**How to Read a Poem**

**Step 1**  Read the poem through **three** times:

Note the title

1. silently, for fast impression
2. ALOUD- noting shifts in pattern, thought, voice, flow
3. again, to adjust first impression

What is the single-most dominant impression of the poem?

**Step 2** Ask yourself the following questions; and locate the evidence for your answer.

What is going on here? What is the “dramatic situation”?

Evidence (How do you know?)

(Look on it as if it were a brief glimpse into a play scene an overheard conversation, a flash of telepathy into someone’s thoughts and feelings of the moment.)

Who is speaking? This is known as the voice/persona/speaker. What kind of a person is he/she? What is his/her attitude to the situation? (TONE)

Who is she/he speaking to? Attitude? Relationship?

**Step 3** Effect: How does the poem achieve the effect of the dominant impression you noted above?

Look at the following:

Patterns: What does the whole structure do? Why is it the shape it is? Why are the stanzas, lines, so constructed?

Listen for repetitions.

Listen to rhyme, meter, rhythm, and sound patterns.

Images: Note that images are anything that appeal to any of the senses: taste, touch, sight, sound, smell, movement.

Where are the literal IMAGES; where are the images figurative- ex. metaphor, personification, symbols? And why?

Words (Diction):

Why the choice and position of words? What extra implications are there- ex. connotation, dimensions, allusions?