

## “POETRY” STRATEGIES

- Highlight prompt.
- Write in 3<sup>rd</sup> person, present tense! Put poem in quotation marks!
- Author's name and work's title in opening paragraph
- Meaning of work as a whole (main lesson/theme) included in opening paragraph  
Establish the direction of your essay in the opening paragraph.
- Thesis in opening – “The text shows X in order to show/highlight/accomplish Y.”
- Underline or circle parts as you read. Annotate in the margin.
- Note physical structure of poem.
- Title and ending are the most important parts of poem.
- Is there a rhyme scheme? What is its purpose?
- One-sentence summary –Quickly jot down at end of poem.
- What does the poem mean? What message does the author have for you? How is that message delivered?
- Tone (note shifts in tone, especially at ending—final stanza or couplet) **SO WHAT?**
- Irony – Star it! Always address irony if it is present. **SO WHAT?**
- Address other literary elements as required and as needed. **SO WHAT?**
- Interweave analysis with summary. Pure summary is death! Support points you make.
- Don't use line numbers; briefly quote. Don't give first and last word with ellipsis in between.
- Don't say “The author uses diction” or that “Sentences have syntax” –these are givens!  
Get to the point. (Ex. William Blake depicts a blacksmith's setting for the creation of the tyger with “furnace,” “anvil,” and “hammer.” Syntactically, William Blake's “The Fly” displays an erratic movement of lines that mimic the movement of a fly.)
- No comments like: “I liked the poem.” “Shakespeare was a great writer.”
- Conclude, even if you only have time for one sentence. Restate your thesis, emphasize “meaning as a whole” or “significant to the work,” and clinch it.
- Creative writing is not academic writing. Academic writing is analytical writing.