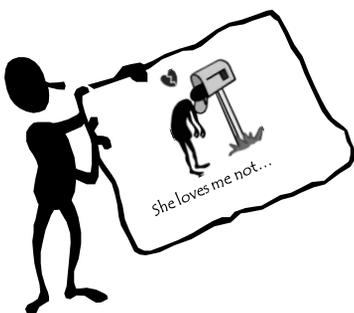
Do the feelings of the speaker change within the poem? How do you know?

What lines does the poet use to show the feelings of the speaker?

Why did the poet give this title to the poem?



4.



Draw a picture that represents an image the poet has created in the poem. Label your drawing with the lines from the poem that inspired your picture.

TPCASTT Template

TPCASTT: Poem Analysis Method

Title of poem means	TITLE OF THE POEM AND WHAT IT MEANS
Paraphrase parts of the Poem	PARAPHRASE MEANS TO SUMMARIZE IN YOUR OWN WORDS
Connotation of some of the words – changing literal meaning to implied or associated values	CONNOTATION MEANS WORDS THAT ARE USED IN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE: SIMILE, METAPHOR, HYPERBOLE, PERSONIFICATION, ALLUSION AND SOUND DEVICES: ALLITERATION, RHYME PATTERN, ASSONANCE AND RHYTHM
Attitude What is the attitude of the author, characters or yourself?	HOW DOES THIS POEM MAKE THE AUTHOR SOUND? MAD, SAD, ANNOYED ABOUT HIS TOPIC.
Shift At first we think or feel one way – then there is a shift: identify the shifts and explain them	THIS IS A CHANGE IN THE POEM SOMEWHERE. THE AUTHOR IS TALKING ONE WAY OR ABOUT ONE THING AND THEN CHANGES HIS MIND. CHANGE CAN OCCUR IN CHARACTER, SETTING, TONE, OR TIME FRAME
Title revisited Any new insights on meaning or significance of title?	DID YOU FIND OUT ANY NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THE POEM AFTER YOU READ IT? WRITE IT HERE! WAS THERE A DIRECT OR IMPLIED CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TITLE AND THE POEM?
Theme	WHAT IS THE UNIVERSAL MAIN IDEA ABOUT THIS POEM? HOW CAN EVERYONE RELATE TO THIS POEM?