

Writing about Poetry

1. Who is the speaker? Is it possible to determine the speaker's age, gender, attitudes? What are the clues?
2. Is the speaker addressing anyone in particular? How do you know?
3. What is the situation of the poem/ are there any special circumstances that give you more information about the occasion of the poem/
4. Is there a specific setting or time mentioned in the poem? What difference does this make?
5. Does reading the poem aloud help you to understand it? In what way?
6. Could you paraphrase the poem (to briefly restate the poem in prose, making its sense as plain as possible)?
7. What does the title emphasize?
8. Is the theme or concern of the poem stated directly or indirectly?
9. Do any allusions (a reference to culture, history or another work of literature) enrich the poem's meanings?
10. How does the diction (word choice) reveal meanings? Are any words repeated/ do any words carry evocative, connotative meanings? Are there any puns or wit?
11. Are figures of speech used? How does this contribute to the poem's vividness and meaning?
12. Do any objects, person, places, events or actions take on a symbolic meaning?
13. Is irony used? Is understatement or paradox used?
14. Does the poem use sound devices such as onomatopoeia, assonance, consonance, or alliteration? To what effects?
15. What sounds are repeated? If there are rhymes, what is the effect? Is there a pattern of rhyme?
16. Do the lines have a regular meter or beat? Does the rhythm seem consistent with the tone?
17. Is the language of the poem intense and concentrated? Does it warrant more than one or two readings?
18. Did you enjoy the poem? What specifically pleased or displeased you about what was expressed and how it was expressed?