

apostrophe

- figurative device
- speaking to someone absent as though they were present

“My beloved wife, how I wish you were here!”

- speaking to an imaginary character as though they were real

“Hercules, if you were here, what would you do? Would you allow this rogue to steal your girlfriend?”

- speaking to a non-living or non-human object or entity as though it were living

“O Canada! Our home and native land! True patriot love in all thy son’s command!”

atmosphere / mood

the feelings or emotions created by a work of literature

GUIDELINES FOR READING POETRY

START WITH STRUCTURE →

1. Is this free verse or metrical verse?

- If metrical verse, what is the structure?
 - Stanza length?
 - Couplet (2)
 - Quatrain (4)
 - Sestet (6)
 - Octave (8)
 - Other length?
 - Line length?
 - Rhyme scheme?
 - Rhythm?
- If metrical verse, is there a specific form?
 - Ballad
 - Elegy
 - Ode
 - Sonnet

THEN LOOK AT CONTENT →

2. Is this a lyric or a narrative poem?

- If a narrative, what is the plot? Setting? Characters? Conflict?
- If a lyric, what is being described?
 - An event or situation?
 - An atmosphere/mood?
 - An emotion or sensation?
 - An idea or concept?
 - Some or all of the above?

***ALLOW FOR AMBIGUITY:
LYRIC POEMS ARE NOT ALWAYS TRANSPARENT***

NEXT, CONSIDER HOW THE POET USES LANGUAGE→

3. How does the poet describe what is being described?

- Figurative language?
 - Apostrophe
 - Euphemism
 - Hyperbole
 - Metaphor
 - Personification
 - Simile
- Imagery?
- Other techniques?

FINALLY, THINK OF THEMES→

REMEMBER THAT A THEME IS NOT A “MORAL” OR A “LESSON”!

4. What ideas or themes emerge from the text?