**Guidelines**

**ANALYZING****POETRY**

One way to better understand poetry is by analyzing the elements that make up a good poem. Poems are written in either closed or open form. Closed form poems are written in specific patterns, using meter, line length, and line groupings called stanzas. Open form poems, often still referred to as "free verse" poems, do not use regular rhythmic patterns (i.e., metric feet), are usually unrhymed, have varying line lengths, and have no set line groupings. Remember that you are looking for relationships between the formal devices of poetry, like word choice, metric pattern, and metaphor and the poem's subject. A thorough investigation of the elements of a poem helps the reader to better understand the poem.

**Guidelines:**

* Pick a poem that you like that you can present within 1.5 to 2 minutes
* Find an image that represents the poem. It can be literal or abstract; it will be projected on the screen behind podium. Image must be online for projection.
* Compose a formal introduction to the image and poem (we will review in class ways to accomplish this)

The following list is a guide providing characteristics to look for when analyzing poetry.

# DETERMINE THE SUBJECT OF THE POEM

* Paraphrase/summarize the poem: what is it about?
* Does the poem address a social, psychological, historical, or mythical phenomenon?

# IDENTIFY THE POEM'S NARRATOR

* Who is speaking?
* To whom?
* Under what circumstances? Identify the setting.

# NOTE THE DICTION (WORD CHOICE) OF THE POET

* Be sure to look up all unfamiliar words in a dictionary.
* What are the words' denotations and connotations?
* Are the words concrete or abstract?
* Is the poem free of clichés?
* How does the diction contribute to or detract from the poem?

# DETERMINE THE TONE OF THE POEM

* Is the poem serious? Ironic? Satiric? Contemplative? Ambiguous?
* Point out words that set the tone.
* Determine whether the tone changes within the poem.

# DETERMINE THE RHYTHMICAL DEVICES USED BY THE POET

* What is the basic metrical pattern? Line length?
* What is the length of the stanza?
* What is the rhyme scheme? End rhyme? Internal rhyme?
* Does the poet employ any other metrical devices?
* What form does the poem take? Open or closed?

# NOTE THE USE OF OTHER LITERARY DEVICES

* What allusions does the poem contain?
* Listen to the sounds in the poem. Make note of assonance, alliteration, and onomatopoeia.
* Does the poet use figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, symbolism, imagery, irony, personification, antithesis, hyperbole, metonymy, synecdoche, allegory, paradox, understatement, or overstatement?
* Are there any examples of synecdoche or metonymy?
* Note the use, or absence, of punctuation.
* Titles are important. It the title the best the writer could have chosen? What would be a better title for the work? Why?

# DETERMINE THE VALUES OF THE POEM

* Does the poet succeed in recreating his experiences within the reader? How?
* Is the experience intensely felt by the reader?