

1. Poetry Introduction Part 1

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 29 Aug 2017 @ 19:16

Hello Everyone!

This week we will be looking at poetry!

Poetry

What is poetry?

When people think of poetry, they tend to think of complicated, dense and difficult works. The good news is that poetry, while compact and filled with saturated meaning, can sometimes be easier to understand and analyse than any other type of prose.

This is because, due to the limited space available to poets (other than Epic Poems, such as [The Homeric Poems](#) ~800 BC), traditionally poems tend to have fairly ridged structures which rely on **figures of speech** (FoS) (Such as **metaphor**, and **oxymoron**) which are striking to the reader, presenting vivid images, and therefore allowing for greater 'colour' or meaning to be transferred through the language. Other techniques used in poetry are **sound patterns** (part of the FoS: onomatopoeia, alliteration and assonance), **verse** and **meter**, **rhetorical devices** (see the figures of speech file and this link: <https://hhs-english-iv.wikispaces.com/file/view/Rhetorical+Devices.pdf>), **style** and **stanza shape** and **structure**.

Clarity:

Figures of Speech versus Rhetorical Devices

A figure of speech not only provides a visual image, but is also **alters the meaning of the words used**.

A rhetorical device provides emphasis or seeks to have a specific effect (i.e. to convince the reader of something), but **without altering the meaning of the words used**.

They are however, often grouped together as they provide added effect and greater depth to a text.

Example of a figure of speech:

An extract from *Lycidas* written by John Milton

Here a rhetorical question is used (last line: "Why swell'st thou then?") to reduce the finality and natural fear of death.

· **Rhetorical questions**: the act of asking a question when a) you already know the answer and it is obvious, and/or b) when no answer is expected. Such questions draw attention to the subject matter *in* question. However, it may also be used in a patronising manner, which reduces the subject or object of the question.

Thus, within *Death, be not Proud*, Donne, having already called Death a "slave" further reduces Death, who, in his capacity of the 'harbinger **of death**', is the physical manifestation (representation) of the final fate of every living organism. By reducing Death, the concept of dying is not as terrifying as it might be.

<https://prezi.com/obpgbw9vxhrg/poetry-what-it-iswhat-it-isnt/>

<https://prezi.com/8k-z8wc8ls34/analyzing-poetry-with-sift/>

<https://prezi.com/6tucdc99bzxh/poetry/>

This next link suggests ways in which to approach a unseen poem in an exam situation. While the marking rubric is different from the one Unisa uses, it is quite a nice compact way of approaching such a task:

<https://prezi.com/spwazzxlq0wa/igcse-literature-unseen-poetry/>

2. Poetry Introduction Part 2

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:44

In part one, I provided a basic overview of what a poem is. I also looked at the difference between rhetoric speech and figures of speech, and included a few links to poems and to rhetorical speech devices.

This post will deal with the terminology of poetry. Hopefully this will assist in your understanding of poetry.

1. Meter

a. In language, words are broken up via groupings of sound. These groupings are called syllables. For example, **compare** is broken up into two syllables COM and PARE.

b. Types of meter:

- i. **Accentual meter**: Each line has equal number of lines
 - ii. **Syllabic meter**: An **accentual meter**, with a specific NUMBER of stresses.
 - iii. **Accentual-Syllabic meter**: A specific number of stresses in a line, with a specific order of emphasis.
 - iv. **Free Verse**: Irregular patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables within each line.
- c. We measure the meter of a poem on the **STRESSES or ACCENT** (emphasis) placed on certain syllables. When you have a pair of stressed and unstressed syllables (com – unstressed; and PARE – stressed) you have what is called an IAMB. You might recognise this word, or at least associate it with the term **IAMBIC**.
- d. A meter is the measure of the ‘iambic’. The most famous meter found within poetry is the **iambic pentameter**.
- i. Pentameter = this word broken down to its prefix: Pent, which is Greek for ‘five’. This means that there are five pairs of IAMB within a line of a poem. The stresses within this form of Meter are found **after** the unstressed syllable.
 - ii. To the ear, such stresses ask that the reader of the poem give weight to and emphasise certain syllables, while speaking/reading the unstressed syllables lightly.
 - iii. See video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5lsuyUNu_4

2. Rhythm

- a. Rhythm may be used in poetry to provide an additional layer of meaning.
 - i. Punctuation, including commas, periods, exclamation marks and question marks, as well as the length and grouping of the vowels and the consonants, all work in tandem to produce a pace which becomes the rhythm of a work.
- b. The meter and rhythm often work together. In the last video, you might have noticed that the creator of the video focused on the ‘beat’ of the syllables, those stressed and unstressed. This is part of what forms the rhythm, along with punctuation.

3. Rhyme Scheme.

a. Rhyming occurs when words that **sound the same** appear within a text. Although found within lines, the most popular (or perhaps most obvious) rhymes are located at the end of the lines within poetry.

b. Because poetry is so structured, rhyming schemes actually have to potential to define the type of poem. For example, a Petrarchan sonnet is a 14 line poem, with a specific rhyme scheme and syllable structure:

i. *ababcdcd-efefgg* rhyme scheme, with **10 syllables** per line.

Sonnet

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321)

Ye ladies, walking past me piteous-eyed,
Who is the lady that lies prostrate here?
Can this be even she my heart holds dear?
Nay, if it be so, speak, and nothing hide.
Her very aspect seems itself beside,
And all her features of such altered cheer
That to my thinking they do not appear
Hers who makes others seem beatified.

'If thou forget to know our lady thus,
Whom grief o'ercomes, we wonder in no wise,
For also the same thing befalleth us,
Yet if thou watch the movement of her eyes,
Of her thou shalt be straightaway conscious.
O weep no more; thou art all wan with sighs.

(Trans. D.G. Rossetti)

- c. See Rhyme Scheme video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bICNBW1r_5s&spfreload=10

For both rhyme and meter:

<https://poemshape.wordpress.com/2009/01/11/what-is-shakespearean-spenserian-amp-petrarchan-sonnets/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPkURJhd24c>

Prezi:

<https://prezi.com/rndbj0l2dleg/meter-in-poetry/>

<https://prezi.com/cvfwf6jsyu5j/poetry-meter-and-rhyme/>

<https://prezi.com/fltvk3ui5yzt/verse-meter-and-rhyme/>

Analysing a poem

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:45

Please find the poem in question under Additional Resources: Adrienne Rich_Aunt Jennifer's Tigers.pdf

A few key elements go into reading a poem in preparation for analysis:

Before you read the poem:

- Always number your lines.
- See if you can find a rhyming pattern (compare the last word of each line to the others, labeling alphabetically as you go).
- Look for any figurative language (FoS) highlight/circle/underline and indicate what type of FoS it is. Find the symbolic meaning of the FoS only when you read the poem.
- Any images or words which are repeated.
- Any words which you can link to main ideas or themes.
- Any words/phrases which have strong connotative value.

Now read the poem. Look for more of the above, but also begin to explain the significance of all the FoS which you have found. Can you link them to ideas and themes in the poem, and even to other FoS?

Once you have read the poem once, quickly write down your impressions of the poem: What is it about? Who is speaking (if possible to know)? Why is the poem important?

Read through the poem a few times, each time attempting to expand on what you have found and find elements which you might have skipped over.

Your poem should look like the .pdf after the first or second reading, after the third or fourth there should be even more detail.

Poetic Language.

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:46

Additional information to work through with the study guide:

Poetic Language.

Because poetry is often written in brief flashes of prose, the language used must, in the least amount of words convey literal and figurative meaning. To do this, the language used must be powerful enough to appeal to the reader's visual, tactile, auditory, gustatory and olfactory senses.

As mentioned before, the diction (those chosen words be they formal, informal, casual, slang) and the rhyming pattern will influence the reading of the text. Yet, these are not the only elements which will have an impact on the poem and on the reading of the poem.

Tropes:

Your study guide mentions the notion of *tropes*, which is the metaphorical or figurative *use* of words. When one uses language to *twist* and weave patterns of understanding and comprehension, this is what is used: tropes.

Such tropes are:

Ambiguity	Allusion	Analogy
Circumlocution	Hyperbole	Irony
Litotes	Metaphor	Metonymy
Oxymoron	Parody	Personification
Pun	Rhetorical Question	Satire
Simile	Synecdoche	Understatement

Tropes, such as the examples above, therefore, change the meaning of expressions or words.

It is important to recognise tropes *when* they are present, to understand what the figure of speech is and *how and why* it has been used. There are many more types of tropes, however those in bold are those of common occurrence within poetry.

Examine your study guide and toolkit for more examples (another list can be found here: <https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/tropes.html>)

Schemes:

If you look back to the previous poetry tutorials, you will notice that I have often stated that to build understanding you need to connect similar words or thoughts which may occur throughout the poem.

A *scheme* is the repetition of a word, phrase or idea which has been repeated throughout the poem. This adds emphasis to those words, phrases or ideas, which are presented within similar, differing or problematic contextual changes throughout the poem. How the word, phrase or idea has been chosen *to be repeated* will indicate those connections and connotations which the poet asks you to make.

Examples of Schemes are:

Alliteration	Anaphora	Antithesis
Chiasmus	Ellipsis	Hyperbaton
Parallelism	Parentheses	Repetition

Tmesis

Once again, you need to be able to recognise the *used* schemes within a particular work, label them, define them and then explain *how and why* those particular scheme have been used.

Look at your study guide and toolkit for definitions and if you feel it necessary look up the term scheme online.

In topic two I asked that you read the poem aloud to yourself. The reason was so that you could fully grasp the rhythm of the poem, its beat and sound, which are made by the emphasis placed on the sounds and syllables of words.

In this section, the study guide asks that you consider such sounds and rhythm when analysing a poem. Activity 17 and 18 in particular break down the beginnings of that audio process of which poetry holds such a strong grasp.

Sound and rhythm:

The purpose for reading out aloud with the CD and re-reading the poems is to train your ear. Poetry is one craft which, with time and practice, a writer and reader may improve. This is because, due to the verbal nature of poetry, to understand, one must know how to read the poems aloud.

There has been mention before of the term **meter**. Meter is the term used to identify how the words are cut into syllables and which syllables are to be stressed and at what kind of tempo (or speed). It is the verbal movement of the poem. If you think visually, poetry is not a stagnant piece of writing. It has a space and a time and a melody which makes it move and flow with the sound of voices.

For more on the term meter (which includes timing such as iambic pentameter):

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/570/03/>

The poetic Subject

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:47

The poetic subject:

Put another way, what is the subject matter or the poem?

Section two of the Study Guide explains how one needs to examine not only the singular line of a poem, but then relate that line to other lines. This idea of connectivity was also touched upon within topic one of this tutorial unit.

The study guide makes reference to the word “context” (p. 36), which asks that you attempt to link the words, lines, stanzas together to determine what the poem is actually about.

Remember that the guide also makes the distinction between the “**poetic subject**” (the topic) and the “**grammatical subject**” (the agent of the action).

At the same time, you must be aware that the poem's theme and its subject matter are also two distinct notions.

- **Theme:** would be the main point or idea which the poet is attempting to make.
 - o Examples: love, death, hate, greed, pride, liberty, autonomy.
- **Subject:** the topic by which the poem express the themes.

Therefore, for example, in a Dylan Thomas poem *Do not go gentle into that good night* : (<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/do-not-go-gentle-good-night>)

- Theme: Mortality and defiance. The poem expresses a wish to fight against mortality, to defy even at the brink, death. It is about a love of life and a need of life to continue.
- Subject: Death. The poem uses the subject matter of the dying father a platform for the speaker to rail against death.

Explore the title:

Activity 1 asks that you consider the title when attempting to ascertain the subject of the poem. Titles can confirm, challenge or seek to confuse. Some are playful others accurate, but all are important as they *provide a first impression* of the work which must then be in some way met through the text itself.

Read the poem more than once:

Activity 2 asks that you read the poems more than once. Try searching Youtube for recordings of the poems you have been asked to analyse. The reason for this is two part.

- It can be easier for individuals to sometimes listen than read a poem. For those who are more audio inclined, understanding will come faster.
- Poems are meant to be read aloud. There is tone and texture which can be lost when reading silently. The pace and the rhythm of poetry, which often has a strong impact on understanding, will almost always be found in the *speaking or reading aloud* of the poems.

Thus, do not just read the poems more than once, read them aloud, with the CD there to pace you. It takes time and practice to figure out what words should be emphasised and which should be softly spoken, glossed over. You will find that when your interpretation of a poem is different, the chosen words which are emphasised are also different.

Once again, in your study guide there is a note about the term 'poet' and 'speaker'.

- I mentioned the term 'poet' within topic one and have used the term constantly when discussing the author of a poem.
- The term speaker I have only used once so far and that has been in relation to the Dylan Thomas poem above. Note how I say that the subject matter provides a platform from which the *speaker* is able to comment.

- Just because the poet wrote the poem, it does not automatically mean that it is his or her voice which is meant to be heard when reading said poem. Thus, there is always that distinction between the terms.

Sentence by sentence:

Poems are often structured in a very specific manner. Where words are placed, the particular verbal stress placed on vowels and consonants, on syllables of words, how often a word is repeated and where the repetition is placed, what figures of speech are present and where and in what language.

Not only this, but poems are often broken up into stanzas and then lines. A poem of 24 lines could have 5 stanzas, two of which are made up of only two lines each. The grouping of each stanza is important because each might consider a particular idea or at least a particular aspect of such an idea.

You need to break the poem down line by line and word by word.

The study guide indicates a need to seek out verb's which are used in each line.

· This is because it is the verbs (and adjectives) which give meaning to the nouns and to the poems itself. These are the words which will help define the poems expression and power.

- o A very good article to read regarding the importance of verbs and adjectives in poetry is an article by A. H. R. Fairchild titled *The Verb and the Adjective in Poetry*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/801577?seq=3>

Mentioned earlier was the term was the *grammatical subject*.

· Once you have looked for verbs and adjectives you must then be able to find the grammatical subject.

- o The agent of the action *performed by a verb* (p. 37)
- o You need to consider what that **verb** is acting on:
the clouds **sweep** through the mountains, / **drowning** their peaks with **un-spilled water**
- o Given the verbs presented and the grammatical subjects on which these verbs are acted upon, what does the sentence mean? What is the literal meaning and what is the symbolic meaning?

These two lines describe an mountain range. Not only that, but there is a focus on the peak of the mountain, which is covered by clouds. There is a sense of movement within the poem through the

verbs "sweep", "drowning" and "un-spilled" which suggests a buildup of clouds at the mountains peak.

- o Also then begin linking the verbs and the nouns and the adjectives. Clouds which drown the mountains, specifically the peaks. Is this an image of mist or fog? Is the cloud heavy (the "un-spilled water" indicates heavy and threatening)? How tall are these mountains considering how cloud cover could "sweep" over them? Note also the term "peak" which would suggest quite high. Yet, these are only two lines of a 'poem' (the line split is indicated with the forward slash: "/") and therefore the actual subject of the poem, as well as the poems themes are unknown as the clouds, mountains and rain may be a metaphor for something else.

Examine Form and Augment:

I briefly wrote on the poetic structure throughout both posts. This 'step' within the study guide mentions poetic structure as well and suggests that the form of a poem, how structures in rhyming scheme, in meter and in line structure can and will provide certain contextual clues as to what the meaning of the poem is.

For example, there are certain expectations which arise by the fact that the poem's structure is a sonnet. Going farther, there are conventions of a Petrarchan sonnet which differ from a Shakespearean sonnet, both in structure and in subject and theme.

Within poetry, much as within any other form of literature, **when** the poem was written is as important as the poems actual **setting**.

A perfect example of structure is Lady Mary Wroth's *A Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love* (<http://allpoetry.com/A-Crown-of-Sonnets-Dedicated-to-Love>).

- This group of sonnets is a small work taken from a much broader work which will not be mentioned here.
- There are 14 sonnets within the work, with the last line of a sonnet, the first line of the next sonnet, and, within the 14th sonnet's last line, a repeat of the 1st sonnet's first line.
- Each sonnet is a part of a bigger weave and has its own particular topic, which links to the next and which eventually comes full circle to the beginning once more.
- Often this grouping of sonnets is called the "labyrinth", not just because that particular metaphor and topic are embedded within the poem, but because the poem itself is very much like a labyrinth.

- There are of course many many more structural elements of the poem (its rhythm, meter...) which will add to the meaning and complexity of the text.

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### **Diction and Mood:**

What words are used, how they are used? Is there a focus of light imagery as opposed to darker imagery? If so, what themes are linked with these images? Is the poem a pastoral one, whose focus is on the idyllic rural life and its rustic yet charming landscapes? Does the poem focus on gleaming streams of clean water or the muddy stale dregs of the city?

This is diction.

All of this adds to the tone. A sombre and dark poem will have heavy and hard words and syllables, where as a light happy poem will most likely be the opposite.

Go through each activity from 01-07 very carefully. These activities will give you the basic understanding of what it means to read a poem.

**When writing an essay on poetry, it is possible to only use the poem and the study guide (and if needed a dictionary). If you follow the steps laid out for you in the study guide (break down the poem, what kind of poem is it? What are the expected conventions? Does the poem meet those criteria? How? Why? Language? Lines? Stanza Structure? Structure of entire poem? Verbs? Adjectives? Grammatical Nouns? Mood? Theme? Subject? Title? And on and on and on) you will have more than enough information for the poetry section.**

**Using the internet for quick finds on poem analysis will not help in this case.**

### **Titles.**

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:49

A quick note on the term 'Poet': Within literature, there are various categories, as you have seen so far. Each category has a particular label. So too are those who write within those categories sometimes provided titles.

- Within *prose*, all fiction and non-fiction works are written by *authors*.
- Within *drama*, works are written by *playwrights* or *dramatists*.
- As above, *poems* are written by *poets*.
- *Newspapers* and *magazines* are written by *journalists* and *bloggers*.

This distinction, while subtle, assists in defining and allocating a particular type of work to a particular type of writer.

How to help you identify oxymoron/antithesis and paradox

**Re: Z - Questions**

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 4 Sep 2017 @ 18:55

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWvpySr7\\_cY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWvpySr7_cY)

<https://socratic.org/questions/what-is-the-difference-between-an-oxymoron-antithesis-irony-and-paradox-how-can->

**Poetry Mock Essay**

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 28 Sep 2017 @ 8:30

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Just remember that poetry can be complex, but it can also be simple. Sometimes, what is written has no deeper meaning than what is there. Focus on identifying and explaining figures of speech where you can, and then linking them back to the significance of the poems themes. Remember to READ the poem carefully.

**SONNET 73**

That time of year thou may'st in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day,  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by-and-by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

William Shakespeare's *Sonnet 73* contemplates the onset of old age and the coming of death. Using images such as the changing of the seasons and the coming of the night, Shakespeare considers a darker and more sombre representation of death. The poem itself seems to be an attempt to prepare for death and its allusions to nature especially

appears to be an attempt to mollify the poet/speaker and audience about death. Yet, at the same time, the poem does not actually contemplate death from the perspective of the dying. Overall, the poem considers the relationship between death and love and does so for an observer of death. The poem indicates that death is natural, as natural as the seasons, as day and night and that it is not something which should be feared, even though it should be taken seriously.

He begins the poem with the notion of time and specifically “that time of the year” (l. 1), which, with the presentation of the “yellow leaves” and bare trees (l. 2) become a metaphor for the approaching death. Winter is often considered the season which is associated with death, and the autumn, here late autumn, is the season which prepares for death. Trees lose their leaves, plants die and animals hibernate. The images Shakespeare present are not those of comfort and there is a quite tone of acceptance of mortality which is embedded within the poem. He uses words which often have negative associations, which is especially important given the poems content.

The winter Shakespeare depicts within the poem is especially brutal and barren of life, with “boughs” that “shake against the cold” and “bare ruined choirs, where ... bids sing” (l. 2-3). Here, the leafless trees are stripped of their protection and they shiver and shake against the cold. This suggests that the cold seeps into everything, and that a tree, naturally strong and protected by the elements is not strong enough. Here, nature is threatened by nature and, as such, the threat of impending death is absolute. The inclusion of the “ruined choirs” (l. 3) suggests the ruination of a location where birds once might have sung their songs in summer and spring. Of course, the inclusion of “sweet” (l. 3) is suggestive of a reminiscing of better days and includes a wistful tone into the sombre tone of the poem.

The association of the choir is also a youthful image and is juxtaposed by the word “ruined” (l. 3) equals ruin, and it suggests that youth, with its evidence of life presented through noise – song – is gone from the world, and all that is left are broken structures. Ruins are also suggestive in the theme of nature. As manmade structures and those that built them fade, nature creeps up and begins dismantling the buildings through sand, rain, sun and the other natural elements. This natural decomposition of moments past is superimposed on the image of the birds of summer and spring having retreated from the path of the oncoming winter, which within the context of the poem is representational of death.

The poet/speaker moves on from the seasons to another cyclical aspect of nature, day and night. Both are metaphors comparing the poet/speaker to their respective ends. Nevertheless, the change of subject matter is most important because, unlike the seasonal images of the previous four lines, the day/night image becomes linked to the poet/speaker himself. Similar to the seasonal aspect of the poem, there is no real mention of the day (as there is no real mention of spring and summer) and the poet/speaker is situated in the

“twilight of such day” while the “sunset fadeth” (l. 5-6). This once more presents the theme of time. However, this notion of time, throughout the poem has suggested a lack of time, rather than a suggestion that there is time. The fading of the sun and the mention of “twilight” (l. 5) are indications that the poet/speaker is not just watching a day draw to an end, but that he is watching, or at least aware of his own metaphorical day coming to an end. This awareness of his mortality is continued in the later lines of the poem where, having now admitted that the end of the cyclical nature images are “in me” (l. 5), rather than just observations of the changing seasons and days, becomes more of an internal confession soliloquy than anything else.

As before, with the harsh image of the “cold” (l. 3), the image of “black” (l.7) becomes the threat. Both the cold and the black are suggestive of a deeper terror which all mortals face, the end of existence. The images presented within the poem and within humanities own fear of death is potentially summed up by these two words which Shakespeare has chosen to use. Despite the poet/speakers attempt at consoling while facing reality, death is always depicted as a threat within the poem. It is a danger which cannot be overcome and therefore, the poet/speaker’s only choice is to reluctantly accept it. This reluctance and the threat which death is seen by the way in which the “night” is taken away (l. 7). The poet/speaker is a passive observer while death, through the images of the “black night” (l.7) becomes the active participant within the poem. As the night, the natural day comes to an end and night *becomes*, so too does the poem reinforce the notion of taken, through line 8, in which “Death’s second self” “seals up all *in rest*” (l. 8). Here, death takes what life is left, just as the “black night” takes the day. The poem then uses its first set of repetition in line 9. “In me”, the poet/speaker recalls.

This repetition of the “in me” from line 5 now reinforces the idea that the poem is about an individual at the beginning of the end of his life. The “in” of the phrase, is indicative of the level of personal struggle. This is an internal battle with the poet/speakers very notion of *being* or *existing*, and, at the end, of existing no more. Another image of nature, of fire, now begins to be associated to the complex ideas of life and death. The “glowing of such fire” (l. 9) which the poet/speaker has within him is also once more juxtaposed by the images of death which have come before, of the cold and the black. The natural inclination to associate life with warmth is used within the poem on multiple levels. The introduction of fire is meant to bring forth connotations of not only warmth and life but also light. Death, within the poem is dark, and therefore, life its polar opposite must be light.

Still, even the presentation of life through the image of “fire” (l. 9) is brief and suggests that even though the poet/speaker sees life within himself, in that he “see’st the glowing of such fire”, and wishes for more because he is not finished yet. Despite this last implication of resistance towards death, the next line suggests that this metaphor of life to fire is built on “the ashes of his youth”. Once more, the notion of a youthful image is eradicated. Like the image of the ruin, here youth is burned up by the very flame from which it came and all



that is left of the poet/speakers life is the “ashes” of his past. Such a metaphor clears the path of all resistance and what is left is weary acceptance on the poet/speakers behalf. As such, the fire will only burn as long as there is fuel and the fuel of the poet/speaker is nearly out. Old age then is representative of the dying fire. This transformation from the fire to an old man is more clearly described in the last two lines (l. 11-2) of the third quatrain. Here, the image of the “death-bed”, which is closely linked to that of the elderly dying becomes the summary of the burnt out fire of lines 9 and 10, “whereon it must expire, /consumed with that which it was nourish’d by” (l. 11-2).

In the last couplet of the poem, which following the structural rules of a sonnets construction is a rhyming couplet, the poem draws to a conclusion. However, this conclusion actually changes the entire tone of the poem. Where before, lines 13 and 14 contemplated the coming of death and negotiated the impending event with a sombre yet fearful tone, the last two lines suggest a more distant observational point of view or even a more drastic change to a response of a loved one watching someone die. The personal meditations of the poet speaker who repeated the phrase “In me” (l. 5 & 9) as if, in him are the stirrings of death changes to “thou”, and is suggestive of the poet/speaker interacting with another individual. The theme of death then becomes problematized and closely tied to the abruptly inserted theme of love. The poet/speaker says “this thou perciv’st, which makes thy love more strong” (l. 13). As throughout the poem, life has been the opposite of death, so here within the last two lines, love becomes the point of opposition to death. No longer is the poem about how one deals with their own death, but the death of a loved one, and the poem ends with the statement that “to love that well, which thou must leave ere long” (l.14) “makes thy love more strong” (l. 13). It suggests that, despite death being natural, inevitable and unpleasant, that capacity for people to love despite the knowledge of death, not of oneself, but of the loved one, people are stronger than even their inevitable fate.

Given the nature metaphors which have been presented within the text, that of the seasons of autumn and winter, the emergence of twilight and the night and the burnt up fire, the poem takes great care in discussing the inevitability of death. Despite the negative reflections from which the poem has (re)presented death, the rhyming couplet twists the poem’s meaning from embittered resignation to a declaration of strength. It does so through the presence of the notion love and through this love, the notion of death becomes less a battle for existence than an acknowledgment of relationships.

### **Re: Poetry Mock Essay**

by [C CROUS](#) - 3 Oct 2017 @ 19:28

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I would love to comment on the last 7 lines. Sometimes I get this wild imaginative train of thought. The 'fire' mentioned in line 11 can relate to the theme of death in the poem, as a fire also 'consumes' life. The 'ashes' mentioned in the poem may be the poet reminiscing

on his passed youth (now only ash). The fire within may also relate to a 'burning' desire to live even though it won't last. The speaker is aware of the fact that this fire will burn out or 'expire' as the speaker maintains that 'it must' be so. A fire requires oxygen to burn as does life, but the fuel that keeps our fire will eventually burn out, as recognised by the speaker. The poet may mean to say that we are also 'consumed' by this life and turned to 'ash' which could be in the literal sense as in the case of cremation or in the figurative sense as the end of our life. The fact that death is drawing near is 'percievest' or perceived and that 'love' will strengthen, may emphasise the importance of love above the power of 'death' and that we should love until the day we 'leave' or depart from this world.

## **1. Poetry Introduction Part 1**

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 29 Aug 2017 @ 19:16

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Hello Everyone!

This week we will be looking at poetry!

### **Poetry**

#### **What is poetry?**

When people think of poetry, they tend to think of complicated, dense and difficult works. The good news is that poetry, while compact and filled with saturated meaning, can sometimes be easier to understand and analyse than any other type of prose.

This is because, due to the limited space available to poets (other than Epic Poems, such as [The Homeric Poems](#) ~800 BC), traditionally poems tend to have fairly ridged structures which rely on **figures of speech** (FoS) (Such as **metaphor**, and **oxymoron**) which are striking to the reader, presenting vivid images, and therefore allowing for greater 'colour' or meaning to be transferred through the language. Other techniques used in poetry are **sound patterns** (part of the FoS: onomatopoeia, alliteration and assonance), **verse** and **meter**, **rhetorical devices** (see the figures of speech file and this link: <https://hhs-english-iv.wikispaces.com/file/view/Rhetorical+Devices.pdf> ), **style** and **stanzas shape** and **structure**.

Clarity:

#### Figures of Speech versus Rhetorical Devices

A figure of speech not only provides a visual image, but is also **alters the meaning of the words used**.

A rhetorical device provides emphasis or seeks to have a specific effect (i.e. to convince the reader of something), but **without altering the meaning of the words used**.

They are however, often grouped together as they provide added effect and greater depth to a text.

Example of a figure of speech:

An extract from *Lycidas* written by John Milton

But now my oat proceeds,

And listens to the herald of the sea  
 That came in Neptune's plea,  
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,  
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?

Within this extract is what we call an example of **metonymy**. Metonymy provides symbolic meaning by replacing a word or concept with something that is related but not exact. The word 'Pen' may (and has been used) be used in place of the concept of 'writing' and 'the written word'.

·The first line ("But now my oat proceeds) might make no sense, unless you are aware of the specific use of the word "oat". There are (and were in Milton's era) musical instruments made from **oat straw** (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/oat+straw>).

Therefore, within Milton's poem, the use of "oat" is intended to link to the notion of the oat made instrument, and through that, to the poet/speaker's 'song'. The first line, and indeed the entire extract, now has some coherence with this knowledge:

But now my [**song**] proceeds,  
 And listens to the herald of the sea  
 That came in Neptune's plea,  
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,  
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?

~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~\*~~~~~\*

Example of a rhetorical device:

John Donne addresses death in his *Death, be not Proud*

Thou 'art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
 And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
 And poppy 'or charms can make us sleep as well
 And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

Here a rhetorical question is used (last line: "Why swell'st thou then?") to reduce the finality and natural fear of death.

·**Rhetorical questions**: the act of asking a question when a) you already know the answer and it is obvious, and/or b) when no answer is expected. Such questions draw attention to

the subject matter *in* question. However, it may also be used in a patronising manner, which reduces the subject or object of the question.

Thus, within *Death, be not Proud*, Donne, having already called Death a “slave” further reduces Death, who, in his capacity of the ‘harbinger **of death**’, is the physical manifestation (representation) of the final fate of every living organism. By reducing Death, the concept of dying is not as terrifying as it might be.

<https://prezi.com/obpgbw9vxhrg/poetry-what-it-iswhat-it-isnt/>

<https://prezi.com/8k-z8wc8ls34/analyzing-poetry-with-sift/>

<https://prezi.com/6tucdc99bzxh/poetry/>

This next link suggests ways in which to approach a unseen poem in an exam situation. While the marking rubric is different from the one Unisa uses, it is quite a nice compact way of approaching such a task:

<https://prezi.com/spwazzxlq0wa/igcse-literature-unseen-poetry/>

Taken from Whatsapp group

Put another way, what is the subject of the poem, or what is the poem about?

Section two of the Study Guide explains how one needs to examine not only each singular line of a poem, but then relate each line to other lines in the poem. This idea of connectivity was also touched upon within topic one of this tutorial unit.

The study guide makes reference to the word “context” (p. 36), which asks that you attempt to link the words, lines and stanzas together to determine what a poem is actually about.

Remember that the guide also makes the distinction between the “poetic subject” (the topic) and the “grammatical subject” (words, phrases, and clauses that perform the action of or act upon the verb in a sentence).

At the same time, you must never forget that a poem’s theme and its subject matter are also two distinct concepts. The theme would be the central point or main idea which the poet is attempting to make. Examples of themes in poetry include: love, death, hate, greed, pride, liberty, autonomy.

The Subject, on the other hand, is the topic through which the poem expresses its themes.

Practically, this is best expressed through an example. Take Keats’ famous Ode to a Nightingale: (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173744>)

- Themes: Mortality and creative expression. The poem contrasts the inevitable cycle of aging and death with the seemingly immortal song of the nightingale, which acts as an inspiration to the speaker.
- Subject: A nightingale singing. The poem uses the subject matter of the nightingale singing in the trees as a platform for the speaker to complain about the transience of life.

So how do we identify the poetic subject?

Explore the title:

Activity 1 asks that you consider the title when attempting to determine the subject of the poem.

Titles can confirm, challenge or seek to confuse the reader. Some are playful, others are accurate, but all are important, as they provide a first impression of the poem which must then be in some way be fulfilled through the text itself.

Read the poem more than once:

Activity 2 asks that you read the poems more than once. I will go a step further. Within your packs from Unisa is a CD with audio recordings of the poems for this course on it. The reason for this is twofold.

- It can be easier for individuals to sometimes listen to a poem and then read it, which will accelerate understanding for those more audio-inclined individuals.
- Poems are meant to be read aloud. There is tone and texture which can be lost when reading silently. The pace and the rhythm of poetry, which often has a strong impact on understanding, will almost always be found in the speaking or reading aloud of poems.

Thus, do not just read the poems more than once, read them aloud, with the CD there to pace you.

It takes time and practice to figure out what words should be emphasised and which should be softly spoken or glossed over. You will find that when your interpretation of a poem is different, the chosen words which are emphasised are also different.

Once again, in your study guide there is a note about the terms 'poet' and 'speaker'.

- A poet is the author of a poem, the person who actually wrote the poem.
- The speaker is the "main character" in a poem, the person actually relating the poem to the reader.
- Just because the poet wrote the poem, it does not automatically mean that it is his or her voice which is meant to be heard when reading said poem. Thus, there is always that distinction between the terms.

Study the poem sentence by sentence:

Poems are often structured in a very specific manner. Where words are placed, the particular verbal stress placed on vowels and consonants, on syllables of words, how often a word is repeated and where the repetition is placed, what figures of speech are present and where and in what language are all elements of poetry that are carefully planned by the poet and, thus, have great significance in understanding and interpreting the poem.

Not only this, but poems are often broken up into stanzas and then lines. A poem of 24 lines could have 5 stanzas, two of which are made up of only two lines each. The grouping of each stanza is important because each might consider a particular idea or at least a particular aspect of such an idea.

You need to break the poem down, stanza by stanza, line by line and word by word.

The study guide indicates a need to seek out verbs which are used in each line. This is because it is the verbs (and adjectives) which give meaning to the nouns and to the poem itself. These are the words which will help define the poem's expression and power.

I came across a very good article about the importance of verbs and adjectives in poetry by A. H. R. Fairchild, entitled *The Verb and the Adjective in Poetry*. You can find the article through this link: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/801577?seq=3>

Earlier, I mentioned the grammatical subject. Once you have looked for verbs and adjectives you must then be able to find the grammatical subject in every sentence or line of the poem.

The grammatical subject is:

- The agent of the action performed by a verb (p. 37)
- You need to consider what that verb is acting on to identify the grammatical subject:
Here,
where men sit and hear each other groan; / Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
- Given the verbs presented and the grammatical subjects on which these verbs are acting,
what does the sentence mean? What is the literal meaning and what is the symbolic meaning?
- Once you understand the action of the verbs, begin linking the verbs, the nouns and the adjectives. Men sitting and listening to each other groan. Are they old, ill or in pain (the palsy shaking gray hairs would indicate that they are old)? Why are they sitting, listening to each other groan? Not the adjective "sad", which might well indicate that they have given up in their old age. Remember, though, that these are only two lines of a 'poem' (the line split is

indicated with the forward slash: “/”) and therefore the actual subject of the poem, as well as the poem’s themes are unknown, as the men and the hairs might well be metaphors for something else.

Examine Form and Argument:

I have briefly written about the poetic structure previously. This ‘step’ within the study guide mentions poetic structure as well and suggests that the form of a poem; how structures in rhyme scheme, in meter and in line structure, can and will provide certain contextual clues as to what the meaning of the poem is.

For example, there are certain expectations which arise by the fact that the poem’s structure is a sonnet. Going farther, there are conventions of a Petrarchan sonnet which differ from a Shakespearean sonnet, both in structure and in subject and theme.

Within poetry, much as within any other form of literature, when the poem was written is as important as the poem’s actual setting, bringing us back to context. In this way, hopefully, you begin to see how every type of analysis is connected, in a broad sense.

Diction and Mood:

What words are used, how they are used? Is there a focus on light imagery or darker imagery in the poem you are analysing? If so, what themes are linked with these images? Is the poem a pastoral one, whose focus is on the perfect rural life and its rustic yet charming landscapes? Does the poem focus on gleaming streams of clean water or the muddy stale runoff of the city?

This is diction.

This sort of word choice adds to and helps to shape the tone of a poem and the other way around. A sombre and dark poem will have heavy and hard words and syllables, whereas a light, happy poem will most likely be the opposite.

Go through each activity from 01-07 very carefully. These activities will give you the basic understanding of what it means to read a poem.

When writing an essay on poetry, it is possible that you use only the poem, your toolkit (for figurative language and other terminology) and the study guide (and if needed a dictionary). If you follow the steps laid out for you in the study guide (break down the poem, what kind of poem is it? What are the expected conventions? Does the poem meet those criteria? How? Why? How is language used? How many lines does it have? What is the stanza Structure? The structure of entire poem? Verbs? Adjectives? Grammatical Nouns? Mood? Theme? Subject? Title? And on and on and on) you will have more than enough information for the poetry section.

Don’t rely on the internet to find one-stop analyses of specific poems, as you need to show us what the poem means to you, not some lecturer in America!!

2. Poetry Introduction Part 2

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:44

In part one, I provided a basic overview of what a poem is. I also looked at the difference between rhetoric speech and figures of speech, and included a few links to poems and to rhetorical speech devices.

This post will deal with the terminology of poetry. Hopefully this will assist in your understanding of poetry.

1. Meter

- a. In language, words are broken up via groupings of sound. These groupings are called syllables. For example, **compare** is broken up into two syllables COM and PARE.
- b. Types of meter:
 - i. **Accentual meter**: Each line has equal number of lines
 - ii. **Syllabic meter**: An **accentual meter**, with a specific NUMBER of stresses.
 - iii. **Accentual-Syllabic meter**: A specific number of stresses in a line, with a specific order of emphasis.
 - iv. **Free Verse**: Irregular patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables within each line.
- c. We measure the meter of a poem on the **STRESSES or ACCENT** (emphasis) placed on certain syllables. When you have a pair of stressed and unstressed syllables (com – unstressed; and PARE – stressed) you have what is called an IAMB. You might recognise this word, or at least associate it with the term **IAMBIC**.
- d. A meter is the measure of the ‘iambic’. The most famous meter found within poetry is the **iambic pentameter**.
 - i. Pentameter = this word broken down to its prefix: Pent, which is Greek for ‘five’. This means that there are five pairs of IAMB within a line of a poem. The stresses within this form of Meter are found **after** the unstressed syllable.

ii. To the ear, such stresses ask that the reader of the poem give weight to and emphasise certain syllables, while speaking/reading the unstressed syllables lightly.

iii. See video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5lsuyUNu_4

2. Rhythm

a. Rhythm may be used in poetry to provide an additional layer of meaning.

i. Punctuation, including commas, periods, exclamation marks and question marks, as well as the length and grouping of the vowels and the consonants, all work in tandem to produce a pace which becomes the rhythm of a work.

b. The meter and rhythm often work together. In the last video, you might have noticed that the creator of the video focused on the 'beat' of the syllables, those stressed and unstressed. This is part of what forms the rhythm, along with punctuation.

3. Rhyme Scheme.

a. Rhyming occurs when words that **sound the same** appear within a text. Although found within lines, the most popular (or perhaps most obvious) rhymes are located at the end of the lines within poetry.

b. Because poetry is so structured, rhyming schemes actually have to potential to define the type of poem. For example, a Petrarchan sonnet is a 14 line poem, with a specific rhyme scheme and syllable structure:

i. *ababcdcd-efefgg* rhyme scheme, with **10 syllables** per line.

Sonnet

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321)

Ye ladies, walking past me piteous-eyed,

Who is the lady that lies prostrate here?

Can this be even she my heart holds dear?

Nay, if it be so, speak, and nothing hide.
Her very aspect seems itself beside,
And all her features of such altered cheer
That to my thinking they do not appear
Hers who makes others seem beatified.

'If thou forget to know our lady thus,
Whom grief o'ercomes, we wonder in no wise,
For also the same thing befalleth us,
Yet if thou watch the movement of her eyes,
Of her thou shalt be straightaway conscious.
O weep no more; thou art all wan with sighs.

(Trans. D.G. Rossetti)

c. See Rhyme Scheme video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bICNBW1r_5s&spfreload=10

For both rhyme and meter:

<https://poemshape.wordpress.com/2009/01/11/what-is-shakespearean-spenserian-amp-petrarchan-sonnets/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPkURJhd24c>

Prezi:

<https://prezi.com/rndbj0l2dleg/meter-in-poetry/>

<https://prezi.com/cvfwf6jsyu5j/poetry-meter-and-rhyme/>

<https://prezi.com/fltvk3ui5yzt/verse-meter-and-rhyme/>

Analysing a poem

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:45

Please find the poem in question under Additional Resources: Adrienne Rich_Aunt Jennifer's Tigers.pdf

A few key elements go into reading a poem in preparation for analysis:

Before you read the poem:

- Always number your lines.
- See if you can find a rhyming pattern (compare the last word of each line to the others, labeling alphabetically as you go).
- Look for any figurative language (FoS) highlight/circle/underline and indicate what type of FoS it is. Find the symbolic meaning of the FoS only when you read the poem.
- Any images or words which are repeated.
- Any words which you can link to main ideas or themes.
- Any words/phrases which have strong connotative value.

Now read the poem. Look for more of the above, but also begin to explain the significance of all the FoS which you have found. Can you link them to ideas and themes in the poem, and even to other FoS?

Once you have read the poem once, quickly write down your impressions of the poem: What is it about? Who is speaking (if possible to know)? Why is the poem important?

Read through the poem a few times, each time attempting to expand on what you have found and find elements which you might have skipped over.

Your poem should look like the .pdf after the first or second reading, after the third or fourth there should be even more detail

Poetic Language.

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:46

Additional information to work through with the study guide:

Poetic Language.

Because poetry is often written in brief flashes of prose, the language used must, in the least amount of words convey literal and figurative meaning. To do this, the language used must be powerful enough to appeal to the reader's visual, tactile, auditory, gustatory and olfactory senses.

As mentioned before, the diction (those chosen words be they formal, informal, casual, slang) and the rhyming pattern will influence the reading of the text. Yet, these are not the only elements which will have an impact on the poem and on the reading of the poem.

Tropes:

Your study guide mentions the notion of *tropes*, which is the metaphorical or figurative *use* of words. When one uses language to *twist* and weave patterns of understanding and comprehension, this is what is used: tropes.

Such tropes are:

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Ambiguity | Allusion | Analogy |
| Circumlocution | Hyperbole | Irony |
| Litotes | Metaphor | Metonymy |
| Oxymoron | Parody | Personification |
| Pun | Rhetorical Question | Satire |
| Simile | Synecdoche | Understatement |

Tropes, such as the examples above, therefore, change the meaning of expressions or words.

It is important to recognise tropes *when* they are present, to understand what the figure of speech is and *how and why* it has been used. There are many more types of tropes, however those in bold are those of common occurrence within poetry.

Examine your study guide and toolkit for more examples (another list can be found here: <https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/tropes.html>)

Schemes:

If you look back to the previous poetry tutorials, you will notice that I have often stated that to build understanding you need to connect similar words or thoughts which may occur throughout the poem.

A *scheme* is the repetition of a word, phrase or idea which has been repeated throughout the poem. This adds emphasis to those words, phrases or ideas, which are presented within similar, differing or problematic contextual changes throughout the poem. How the word, phrase or idea has been chosen *to be repeated* will indicate those connections and connotations which the poet asks you to make.

Examples of Schemes are:

Alliteration **Anaphora** **Antithesis**

Chiasmus **Ellipsis** **Hyperbaton**

Parallelism **Parentheses** **Repetition**

Tmesis

Once again, you need to be able to recognise the *used* schemes within a particular work, label them, define them and then explain *how and why* those particular scheme have been used.

Look at your study guide and toolkit for definitions and if you feel it necessary look up the term scheme online.

In topic two I asked that you read the poem aloud to yourself. The reason was so that you could fully grasp the rhythm of the poem, its beat and sound, which are made by the emphasis placed on the sounds and syllables of words.

In this section, the study guide asks that you consider such sounds and rhythm when analysing a poem. Activity 17 and 18 in particular break down the beginnings of that audio process of which poetry holds such a strong grasp.

Sound and rhythm:

The purpose for reading out aloud with the CD and re-reading the poems is to train your ear. Poetry is one craft which, with time and practice, a writer and reader may improve. This is because, due to the verbal nature of poetry, to understand, one must know how to read the poems aloud.

There has been mention before of the term **meter**. Meter is the term used to identify how the words are cut into syllables and which syllables are to be stressed and at what kind of tempo (or speed). It is the verbal movement of the poem. If you think visually, poetry is not a stagnant piece of writing. It has a space and a time and a melody which makes it move and flow with the sound of voices.

For more on the term meter (which includes timing such as iambic pentameter):

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/570/03/>

The poetic Subject

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:47

The poetic subject:

Put another way, what is the subject matter or the poem?

Section two of the Study Guide explains how one needs to examine not only the singular line of a poem, but then relate that line to other lines. This idea of connectivity was also touched upon within topic one of this tutorial unit.

The study guide makes reference to the word “context” (p. 36), which asks that you attempt to link the words, lines, stanzas together to determine what the poem is actually about.

Remember that the guide also makes the distinction between the “**poetic subject**” (the topic) and the “**grammatical subject**” (the agent of the action).

At the same time, you must be aware that the poem's theme and its subject matter are also two distinct notions.

- **Theme:** would be the main point or idea which the poet is attempting to make.
 - o Examples: love, death, hate, greed, pride, liberty, autonomy.
- **Subject:** the topic by which the poem express the themes.

Therefore, for example, in a Dylan Thomas poem *Do not go gentle into that good night* : (<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/do-not-go-gentle-good-night>)

- **Theme:** Mortality and defiance. The poem expresses a wish to fight against mortality, to defy even at the brink, death. It is about a love of life and a need of life to continue.
- **Subject:** Death. The poem uses the subject matter of the dying father a platform for the speaker to rail against death.

Explore the title:

Activity 1 asks that you consider the title when attempting to ascertain the subject of the poem. Titles can confirm, challenge or seek to confuse. Some are playful others accurate, but all are important as they *provide a first impression* of the work which must then be in some way met through the text itself.

Read the poem more than once:

Activity 2 asks that you read the poems more than once. Try searching Youtube for recordings of the poems you have been asked to analyse. The reason for this is two part.

- It can be easier for individuals to sometimes listen than read a poem. For those who are more audio inclined, understanding will come faster.
- Poems are meant to be read aloud. There is tone and texture which can be lost when reading silently. The pace and the rhythm of poetry, which often has a strong impact on understanding, will almost always be found in the *speaking or reading aloud* of the poems.

Thus, do not just read the poems more than once, read them aloud, with the CD there to pace you. It takes time and practice to figure out what words should be emphasised and which should be softly spoken, glossed over. You will find that when your interpretation of a poem is different, the chosen words which are emphasised are also different.

Once again, in your study guide there is a note about the term 'poet' and 'speaker'.

- I mentioned the term 'poet' within topic one and have used the term constantly when discussing the author of a poem.
- The term speaker I have only used once so far and that has been in relation to the Dylan Thomas poem above. Note how I say that the subject matter provides a platform from which the *speaker* is able to comment.
- Just because the poet wrote the poem, it does not automatically mean that it is his or her voice which is meant to be heard when reading said poem. Thus, there is always that distinction between the terms.

Sentence by sentence:

Poems are often structured in a very specific manner. Where words are placed, the particular verbal stress placed on vowels and consonants, on syllables of words, how often a word is repeated and where the repetition is placed, what figures of speech are present and where and in what language.

Not only this, but poems are often broken up into stanzas and then lines. A poem of 24 lines could have 5 stanzas, two of which are made up of only two lines each. The grouping of each stanza is important because each might consider a particular idea or at least a particular aspect of such an idea.

You need to break the poem down line by line and word by word.

The study guide indicates a need to seek out verb's which are used in each line.

· This is because it is the verbs (and adjectives) which give meaning to the nouns and to the poems itself. These are the words which will help define the poems expression and power.

o A very good article to read regarding the importance of verbs and adjectives in poetry is an article by A. H. R. Fairchild titled *The Verb and the Adjective in Poetry*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/801577?seq=3>

Mentioned earlier was the term was the *grammatical subject*.

· Once you have looked for verbs and adjectives you must then be able to find the grammatical subject.

o The agent of the action *performed by a verb* p. 37)

o You need to consider what that **verb** is acting *on*: the clouds **sweep** through the mountains, / **drowning** their peaks with **un-spilled** water

o Given the verbs presented and the grammatical subjects on which these verbs are acted upon, what does the sentence mean? What is the literal meaning and what is the symbolic meaning?

These two lines describe an mountain range. Not only that, but there is a focus on the peak of the mountain, which is covered by clouds. There is a sense of movement within the poem through the verbs "sweep", "drowning" and "un-spilled" which suggests a buildup of clouds at the mountains peak.

Also then begin linking the verbs and the nouns and the adjectives. Clouds which drown the mountains, specifically the peaks. Is this an image of mist or fog? Is the cloud heavy (the "un-spilled water" indicates heavy and threatening)? How tall are these mountains considering how cloud cover could "sweep" over them? Note also the term "peak" which would suggest quite high. Yet, these are only two lines of a 'poem' (the line split is indicated with the forward slash: "/") and therefore the actual subject of the poem, as well as the poems themes are unknown as the clouds, mountains and rain may be a metaphor for something else.

Examine Form and Augment:

I briefly wrote on the poetic structure throughout both posts. This 'step' within the study guide mentions poetic structure as well and suggests that the form of a poem, how

structures in rhyming scheme, in meter and in line structure can and will provide certain contextual clues as to what the meaning of the poem is.

For example, there are certain expectations which arise by the fact that the poem's structure is a sonnet. Going farther, there are conventions of a Petrarchan sonnet which differ from a Shakespearean sonnet, both in structure and in subject and theme.

Within poetry, much as within any other form of literature, **when** the poem was written is as important as the poem's actual **setting**.

A perfect example of structure is Lady Mary Wroth's *A Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love* (<http://allpoetry.com/A-Crown-of-Sonnets-Dedicated-to-Love>).

- This group of sonnets is a small work taken from a much broader work which will not be mentioned here.
- There are 14 sonnets within the work, with the last line of a sonnet, the first line of the next sonnet, and, within the 14th sonnet's last line, a repeat of the 1st sonnet's first line.
- Each sonnet is a part of a bigger weave and has its own particular topic, which links to the next and which eventually comes full circle to the beginning once more.
- Often this grouping of sonnets is called the "labyrinth", not just because that particular metaphor and topic are embedded within the poem, but because the poem itself is very much like a labyrinth.
- There are of course many many more structural elements of the poem (its rhythm, meter...) which will add to the meaning and complexity of the text.

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### **Diction and Mood:**

What words are used, how they are used? Is there a focus of light imagery as opposed to darker imagery? If so, what themes are linked with these images? Is the poem a pastoral one, whose focus is on the idyllic rural life and its rustic yet charming landscapes? Does the poem focus on gleaming streams of clean water or the muddy stale dregs of the city?

This is diction.

All of this adds to the tone. A sombre and dark poem will have heavy and hard words and syllables, whereas a light happy poem will most likely be the opposite.

Go through each activity from 01-07 very carefully. These activities will give you the basic understanding of what it means to read a poem.

**When writing an essay on poetry, it is possible to only use the poem and the study guide (and if needed a dictionary). If you follow the steps laid out for you in the study guide (break down the poem, what kind of poem is it? What are the expected**

**conventions? Does the poem meet those criteria? How? Why? Language? Lines? Stanza Structure? Structure of entire poem? Verbs? Adjectives? Grammatical Nouns? Mood? Theme? Subject? Title? And on and on and on) you will have more than enough information for the poetry section.**

**Using the internet for quick finds on poem analysis will not help in this case.**

### Titles.

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 3 Sep 2017 @ 9:49

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A quick note on the term 'Poet': Within literature, there are various categories, as you have seen so far. Each category has a particular label. So too are those who write within those categories sometimes provided titles.

Within *prose*, all fiction and non-fiction works are written by *authors*.

Within *drama*, works are written by *playwrights* or *dramatists*.

· As above, *poems* are written by *poets*.

· *Newspapers* and *magazines* are written by *journalists* and *bloggers*.

This distinction, while subtle, assists in defining and allocating a particular type of work to a particular type of write

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### HOW TO IDENTIFY AN OXYMORON OR PARADOX

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWvpySr7\\_cY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWvpySr7_cY)

<https://socratic.org/questions/what-is-the-difference-between-an-oxymoron-antithesis-irony-and-paradox-how-can->

### Re: Z - Questions

by [C BARRINGTON](#) - 4 Sep 2017 @ 19:03

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Do your best to avoid giving dictionary definitions. Rather consider how the word links to the text via CONTEXTUALLY relevant connotations or implications, how the word adds to tone, atmosphere, mood, theme, plot, and so on. As such, I generally never even indicate that a word is a verb or adjective, as it actually distracts from the analysis of the text.