

Meaning

- **what is the poem about?**
- **who is the speaker?** - are they dramatized (a character)
- **who is being spoken to or addressed?**
- **what is being spoken about?**
- **Theme(s) of the poem** - what is it really about?
- **Setting/culture** - where's the poem set? Culture it is from/about?
- where does the poem "get to" from start to end?

Structure

- **Rhyme** - is there a rhyme scheme? Couplets? Internal rhyme?
- **Rhythm** - how many syllables per line? Is it regular or free verse? Why are some different lengths?
- **Stanzas** - How many? How do they change? Is there a narrative?
- **Lines** - how many are there in each verse? Do some stand out?
- **Enjambment** - do the lines "run on" to the next line or stanza?
- **End stopping** - does each line finish at the end of a sentence?
- **Form** - does the poem have a shape to it?

Imagery

- **Alliteration** - the repeating of initial sounds.
- **Assonance** - is the term used for the repetition of vowel sounds within consecutive words as in, 'rags of green weed hung down...'
- **Metaphor** - comparing two things by saying one is the other.
- **Simile** - comparing two things saying one is like or as the other.
- **Personification** - giving something non-human human qualities.
- **Onomatopoeia** - words that sound like the thing they describe.
- **Repetition** - does the poet repeat words or phrases?

MITSL

Meaning, Imagery, Tone, Structure, Language (My Itchy Toes Smell Loads)

Always link everything to meaning. Ask yourself how does this contribute to the meaning? Why has the poet used this technique?

Tone

- How would the poem be spoken? (angry, sad, nostalgic, bitter, humorous etc)

Language

What kinds of words are used?

- **Puns** - a pun is a play on words - "Shear Class!" if Shearer scores.
- **Connotation** - associations that words have (as "stallion" connotes a certain kind of horse with certain sorts of uses)?
- **Double meanings** - "butts in" - putting bottoms in or interrupting.
- **Ambiguity** - is the word or phrase deliberately unclear? Could it mean opposite things or many different things?.
- **Word order** - are the words in an unusual order - why?
- **Adjectives** - what are the key describing words?
- **Key words and phrases** - do any of the words or phrases stand out? Do they shock? Are the words "violent" or "sad" etc?
- **Slang or unusual words and misspellings** - Does the poet use slang or informal language? Are American words used?
- **Intertextuality** - does the poem reference another text?
- **Style** - does the poet copy another style? (Newspaper, play etc)
- **Characters** - if there are characters how do they speak?