



## Approaching a Poem – MESSAGE, TONE, LANGUAGE and STRUCTURE, CONTEXT

### MESSAGE

- What is the poem about?
- Are meanings clear or ambiguous? Literal or figurative?
- Who is the speaker? What are their thoughts?
- Are there any alternative interpretations?
- What is the key message/ moral of the poem?
- Who is the poem written to?
- What themes are in the poem? Why are these significant?
- How is the reader intended to react?
- How does the poem make you feel?

### TONE

- How does the speaker/subject feel?
- What is the feeling that you get when reading the poem? What attitudes does the poem express?
- What mood runs through the poem? Why has the poet done this? What is the poet trying to say?
- Does the mood stay the same throughout the poem, or does it change?

### LANGUAGE & STRUCTURE

- Where are key words and why are they significant?
- Are there any effective language technique uses by the poet? (See the 'Language Techniques section of the Knowledge Organiser').
- What do you notice about the structure of the poem? (See the 'Structural Information/Techniques section of the Knowledge Organiser').
- Link back: how do the language or structural choices made by the poet lead you to your understanding of the MESSAGE and TONE?

### CONTEXT

- Who is the poet and when did they live?
- What happened in the poet's life? Did this influence their poetry?
- What social/political ideas did the poet hold? How do these affect his/her poetry?
- What styles/forms/language is the poet known for? Are these evident in this poem?
- When/where do you think the poem was set/written?
- What were the main attitudes at the time? What clues in the poem are there for this?
- Is the poem linked to any historical events? How is this significant?



**Structural Information/Techniques – the form (style) of the poem, its rhyme, rhythm and metre, and how it is set out on the page**

**Form**

The **form** of a poem is its physical structure. A poem’s form is dictated by its stanza structure, line lengths, and rhyme scheme, amongst other features. Here are some common forms of poetry:

- **Sonnet** – A short rhyming poem with 14 lines. Sonnets use iambic metre in each line, and use line-ending rhymes.
- **Elegy** – A poem of serious reflection, normally about the dead.
- **Narrative** – Narrative poems tell the story of events through poetry. There are clear narration, characters and plot.
- **Epic** – A lengthy poem celebrating adventures and accomplishments.
- **Free Verse** – Free verse poems do not follow any rules.
- **Ballad** – A long poem in short stanzas – normally quatrains (4 lines) – that tells a story. They often use repetition.

**Stanzas**

A **stanza** is a grouped set of lines in a poem, set apart from other lines by a blank line of indentation.

- Stanzas are often used to group related ideas, or show content related to a particular time or place.
- Poets manipulate the number, type and length of stanzas to aid meaning.
- Names of stanzas of different lengths are shown on the right.

**Rhyme**

**Rhyme** is the ‘correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words, especially when these are used at the ends of lines of poetry.’

Poets use rhyme for a number of reasons:

- To make a poem more musical and give it a ‘beat’ or ‘rhythm, or to show creativity and sophistication in language’.
- To emphasise particular words/sounds that hold value or add meaning to the poem/its messages.
- Aid the memory for recitation purposes.

**Poets organise the rhyme in their poems using Rhyme Schemes:**

- This can help to establish the form – for example, the English sonnet traditionally holds an ABAB-CD-DE-EE-FF-GG rhyme scheme.

**Metre/Rhythm**

The **metre** of a poem is the measured pattern of rhythm created by stressed and unstressed syllables. **Rhythm** refers to the overall tempo, or pace, at which the poem unfolds.

Poets who write free verse often tend to ignore metre and focus instead on the content and tone of their poem. However, many poems follow a clear metre throughout.

Common metres are below:

- **Iambic:** Metre which starts with an unstressed and then a stressed syllable.
- **Trochaic:** Metre which starts with a stressed and then an unstressed syllable.
- **Dactylic:** Metre which starts with a stressed and then 2 unstressed syllables.
- **Anapestic:** Metre which has 2 unstressed and then a stressed syllable.

## Structural Information/Techniques – the form (style) of the poem, its rhyme, rhythm and meter, and how it is set out on the page

### Key Questions Regarding Structure

- What is the form of the poem? How do you know?
- Does the poem have a regular or irregular structure? Why?
- How many stanzas does it have? What can be read from this?
- Does the poem rhyme? What rhyme scheme does it use? What is the effect of this? Is the rhyme regular or irregular?
- What can be noted about the line length/metre?
- What rhythm (if any) runs through the poem? Why did the poet include this line length/metre/rhythm in the poem?

### Line Type/Length

**Lines of poetry can end in two ways – enjambment (the sentence runs over two lines) or end-stopped.**

Unlike prose, writers of poetry can end lines where they choose, meaning that the line type and length is often employed to support meaning.

- The use of long lines, containing enjambment, for example, can reflect complex or even confusing ideas.
- Short, end-stopped lines may be used for dramatic effect, or to allow the reader to dwell on ideas.

## Language Techniques – vocabulary, phrases, techniques and devices used by the poet

<b>Interesting Adjectives</b>	Describing words that are specific or beyond the most obvious, creating a clear effect.	“Parting with his poison – Flash of <u>diabolic</u> tail In the <u>dark</u> room – he risked the rain again”
<b>Interesting Verbs</b>	Doing words that are specific or beyond the most obvious, creating a clear effect.	“ <u>Stumbling</u> across a field of clods towards a gree hedge That <u>dazzled</u> with rifle fire, hearing Bullets <u>smacking</u> the Belly out of the air”
<b>Imagery</b>	Words or phrases that appeal to any sense or any combination of senses.	“Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed”
<b>Similes</b>	A comparison between two objects using “like” or “as”.	“O my Luve is <u>like</u> a red, red rose That’s newly sprung in June O my Luve is <u>like</u> the melody That’s sweetly played in tune”



### Language Techniques – vocabulary, phrases, techniques and devices used by the poet

<b>Metaphors</b>	A comparison between two things in order to give clearer meaning to one of them.	“Hope’ <u>is</u> the thing with features - / That perches in the soul And sings the tune without the words / and never stops – at all”
<b>Alliteration</b>	The repetition of initial consonant sounds	“With <u>swift, slow, sweet, sour</u> ; adazzle, dim; He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change”
<b>Assonance</b>	The repetition of vowel sounds	“With its <u>leaping</u> , and <u>deep</u> , cool murmur ... <u>White</u> and <u>shining</u> in the silver-flecked water”
<b>Repetition</b>	The repeating words, phrases, lines or stanzas	Keeping <u>time, time, time</u> In a sort of Runic rhyme, To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells From the <u>bells, bells, bells, bells</u>
<b>Onomatopoeia</b>	The use of words which imitate sound	“A child sitting under the piano, in the <u>boom</u> of the <u>tingling</u> strings And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings”
<b>Oxymoron</b>	A figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear together	“Down the close, darkening lanes they sang their way To the siding-shed, And lined the train With faces <u>grimly gay</u> ”
<b>Personification</b>	A figure of speech which gives animals, ideas, or inanimate objects human traits or abilities	“ <u>Death, be not proud</u> , though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou art no so”
<b>Hyperbole</b>	Exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally	“The sea him <u>lent</u> those bitter tears Which at his eyes he always wears/And from the Wind the sighs he bore, Which through his <u>surging breast do roar</u> ”

## Year 7: Reading Short Stories

What is a short story?		Features of stories		Narrative Perspective	
A prose narrative which often deals with a single incident or event. It will share many features with a novel, such as characters and themes but is much shorter and can usually be read in less than half an hour. They are often published in magazines or collected into an anthology with other short stories.		<b>Plot</b>	What happens in the story. Also called the narrative.	<b>1<sup>st</sup> person</b>	Told from the perspective of the speaker/narrator. Uses the pronouns 'I', 'My', 'we', 'our' etc.
		<b>Setting</b>	Where the story takes place.	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> person</b>	Speaks directly to the reader, suggesting that they are somehow involved in the story. Uses the pronouns 'you', 'your', 'our' etc.
		<b>Characters</b>	The people in the story.	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> person</b>	Told from the perspective of a narrator who can see everything that happens and knows what characters are feeling and thinking. Uses pronouns such as 'he', 'she', 'they' etc.
Structure Terminology					
<b>Sentence length</b>	How long or short a sentence is and the number of clauses it contains can change the effect that it has. For example short sentences are often used to create tension whereas longer sentences can have a gentle, soothing effect.				
<b>Paragraphing</b>	Just like sentences, the length and structure of paragraphs can create different effects.				
<b>Flashback</b>	Looking back on a memory or event that happened long before the main story takes place.				
<b>Narrative structure/ order</b>	Choosing where to start a story can change the meaning or tone. Sometimes writers choose to start at the end or in the middle to create confusion or mystery. Sometimes they follow a simple 5 part structure in that order.				
<b>Repetition</b>	Using a word, phrase or idea more than once to draw attention to it.				
<b>Narrator</b>	The person who tells the story (see narrative perspective).				
Narrative Structure					
<p><b>Climax</b> A dramatic or eventful moment.</p> <p><b>Problem</b> Something that complicates the story and needs sorting.</p> <p><b>Resolution</b> The tidying up of loose ends, pulling the threads of a story together.</p> <p><b>Opening</b> A way in to the story; to grab the reader's interest</p> <p><b>Ending</b> The last words, leaving an impression on the reader.</p>					