








# READING & UNDERSTANDING *POETRY*



Steps:	Process:
1 	Predict (title, author, and pictures).
2 	Read through the whole poem without stopping, whether you understand it or not, to get a sense of what it's about.
3 	Read the poem aloud a second time... slowly... word by word... line by line. Pay attention to punctuation. Underline words you don't know.
4 	Read it again, word by word. Look up the words you don't know or try to use context clues to help you figure them out.
5  	Reread the poem for imagery. Create pictures in your head based on the senses (see, hear, smell, taste, touch). Box stanzas/thoughts and be an active reader by drawing picture notes or writing margin notes next to stanzas/thoughts.
	<p>Question yourself for understanding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Who is the speaker?</li> <li>b. What is the setting (where/when)?</li> <li>c. What is the title trying to say?</li> <li>d. What is the theme?</li> <li>e. Are there any words repeated? Why?</li> <li>f. Do any of the objects, people, or places seem to have symbolic meaning?</li> <li>g. What is the overall tone?</li> <li>h. What reactions or feelings of your own does this poem reveal (the mood)?</li> </ol>

# Interpreting Elements of Prose & Poetry

<p><u>Literal Meaning:</u> (denotation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to understand</li> <li>• Dictionary type meaning</li> <li>• Example: An apple is the fruit of the apple tree, anywhere from gold to dark red in color. It has a sweet taste and has seeds inside.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Figurative Meaning:</u> (connotation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less specific &amp; less direct in meaning</li> <li>• Has implied meaning</li> <li>• Example: The red apple in Snow White is not just a delicious fruit to eat but the red symbolizes danger as it was full of poison.</li> </ul>
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<b>Element:</b>	<b>Definition:</b>	<b>Example:</b>
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Flashback	An interruption in the action of a plot to tell what happened at an earlier time. A flashback breaks the usual movement of the narrative by going back in time. Flashback usually gives background information that helps the reader understand the present situation.	One afternoon, a year and a half before, father and Laban Small had been running a vixen through the woods with their dogs.
Foreshadowing	A writer's use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in the plot. Foreshadowing creates suspense and prepared the reader for what is to come.	Sam wished he could rid himself of the sick feeling in his gut that told him something terrible was going to happen, and happen soon.
Hyperbole	A figure of speech in which the truth is exaggerated for emphasis or for humorous effect. Writers often use hyperbole to intensify a description or to emphasize the essential nature of something.	The limousine is as long as an ocean liner.
Imagery	Language that appeals to the senses. It consists of descriptive words and phrases that re-create sensory experiences for the reader. It usually uses one or more of the five senses---sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.	And like a thunderbolt he falls.
Irony	A contrast between what is expected and what actually exists or happens. Irony involves the tension that arises that could use writer's techniques such as exaggeration, sarcasm, and understatement.	Romeo & Juliet: Romeo thinks Juliet is dead but really she just swallowed a sleeping potion. So Romeo killed himself because of Juliet's death and not being able to live without her. He didn't know that she really was NOT dead... just sleeping.
Metaphor	A comparison of two things that have some quality in common. Unlike a simile, a metaphor does not contain an explicit word of comparison, such as <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> .	The apple never falls far from the tree. The parents are compared to a tree, while the children are compared to an apple. It expresses that children are never very different from the parents or family from which they come.
Mood	The feeling or atmosphere that a writer creates for the reader. The use of details, imagery, foreshadowing, setting, and rhythm can help establish mood.	Life <i>is</i> full of misery, loneliness, and suffering--and it's all over much too soon.
Onomatopoeia	The use of words whose sounds suggest their meanings.	Meow = kitten or cat
Personification	A figure of speech in which a nonhuman thing or quality is written about as if it were human.	The wind is whispering to me.
Paradox	Occurs when two things that should not be able to exist at the same time are said to exist at the same time.	If a piece of writing said that the speaker of the writing is experiencing the past and the present at the same time, this may mean that his memories of the past are so vivid that the past

		seems to be existing in the present.
Pun	Play on the multiple meanings of a word or on two words that sound alike but have different meanings.	I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.
Sarcasm	A form of verbal irony, usually harsh. It is often used as an insult.	A man comes to breakfast after a late night party, he looks unshaven, wearing the wrinkled clothes he slept in, with hair disheveled, and his eyes are red and squinted from the sunlight. His wife takes one look at him and says, "Well, now, don't you look just bright and shiny this morning?!"
Simile	A comparison of two things that have some quality in common. In a simile, the comparison is conveyed by means of the word <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> .	The woman moved like a leaf floating in the water, completely weightless.
Symbolism	The use of something concrete (e.g. an object, a setting, an event, an animal, or a person) that functions in a text to represent something more than itself. A symbol must be something tangible or visible, while the idea it symbolizes must be something abstract or universal.	Well, son, I'll tell you; Life for me ain't been no crystal stair. It's had tacks in it, And splinters, and boards torn up, and places with no carpet on the floor – bare.
Tone	An expression of a writer's attitude toward a subject. Unlike mood, which is intended to shape the reader's emotional response, tone reflects the feelings of the writer. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, playful, ironic, bitter, or objective.	The Pasture Excerpt By Robert Frost  I'm going out to clean the pasture spring; ( <i>tone: informing</i> ) I'll only stop to rake the leaves away ( <i>tone: reservation</i> ) (And wait to watch the water clear, I may): ( <i>tone: possibility</i> ) I sha'n't be gone long. -- You come too. ( <i>tone: after thought/inviting</i> )
Understatement	Opposite of exaggeration --- one states less than one's full meaning.	It's warm in August in Miami. --- Actually it's scorching HOT in Miami during the month of August!