

Reading Poetry Graphic Organizer

Grades 9–12

Reading poetry can be an effective way to practice comprehension skills. Just as there is no *one* right way to write a poem, there is also no *one* right way to read a poem. A poet might have a specific meaning in mind when writing a poem, but the meaning you take out of the poem is up to you! Still, reading and making meaning out of poetry is an exercise in attentiveness. Every observation you make about a poem shapes the meaning you take from it. Making more observations can lead to deeper meaning-making. The following graphic organizer offers questions that can help you make observations about a poem as you read and analyze it.

For further guidance on using the graphic organizer and to learn more about reading and writing poetry, check out our “Beginner’s Guide to Poetry” for Grades 9–12.

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Title of poem:

Poet:

Word Choice

Which words in this poem carry strong connotations? What are they?

Are any words repeated? Why might that be?

What connections can I draw between these words?

Speaker

Who is the speaker of this poem?

What do I know about the speaker from this poem?

From which perspective is the poem written? (first person, second person, etc.)

Punctuation

What punctuation is in the poem? What punctuation did I expect in the poem?

How does the punctuation affect the meaning of the poem's words?

How does the punctuation affect the pace of the poem?

Sound

What sounds do I hear? Are there rhyming words? Is there alliteration?

How do the sounds in the poem relate to the words of the poem?

Meter

How many syllables are in each line of the poem? Is there a pattern here?

Is there a pattern of stress in the syllables of the poem?

If there are patterns in the stress and numbers of syllables, are they always consistent? What do these choices draw my attention toward?

Shape

Do I see an image in the shape of the poem's words? If so, how does this image relate to the subject matter of the poem?

Lination

Which words are emphasized by the poem's line breaks? What meaning can I take from them?

Is there a rhythm created by the poem's line breaks?

Where is each line indented on the page? What do these choices draw my attention toward?

Stanzas

How many lines are in each stanza? Is there a pattern of stanza length?

Does each stanza end at the end of a sentence or thought? Or does the stanza break up the sentence? What do these choices draw my attention toward?