Poetry - Core Information

1. How To Read a Poem

Step	Action
1	• If applicable, read the **question** about the poem first. This will tell you the main theme or idea of the poem • Read the **title.** This may tell you the main **theme** or **idea** of the poem • Read the poem from start to finish (**out loud** if you can!)
2	• Read the poem again • What is **happening** in the poem? • What **moment** does the poem describe? • Who is the **speaker** of the poem? • What is the **tone** of the poem? Does this **change**?
3	• Now, look at the **language** of the poem and **annotate** • Are there any **patterns** in the language? • Consider how the language **connects** to the theme and tone of the poem • Similes, metaphors, personification, imagery etc.
4	• Finally, look at the **structure** of the poem • Does it have a **rhyme scheme**? • Does it have a particular **shape**? • **Stanzas** or one block of text? • Caesura, enjambment, repetition, cyclical ideas, couplets etc

2. Words to Describe the Tone of a Poem

Positive Tone	Negative Tone
Assertive	Accusatory
Admiring	Bitter
Benevolent	Defiant
Enthusiastic	Critical
Humorous	Frustrated
Impassioned	Jaded
Intimate	Outraged
Loving	Regretful
Nostalgic	Solemn
Sentimental	Worried
Inspired	Defensive

3. Key Poetry Terms: Structure

Term	Definition
Stanza	A group of lines in a poem.
Caesura	When there is a pause within a line of poetry.
Enjambment	When the lines of a poem run on without a pause.
Perspective	First, second, or third person perspective.
Repetition	When a word, phrase or idea is repeated.
Rhetorical question	A question used to make a statement or to make the reader think. Doesn't require an answer.
Anaphora	The repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of lines of poetry.
Rhyme	The same sounds at the ends of lines of poetry.
Rhyming couplets	Two lines that rhyme

4. Key Poetry Terms: Language

Term	Definition	Sentence Stems
Simile	When two or more things are compares using 'as' or 'like'.	The writer uses the simile to paint a vivid image of…
Metaphor	When something is described as if it is something else.	The writer uses the metaphor to convey the impression of…
Personification	Giving non-human things human characteristics.	The writer uses the metaphor to convey the impression of…
Imagery	Visually descriptive writing/ painting a picture with words.	The writer uses imagery to paint a vivid image of…
Alliteration	The repetition of the same letter at the beginning of two or more words.	The writer uses alliteration to emphasise…
Plosives	Hard, power sounds such as 'p', 'b', and 'd'	The writer uses plosives to emphasise
Sibilance	A repeated soft 's' sound.	The writer uses sibilance to accentuate the softness… The writer uses sibilance to establish a sinister atmosphere…
Onomatopoeia	Words that sound like the thing they are describing.	The writer uses onomatopoeia to emphasise…
Juxtaposition/Contrast	When opposite ideas or images are placed together.	The writer uses juxtaposition to draw attention to…
Pathetic fallacy	Giving human emotions to non-human things.	The writer uses pathetic fallacy to convey the impression of…