



SIX STEPS TO ANALYSING AN UNSEEN POEM

TEST IN PERIOD 3

STEP ONE:

❖ THINK ABOUT **THE POET**:

- Sex: Male/female?
- Date: written, published, when did the poet die?
- Think about the historical period.

- E.g. female poet from the 1700s, this is a time when women didn't have the same rights as today.
- Or male poet 1890 – 1930, lived through WWI.

- But it could be that there are no clues!



STEP TWO:

❖ WORK OUT WHAT THE POEM IS **ABOUT**...

- Literal meaning.
- What is the subject of the poem?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is the narrator speaking to?



STEP THREE:

❖ IDENTIFY THE **THEMES** AND **MESSAGE** OF THE
POEM...

- Why has the poet written the poem?
- What are they trying to say?
- What ideas are they using?
- Is it an emotional response to something that's happened?
- Is it trying to get an emotional response from the reader?
- Is it portraying a message or opinion on a subject or event?



STEP FOUR:

❖ IDENTIFY THE **ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS** IN
THE POEM...

- What are the different emotions and feelings of the narrator or poet?
- What is the mood or atmosphere of the poem (e.g. sad, angry, etc.)?
- How has the poet used different poetic techniques to show these attitudes and feelings?



STEP FIVE:



❖ IDENTIFY THE **POETIC TECHNIQUES** USED IN
THE POEM...

- What are the different poetic techniques that the poet has used to show the attitudes and feelings in the poem?
- How has the poet shown these feelings through form and structure (e.g. rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.)?
- How has the poet used poetic devices to show these feelings (e.g. metaphors, similes, caesura, enjambment, alliteration, juxtaposition, personification, etc.)?



STEP SIX:

❖ EXPLORE YOUR **PERSONAL RESPONSE** TO THE
POEM...

- How do you feel about the poem?
- How well does the poet get the message across in the poem?
- What is the impact of the poem on the reader (refer to ‘the reader’, rather than ‘I’ when talking about the impact of the poem)?
- Are there any other ways the poem could be interpreted?