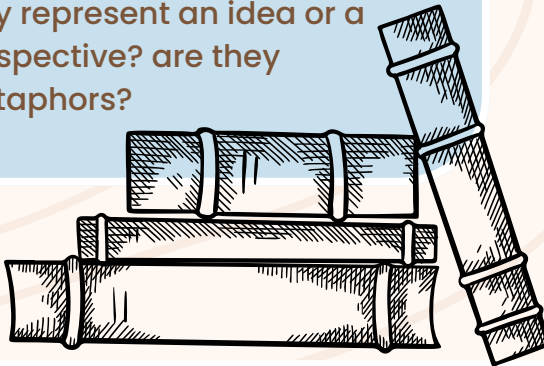


# HOW TO...

## Create 6 Smart Habits for Analyzing Poetry

### 1. Identify Imagery

- sensory details (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) create mental pictures
- consider how the mental pictures establish a tone-- positive tone, negative tone? light-hearted or angry?
- question whether the images perform a symbolic duty--can they represent an idea or a perspective? are they metaphors?

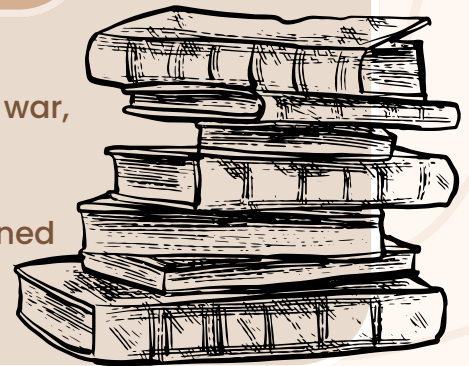


### 2. Listen for Rhyme

- sounds will affect our attitude towards what is being said--harsh consonant sounds may convey harsh or strict ideas; soft vowel sounds may mimic feelings of soothing gentleness
- repetition of sounds are deliberate attempts by the poet to affect how we hear the words written/spoken
- sounds will enrich a poem's theme by deepening associations through our sense of hearing with our perceptions or presumptions on a subject
- a rhyme scheme can tell us how disciplined, structured, and measured the poet's control of sound is

### 3. Separate Subject from Theme

- subject is what the poem is literally about, i.e., war, romantic love, courage
- theme is a message, i.e., courage is strengthened through failures rather than successes



## 4. Note Structure

- for example, sonnets are 14-line poems and can be arranged in Shakespearean style or Petrarchan style, each with its own organizational function
- in any poem, stanzas and line breaks communicate organizational groupings and/or deliberate disruptions
- irregular line groups may be intentional to draw your attention to a specific word, phrase, or subject; line groups can also control your pace of reading
- Titles are part of a poem's structure, so if a poem has a title, it can be a poet's initial gesture towards a first impression for subject matter; it can also be a poet's way of manipulating a reader's expectations



## 5. Focus on Effects

- consider the effects of the poetic elements of rhyme, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, and so on, rather than simply identifying examples of them
- effects can be the feelings created, the connections made between ideas or objects, or even the depth of insight brought to a subject
- mood is an effect: it is the feeling created by the text, especially through imagery and setting, and it is connected to the emotional feeling of the reader
- tone is an effect: the poet's or speaker's attitude toward the subject; it is created through diction and narrative voice

## 6. Question Word Choice

- until you think about other words the poet could have chosen, you may not realize the importance in the choice of a specific word--does a the word sound harsh? or soft? Can we detect a double meaning? are words repeated? or is an idea repeated but in different words?