

When you write about a poem, it is helpful to have the right vocabulary to hand. You will be looking at the message of the poem, and the methods the poet uses to convey their message(s).

What is the poet’s message?

Look for implied meanings and alternative interpretations of the meaning of the poem.

Key words/phrases
This suggests ...
The word/phrase ... implies ...
This gives the impression that ...
The reference to ... could indicate ...
This hints that ...
This indicates that ...
This can be interpreted in more than one way ...
I think the poet/speaker also means ...

Which methods could you comment on?

Consider the techniques used by the poet at WORD, SENTENCE and TEXT level.

WORD	Effective vocabulary (adjectives, verbs, adverbs etc.), use of contrast, exaggeration, modern or archaic words/expressions, personification, alliteration, similes, metaphors etc.
SENTENCE	Repetition, lists, short or incomplete sentences, commands, questions etc.
TEXT (form & structure)	Viewpoint (first, second or third person), stanzas, rhyme, rhythm, a particular form (e.g. sonnet), how the poem starts and ends.

Evaluate by saying what is effective about the poet’s use of language and other techniques.

Key words/phrases:
The poet’s use of ... is effective because ...
I particularly like ... as it gives the effect of ...
I particularly like ... because it shows ...
The use of ... helps to ...
This technique reinforces ...
The use of ... emphasises ...

The task below uses the poem 'Remembering Snow' by Brian Patten.

The poem is widely available online, including Brian Patten's website:

<http://www.brianpatten.co.uk/poetry.html>

Either use this poem and complete the sentence stems, or use these as models of good sentence starts to analyse another poem. Practising using this vocabulary will help you write fluently about poems.

Task

1	The speaker dressed and 'sneaked down the stairs ...' The verb 'sneaked' suggests ...
2	He 'opened wide the door' . This gives the impression that ...
3	The poet refers to their street as a 'grubby little street' implying that ... The poet repeats this phrase at the end of the poem which reinforces the idea that ... Once the snow has fallen, the poet uses much more positive descriptions such as 'beautiful' and 'brand-new' . The use of contrast emphasises ...
4	The line 'I felt more and more awake' can be interpreted in more than one way. The speaker is now fully awake from his recent sleep but I think he also means ... The repetition of 'more' adds to the effect because it suggests ...
5	The use of rather childish exaggeration in 'the trillion million different kinds' of snowflakes is effective because ...
6	The poet's use of alliteration in 'frosty flakes' and 'mute miracle' makes these descriptions stand out when the poem is read aloud. I particularly like 'mute miracle' because ...
7	The structure of the poem is interesting as there are three short lines each written as a complete sentence. These lines stand out and help to convey the message of the poem. I particularly like the line ... because it shows ...
8	The ending of the poem is rather puzzling as the boy in the poem doesn't share his experience with his mother. Perhaps the poet is hinting that ...