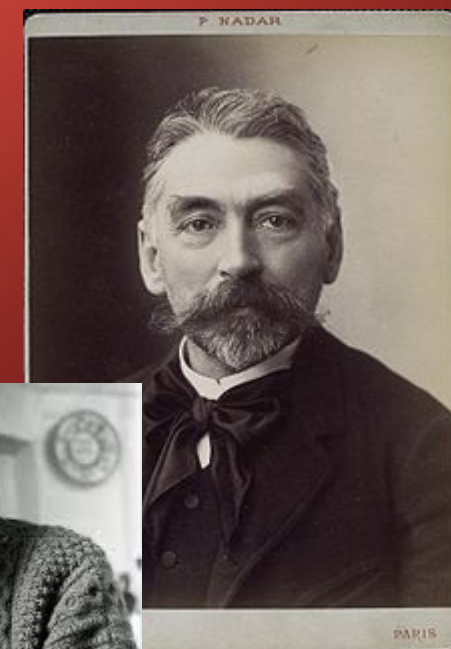
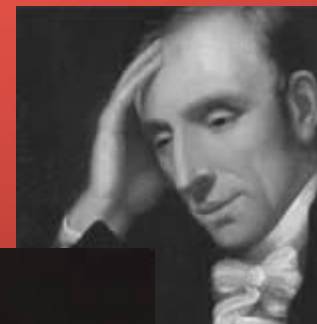


POETRY

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS



HOW TO APPROACH A POEM

Many people find poetry difficult to analyse because **a poem must be read several times in order to understand** the message that the poet might have chosen to convey. Think: **Soak-in-speed**

In poetry, words are used both literally and figuratively and they enable the reader to explore something of the poet's intentions, meaning and emotions or their historical situation.

When analysing a poem you must be aware of the techniques used by the poet in order to facilitate the illustration of specific feelings and meanings.


As the poet Lionel Abrahams wrote,

"The whole made thing is made to make; the meaning felt not merely known."

THINGS TO CONSIDER

The **title** of the poem is of great importance. Use it like a signpost pointing you to a/the meaning of the poem. It should give you some understanding of the content.

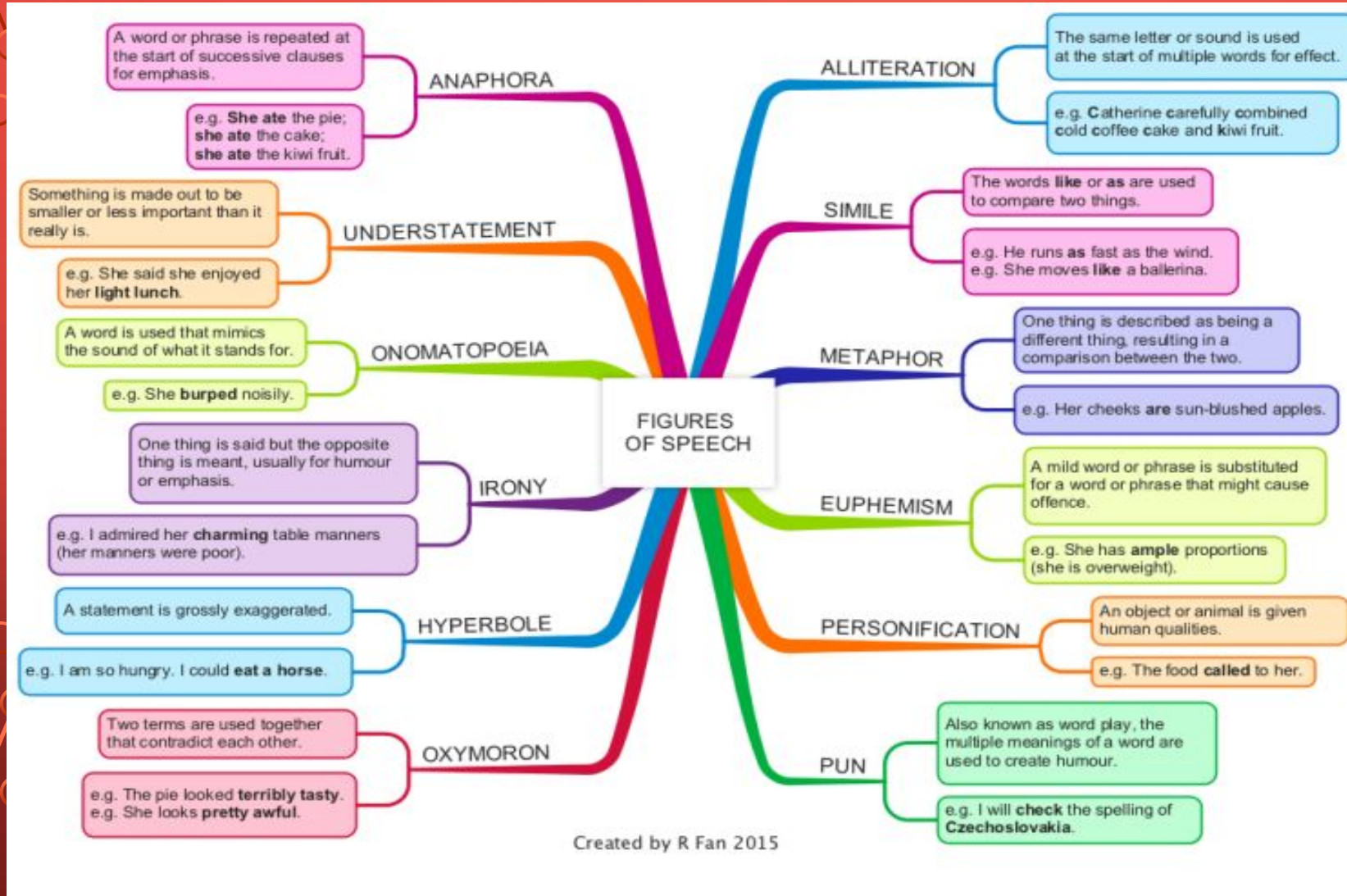
Ask yourself questions like: what is the **theme** of the poem? What might the poet's intention have been when s/he wrote this poem?



Ask yourself, "Where and why did the poet employ **figurative language**?"


As a reader you need to identify the use of different figures of speech. An understanding of rhetorical devices will likewise be beneficial.

As reader your work is to imagine the woven **images** the poet has constructed through the specific use of **metaphors, similes, alliteration, and onomatopoeia**.



Do it
Now!

Please choose four of these rhetorical devices/ figures of speech and write down your own creative examples using that device. Ask, “How strong or effective is the image I’ve constructed?”



Always answer figurative language questions with the words, “the poet is using the simile/the metaphor/the alliteration to suggest...” then write what it is that this (visual/sensual) image suggests to you.

Examine the structure. Often each stanza will introduce a different idea that connects to the theme of the poem. The structure also gives the reader an idea about the content.

For visually sensual poems, the structure is important. It may be used to create a sense of movement or to suggest a particular image. The structure may be used to create a sense of rhythm and to suggest a particular image. The structure may be used to create a sense of rhythm and to suggest a particular image. The structure may be used to create a sense of rhythm and to suggest a particular image. The structure may be used to create a sense of rhythm and to suggest a particular image.

The choice of **emotive words** identifies the feelings of the poet towards her/his subject and will also identify her/his tone.

When we speak of **tone** in poetry you must think about the attitude and texture of the meaning of the words which have been chosen. Think about it: there are billions of words to choose from. The poet chose each word specifically to construct a specific image.

*For example, the word “fling” rather than “throw” **conveys** impatience and irritability. “Fling” can also *portray* indifference or apathy.*

Furthermore, the language of a poem could be formal, conversational, or unusual. Words change over the years. They may become old fashioned or archaic, or they might have a new and special meaning.

We call the dictionary meaning of a word – denotive, while figurative meaning is known as connotative.



One poet (Phoebe Hesketh) has written that

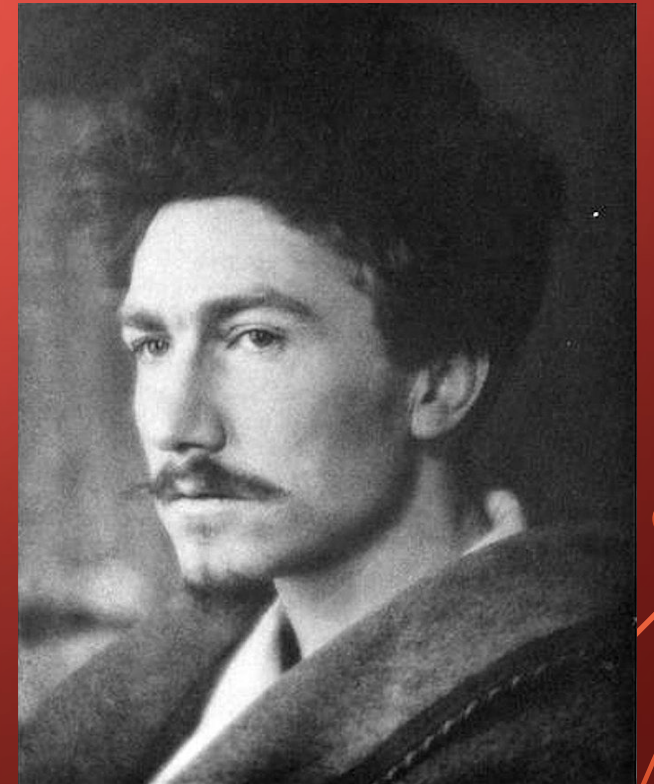
A poem is a painting that is not seen;

A painting is a poem that is not heard.

Another famous poet (Ezra Pound) has written:

An “Image” is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time[...]. It is the presentation of such a “complex” instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.

Why do you think this is so?



To assist you in your analysis of different poems and instances of poetry

the following acronym **SWIFTT** can serve to guide you.



S – Style & Structure

W – Word Choice (Diction)

I – Intention of Poet

F – Form

T – Tone

T – Themes

I am confident that as you cover each of these points your understanding of the poem at hand will expand and you will have something significant to say, even if what you say is something simple.

As a tip, try to begin with form; it is usually the easiest thing to discern.

DON'T FORGET!