

Eight Questions to Ask When Analyzing Poetry

1. Always note the title and any punctuation in the title and in the poem itself.
2. Who is speaking in the poem? (Hint: It's not usually the poet.) Think about the persona in poetry. Persona could be different from the speaker; examples "Rime of Ancient Mariner," "Ozymandias," etc.
3. To whom is the speaker speaking? Examples: Rime of Ancient Mariner
4. What is the poet's tone? Tone is the attitude toward the subject. Tone is from the perspective of the author.
5. What is the mood of the poem? Mood is from the perspective of the reader.
6. What is the theme of the poem? This would be the main idea the poet wants to convey.
7. Does the poem have a pattern? This does not necessarily relate to meter. This has to do with idea patters. There may be no pattern present in the poem. Do not create a pattern where there is none.
 - A. Circular
 - B. Near- far
 - C. Far- near
 - D. External- internal
 - E. Internal- external
 - F. General - specific
 - G. Specific - general
8. What is the style of the poem?
 - A. Diction/ word choice - formal or informal
 - B. Concrete imagery - words that appeal to one or more of the five senses
 - C. Figures of speech/ figurative language
 1. Simile
 2. Metaphor
 3. Personification
 4. Hyperbole
 5. Apostrophe - supercedes personification
 - D. Allusion - What is the allusion and why is it there?
 - E. Symbols
 1. Nonce/private symbols
 2. Conventional/ Public symbols
 - a. Represents life
 1. 24- hour day
 2. Seasons
 3. 12 months of the year
 4. Beginning and end
 - b. Colors - both positive and negative meanings
 - c. Flowers
 - d. Trees
 - e. Birds
 - f. Water
 3. Sound imagery
 - a. Alliteration
 - b. Onomatopoeia
 - c. Euphony -- Agreeable sound
 - d. Cacophony – harsh sounds