

TPCASTT

Strategy for Analyzing Poetry

T-Title

Look at the title BEFORE reading the poem. Attempt to predict the significance of the title.

P-Paraphrase

Translate the *literal* plot of the poem into your own words. Make sure you understand what every word means and that you can literally see every image that is used.

C-Connotation

Contemplate the poem for meaning *beyond* the literal, the figurative. Look for all poetic devices and see how those contribute to the meaning, the effect, or both.

Figurative Language Devices

- Simile
- Metaphor
- Personification
- Hyperbole
- Imagery (sight, taste, touch, hearing, smell)
- Allusions
- Symbolism

Sound Devices

- Alliteration
- Onomatopoeia
- Rhyme (end, internal, slant)

Others

- Diction—important words
- Syntax—different arrangement of words

A-Attitude

Identify and describe the *persona*. Observe the speaker's attitude, the *tone*.

S-Shift

Determine the *stanza* type and whether there are shifts in the tone/attitude. Sometimes a change in stanzas will indicate a shift in attitude.

T-Title (again)

Reexamine the title. Try to see how the title fits with the work as a whole.

T-Theme

Determine what the poet is saying. This does not have to be a "moral" or a "cute saying." Instead, you should think about how the human experience is presented in the poem. The theme should be a universal truth, not applicable only to the poem.