

The DIY Poetry Kit

The word “poetry” comes from the Greek *poiesis*, a “making.” In this sense, poetry is not some thing that is already made; it is *in the making*.

Poetry is making an experience of meaning, beauty, value, powerful feelings, something completely new, and/or poetry itself.

Reading poetry is like a do-it-yourself experience of a poet’s intention and craft.

A poem is nothing but marks on a page until reading brings it to life, animating the sequence of its parts (words, syllables, sound effects, lines, stanzas, rhythms, images, symbols, etc.). **To understand a poem is to relate how the pieces fit together as a whole.** There are as many ways of doing this as there are readers.

You can understand any poem using the tools in The DIY Poetry Kit!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read the poem all the way through, silently, at a steady pace.
2. Brain dump: write down or draw whatever is in your head when you come to the end.
3. Read the poem again -- this time, underline whatever strikes you and *note your reactions in the left margin*.
4. Look over the poem and *mark any ---divisions---*
 - stanzas**: groups of lines separated by white space
 - other, marked or unmarked parts or transitions (in mood, content)?
5. Read the poem out loud and listen for \sim | patterns | \sim
 - meter**: a pattern formed by | \sim stressed \sim unstressed syllables | in a line

\sim Whose \backslash woods \sim these \backslash are \sim I \backslash think \sim I \backslash know
 $\sim \backslash \sim \backslash \sim \backslash \sim \backslash = | \sim \backslash | \times 5 =$ iambic pentameter

for traditional meter in English poetry:

<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/meter.html>

how many **feet** (repeating units of syllables) and what kind?

OR, simply, do the syllables create a strong rhythm? *describe it*
-rhyme scheme: a pattern formed by matching sounds at the end of lines

Whose woods these are I think I know.	A
His house is in the village, though;	A
He will not see me stopping here	B
To watch his woods fill up with snow.	A
My little horse must think it queer	B
To stop without a farmhouse near	B
Between the woods and frozen lake	C
The darkest evening of the year.	B
...	

for types of rhyme and traditional forms in English:
<http://www.loske.org/html/school/english/rhyme.pdf>

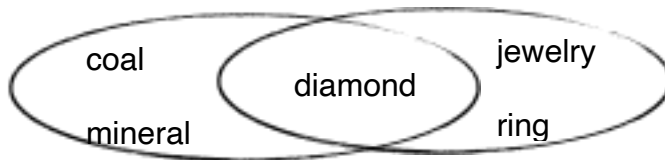
identify rhyming lines if there is a pattern
 -other, unrhyming patterns inside or between the lines?
draw arrows to connect echoes or sound effects

alliteration: setting sun **assonance:** lie by my side

6. Highlight any instances of **repetition:** repeated words, phrases, lines

7. Look up any unfamiliar words or **allusions**
 (proper name references)

8. Draw boxes around **figurative language**



(**metaphor, personification**)

9. **Lexicons:** group words and images into categories
List them in circles (allow for overlap)

10. Read the poem (at least) two more times

-*analyze*: what do the details contribute to your understanding of the poem?

-*synthesize*: how do the elements of the poem interact to produce a specific effect or meaning?

11. Prepare to share your reading!