POETRY 101
By the Team at Poem Analysis

A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding Poetry
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Summary

Encountering a poem can be daunting, and it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the wave of terms, styles, and names that come with engaging with poetry. Sometimes it can feel difficult to know where to start, which direction to head in, and even when to stop.

We believe that we have created a one-stop roadmap for exploring any poem, new or old, long or short. Our five-step process, which will be outlined in the pages that follow, will help you make sense of whatever poem you are trying to get to grips with. You can apply our methodology to any poem you choose, and we guarantee that you’ll be able to produce insightful observations that you may not have been capable of before. You can check in with some of the numerous examples of our methodology in action below, either while you’re reading or once you’ve finished.

Our methodology is the result of thousands of hours spent reading and studying poems and we are extremely proud of it. Think of it as having a poetry expert on speed dial, ready and waiting to guide you through the labyrinth that is poetry.

What is F.L.A.M.E.?

F.L.A.M.E. stands for “Form, Language, Analysis, Meanings & Effect.” It is an acronym used as a mnemonic device to guide the analysis and interpretation of poetry. Each letter represents a key aspect or element to consider when analyzing a poem. Remember that you can download specific PDFs that go into more detail on all of the subject-specific terms you will encounter below as part of your Poetry+ experience.
Form:
Refers to the organization and structure of the poem. This includes the poem's rhyme scheme, meter, line length, stanza structure, and overall shape.

Language:
Involves examining the poet's choice of words, diction, and figurative language devices such as similes, metaphors, personification, and symbols. Analyzing the language helps reveal the poet's style, tone, and the specific effects they intend to achieve.

Analysis:
Requires the reader to unpick the significance of the formal and linguistic elements they have so far identified in the poem and begin to consider how they link to the poem's big ideas and message.

Meanings:
Pertains to the poem's wider message, themes and viewpoints. It involves exploring what the poet is trying to convey both generally and with regard to the poem's hidden meanings.

Effects:
Refers to the overall impact or emotional response that the poem elicits from the reader. It involves considering the techniques used by the poet to create a particular mood, atmosphere, or emotional experience.

Why F.L.A.M.E.?
We feel the acronym ‘F.L.A.M.E.’ evokes the spark of inspiration at the heart of every great poem. Likewise, a F.L.A.M.E. is never static but constantly shifts in the wind as it consumes whatever fuel it is using. This chimes with the process of analyzing a poem because a poem’s meaning is never fixed and appears different to readers from different eras, as well as those who focus on different aspects of the poem.
Step One: Identify Formal Elements

When analyzing the form of a poem, you examine the organization and structure of the poem as a whole. Here are some key aspects to consider:

**Rhyme Scheme**

Refers to the pattern of rhyming words in a poem. It involves assigning letters to each line to indicate which lines rhyme. Common rhyme schemes include:

- AABB
- ABAB
- ABBA
- And many others.

Analyzing the rhyme scheme can provide insights into the poem’s musicality and help identify patterns or shifts in the poem. Need some more guidance on the effect of a certain rhyme scheme? Check out the available PDFs for each type of rhyme scheme on Poetry+ or the Poem Analysis Literary Glossary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>W.H. Auden’s ‘Funeral Blues’ uses an AABB rhyme scheme.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>This creates a monotonous beat, like funeral drums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>The poem explores themes of grief, loss, and death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The reader feels immersed in the mournful atmosphere of the funeral.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**W.H. Auden and ‘Funeral Blues’**

The AABB rhyme scheme in W.H. Auden’s ‘Funeral Blues’ mirrors the monotonous beat of funeral drums to evoke an atmosphere of loss and grief.
**Meter**

Refers to the rhythmic pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Different meters, such as iambic pentameter or trochaic tetrameter, create distinct rhythms and contribute to the overall flow and musicality of the poem. Analyzing the meter can help uncover the poem's intended pace, emphasis, and effects on the reader.

F  William Shakespeare uses iambic pentameter in ‘Sonnet 18’.
L  
A  This evokes the rhythm of a heartbeat.
M  The poem explores themes of love and desire.
E  The reader feels the weight of the narrator’s love.

**William Shakespeare and ‘Sonnet 18’**

The use of iambic pentameter in Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnet 18’ evokes the rhythm of a heartbeat in order to reinforce the poem’s declaration of love.
**Line Length**

Refers to the number of syllables or words in a line of poetry. Poems can have lines of varying lengths, from short and concise to long and expansive.

The line length can impact the poem’s pacing, emphasis, and overall structure. Analyzing line length can reveal patterns or deviations contributing to the poem’s meaning or aesthetic qualities.

- **F** John Agard uses short lines in some stanzas of his poem, ‘Checking Out Me History’.
- **L**
- **A** The contrasting line lengths reflect the gaps in knowledge about certain historical contexts.
- **M** The poem’s message relates to the absence of non-European history in the curriculum.
- **E** The reader becomes aware of the vast gaps in our knowledge.

**John Agard and ‘Checking Out Me History’**

John Agard’s use of short lines in certain stanzas in his poem ‘Checking Out Me History’ emphasizes the gaps in the curriculum when it comes to the teaching of non-European history.
**Stanza Structure**

Refers to grouping lines into stanzas, which are analogous to paragraphs in prose. Stanzas can consist of a specific number of lines, such as couplets (two lines), tercets (three lines), quatrains (four lines), or have varying lengths.

Examining the stanza structure helps identify the poem's internal organization and the relationship between ideas or sections.

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<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>Charles Causley’s ‘Eden Rock’ has a final line isolated from its quatrains.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>The isolated line implies the possibility of symbolic isolation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td>The poem is concerned with memory and childhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>The reader can infer that the narrator feels cut off from their own childhood.</td>
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</table>

**Charles Causley and ‘Eden Rock’**

Charles Causley’s ‘Eden Rock’ features an isolated line at the end of the poem, which contrasts with the prior use of four-line stanzas, known as quatrains. This isolated line reflects the narrator’s feelings of isolation from his own childhood.
**Overall Shape**

Refers to the visual appearance or arrangement of the poem on the page. Some poems are structured to form specific shapes or patterns, known as concrete or visual poetry. The shape can enhance the poem's meaning or provide an additional layer of interpretation.

| F | *The Mouse’s Tale* by Lewis Carroll resembles the shape of a mouse’s tail. |
| L |
| A | The distinctive appearance is fresh and exciting. |
| M | The poem describes the movements of a living mouse. |
| E | The reader gets a sense of the poem as something alive and vital. |

**Lewis Carroll and ‘The Mouse’s Tale’**

Lewis Carroll’s *The Mouse’s Tale* is structured so that the poem resembles the tail of a mouse on the page in order to make the poem's content more energetic and lifelike.
**Punctuation**

Refers to the poet’s use and placement of full stops, commas, semi-colons, etc. The main punctuation devices are outlined below:

➤ **Caesura**: The use of punctuation in the middle of a line. This disrupts the flow and momentum of the poem, creating a fractured, discordant effect.

➤ **Enjambment**: The absence of punctuation at the end of a line, causing the reader to continue reading without pause or hesitation. This can create a sense of flow and momentum within a poem.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>Carol Ann Duffy uses enjambment in her poem, ‘Standing Female Nude’.</th>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>This creates a degree of flow and momentum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>The poem is a meandering monologue that touches on many subjects and issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The increased pace of the poem mirrors the narrator’s flowing thoughts.</td>
</tr>
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**Carol Ann Duffy and Standing ‘Female Nude’**

Carol Ann Duffy uses enjambment in her poem, ‘Standing Female Nude’, in order to create a sense of flow and pace that mirrors the narrator’s free-flowing thoughts.
**Formal Identification**

The consequence of identifying the aforementioned structural features is that the reader can identify whether or not the poem subscribes to a specific form, such as a sonnet or a haiku. This process is crucial as certain forms are associated with particular locations, time periods, or subjects, which can help the reader understand the poet’s intentions.

- **F** Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s ‘*Hiram Powers’ Greek Slave*’ is a Petrarchan sonnet.
- **L** This means it conforms to strict rules, which evokes a sense of rigidity.
- **A** The poem is about slavery and the prospect of abolition.
- **M** The poem’s structural rigidity reflects the incarceration of the slave in the poem.

**Elizabeth Barrett Browning and ‘Hiram Powers’ Greek Slave’**

‘*Hiram Powers’ Greek Slave*’ by Elizabeth Barrett Browning is a Petrarchan sonnet, meaning it must be confined to strict structural rules. This sense of rigidity could mirror the incarceration of the poem’s central subject.
Step Two: Identify Aspects of Language

Language is a fundamental element in poetry, and analyzing the poet’s choice of words and figurative language devices provides insights into their style, tone, and the effects they aim to create. Here’s a closer look at the different aspects of language in poetry:

Word Choice and Diction

The poet’s selection of words, known as word choice or diction, significantly impacts the poem’s meaning, tone, and overall effect. Examining word choice helps identify the poet’s specific intentions, whether they convey emotions, create vivid descriptions, or evoke a particular atmosphere.

Example: Using precise and specific words like “ebullient” instead of “happy” or “forlorn” instead of “sad” can evoke a more nuanced emotional response.

Michael Longley uses the term ‘uniform’ instead of armor in his poem, ‘Ceasefire’.

This term is anachronistic and drags the poem’s classical setting to a modern context.

The poem is concerned with the futility of war and the difficulty in reconciling afterward.

The word’s anachronism allows for the poem to be read in the context of The Troubles.

Michael Longley and ‘Ceasefire’

Michael Longley’s use of the anachronistic word ‘uniform’ instead of ‘armour’ in his poem, ‘Ceasefire’, completely alters the poem’s meaning as it suddenly becomes applicable to modern contexts, such as The Troubles in the poet’s native Northern Ireland.
**Figurative Language Devices**

Poets often employ figurative language to convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation of words. Common devices include:

▶ **Simile**: A comparison between two things using “like” or “as.” It highlights similarities and enhances the reader’s understanding or visualization. Example: “Her laughter was like music, filling the room with joy.”

▶ **Metaphor**: A direct comparison between two dissimilar things, suggesting a resemblance or identity. It creates imaginative associations and adds depth to the poem. Example: “The moon was a glowing pearl in the night sky.”

▶ **Personification**: Assigning human qualities or actions to non-human entities. It animates the poem, making the objects or concepts relatable or alive. Example: “The wind whispered secrets through the trees.”

▶ **Symbolism**: Using symbols to represent abstract ideas, emotions, or concepts. Symbols can be objects, images, colors, or actions, carrying deeper meanings beyond their literal significance. Example: A red rose as a symbol of love or a dove as a symbol of peace.

▶ **Hyperbole**: Exaggerating something to accentuate a particular quality, such as size, speed or volume. Example: “I am so hungry I could eat a horse.”

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Emily Dickinson uses an extended metaphor in her poem, *Fame is a bee*.

This metaphor implies a degree of restlessness and an unwillingness to linger.

The poem is preoccupied with the true reality of fame.

The reader is informed that, like a bee, fame will soon move on to the next person.

---

**Emily Dickinson and *Fame is a bee***

Emily Dickinson’s titular metaphor in *Fame is a bee* is used to demonstrate the fact that fame is fickle and never lingers long in a person’s life.
Tone and Mood

The poet’s choice of words and language influences the overall tone and mood of the poem. Tone refers to the poet’s attitude or emotional disposition towards the subject matter, while mood refers to the atmosphere or emotional response created in the reader.

Example: Using harsh, aggressive language can create a tone of anger, or employing soft, gentle words can establish a soothing mood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>William Wordsworth gradually shifts to more cacophonous words in ‘The Prelude’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>This creates a more aggressive atmosphere and tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>The poem portrays a gradual loss of childish innocence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The reader realizes that the shift in tone reflects a loss of youthful innocence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

William Wordworth and ‘The Prelude’

William Wordsworth’s shift from gentle words to more aggressive, cacophonous sounds in ‘The Prelude’ reflect the narrator’s emotional journey and loss of innocence.
Sound Devices

Sound devices are linguistic techniques used to create specific auditory effects in poetry. These devices include sibilance, alliteration, consonance, and assonance. Example: Employing repeated sounds like “s” or “sh” in a line can create a soft, whispering effect, while using heavy consonants like “b” or “k” can create a harsh, abrupt tone.

Imtiaz Dharker uses plosive alliteration in her poem, ‘Living Space’.

This creates a repetitive thudding sound, similar to a series of hammer blows.

The poem depicts a house in a slum in dire need of repair.

The thudding sounds are used to emphasize the fact the house is constantly being fixed.

Imtiaz Dharker and ‘Living Space’

Imtiaz Dharker’s use of plosive alliteration in her poem, ‘Living Space’, evokes the repetitive sound of hammer blows, emphasizing the fact that the building the poem describes is in constant need of repair.
Step Three: **Analysis**

This stage is critical, as it allows the reader to begin interpreting the structural and linguistic features that they have so far identified. Different words, rhyme schemes, poetic devices, and punctuation devices can have vastly different consequences depending on the way they have been used.

**Formal Analysis**

Different formal and structural features can create different potential avenues for interpretation. For instance, a strict rhyme scheme might create a sense of rigidity. Similarly, the use of free verse might imbue a poem with an unpredictable quality.

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>F</strong></th>
<th>Langston Hughes’ ‘The Negro Speaks of Rivers’ is written in free verse.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>This imbues the poem with unpredictability and flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td>The poem uses a meandering river as a symbol for the story of human suffering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>The poetic flow mirrors the undulating and unpredictable story of human suffering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Langston Hughes and ‘The Negro Speaks of Rivers’**

Langston Hughes’ use of free verse in ‘The Negro Speaks of Rivers’ imbues the poem with a degree of unpredictability and flow. This poetic flow could have been intended to embody the flow of the titular river, which rarely flows entirely straight but rather meanders through the landscape, just as human suffering has shifted and changed throughout history.
Punctuation Analysis

Different punctuation devices, such as caesura or enjambment, can vastly affect the ways in which a poem should be analyzed. For example, a poem with lots of enjambment should be read faster than a poem without it, thus imbuing the poem with speed and urgency.

Robert Browning uses caesura at a crucial point in his poem, ‘My Last Duchess’. This disrupts the flow and pace of the narrator’s speech. The poem explores themes of male power and female vulnerability. The disruption allows the reader to speculate that the narrator may be feeling guilty.

Robert Browning and ‘My Last Duchess’

Robert Browning’s use of caesura in ‘My Last Duchess’ serves to disrupt the flow of the narrator’s speech at the point when he confesses to the murder of his wife. This disruption could be used to showcase his guilt, as he is stuttering, or the fact his hatred of her remains strong and causes him to lose his composure.
Language Analysis

Poetic devices such as similes, metaphors, and personification can have vastly different consequences for a poem. For instance, if a poet uses a metaphor when claiming that the sound of an engine to be a “hurricane of noise,” then they may be attempting to express the volume and intensity of the sound. Don’t forget that there are PDFs that explain each linguistic technique available as part of your Poetry+ subscription.

F

L Sylvia Plath uses personification in her poem, ‘The Mirror’.

A This disrupts the flow and pace of the narrator’s speech.

M The poem explores themes of male power and female vulnerability.

E The disruption allows the reader to speculate that the narrator may be feeling guilty.

Sylvia Plath and ‘The Mirror’

Robert Browning’s use of caesura in ‘My Last Duchess’ serves to disrupt the flow of the narrator’s speech at the point when he confesses to the murder of his wife. This disruption could be used to showcase his guilt, as he is stuttering, or the fact his hatred of her remains strong and causes him to lose his composure.
Step Four: Explore Meanings

When analyzing the meaning of a poem, you delve into the poem’s overall message, theme, or central idea. Here are some key aspects to consider:

Message or Central Idea

This refers to the main point or overarching message that the poet intends to communicate. It involves understanding the poem’s purpose and what the poet wants to convey to the reader. The message could be explicit or implicit and may require careful interpretation.

Choman Hardi uses a rhyming couplet at the end of her poem, ‘My Mother’s Trees’.

This evokes a sense of clarity and finality.

The poem’s central message is that laying down roots is necessary to feel part of a place.

The finality evoked by the couplet reflects the fact the narrator’s mother finally feels settled.

Choman Hardi and ‘My Mother’s Trees’

Choman Hardi’s poem, ‘My Mother’s Trees’, ends with a rhyming couplet after featuring no rhymes up to that point. This creates a sense of finality and clarity, which mirrors the fact that the narrator’s mother has found the sense of belonging she has been searching for.

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Choman Hardi and ‘My Mother’s Trees’

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**Theme**

Themes are recurring ideas, subjects, or motifs that underlie the poem. They represent the broader concepts or issues explored within the poem. Themes can encompass topics such as love, nature, mortality, identity, or social justice. Identifying and contemplating the theme helps reveal the deeper layers of meaning in the poem.

| F | 
| L | W.B. Yeats uses an oxymoron in his poem, ‘Easter 1916’. |
| A | This functions as a microcosm of conflict and strife. |
| M | The poem’s theme is related to conflict, both literal and figurative. |
| E | The conflict evoked by the oxymoron mirrors the conflict. |

**W.B. Yeats and ‘Easter 1916’**

W.B. Yeats uses an oxymoron, “terrible beauty,” in his iconic poem, ‘Easter 1916’. This embodies both the conflict between the Irish revolutionaries and the English forces but also the conflicted way in which the uprising was regarded by the people of Ireland.
Tone

Tone refers to the poet’s attitude or emotional disposition towards the subject. It involves considering the poet’s choice of words, imagery, and other literary devices to convey a particular tone. The tone can be joyful, melancholic, critical, sarcastic, or emotional.

Determining the tone helps us understand the poet’s perspective and the emotional atmosphere created within the poem.

William Ernest Henley uses an ABAB rhyme scheme in his poem, ‘Invictus’.

This creates an unwavering and relentless rhythm.

The poem’s tone is steadfast and defiant.

The relentless rhyme scheme emboldens the poetic voice, creating a defiant tone.

William Ernest Henley and ‘Invictus’

William Ernest Henley’s use of an ABAB rhyme scheme in Invictus creates an unwavering rhythm. This sense of permanence helps create a defiant tone, reflecting the poem’s belief that anything can be overcome with perseverance and belief.
Imagery and Symbols

Imagery refers to sensory details and descriptive language that appeals to the reader’s senses. Symbols are objects, actions, or ideas that represent something beyond their literal meaning. Considering the imagery and symbols used in the poem helps unravel the poet’s intended meanings and associations.

Beatrice Garland and ‘Kamikaze’

Beatrice Garland’s use of a simile when likening schools of fish to a flag conjures the symbol of national identity, which is associated with flags. This symbol is important as it represents the enormous pressure on the pilot in the poem, who is expected to kill himself in service of his country, Japan.
Step Five: Consider Effects

The effect is a crucial aspect of understanding poetry as it focuses on the overall impact or emotional response that the poem has on the reader. It involves considering the techniques employed by the poet alongside the poem’s wider meanings in order to understand how the two work in tandem.

Emotional Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Patrick Kavanagh uses a refrain in his poem, ‘Memory of my Father’.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>This repeated line mirrors the repeated intrusions of the narrator’s memories into his life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>The poem’s primary themes are grief and memory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The refrains capture the inescapability of grief, which many readers will understand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patrick Kavanagh and ‘Memory of my Father’

Patrick Kavanagh’s use of the refrain in ‘Memory of my Father’ serves to emphasize the repeated and intrusive nature of his memories of his deceased father. This strikes a chord with the reader as it captures the essence of grief, which is as near to a universal emotion as there is.

The poet’s use of language, imagery, tone, and subject matter can evoke a range of emotions in the reader. The effect examines how the poem makes the reader feel—whether it evokes joy, sadness, anger, awe, or any other emotional response.
**Musicality and Rhythm**

The poet’s use of sound devices, such as rhyme, rhythm, and repetition, can impact the reader’s emotional experience. A poem with a rhythmic and musical quality may evoke a sense of harmony, while a disjointed or jarring rhythm may create a sense of tension or unease.

Dick Davis uses monorhymes in his poem, ‘A Monorhyme for the Shower’.

The monorhymes create a dull, monotonous rhythm.

The poem describes the daily act of washing oneself.

The establishment of a monotonous rhythm mirrors the mundane nature of the task at hand.

Dick Davis and ‘A Monorhyme for the Shower’

Dick Davis’ use of monorhymes in his poem, ‘A Monorhyme for the Shower’, creates a sense of monotony and dullness. This could, in turn, be used to reflect the monotonous nature of the task being described: showering.
Symbolic Resonance

Symbols and metaphors used in the poem can have a deep emotional impact by tapping into universal or culturally significant associations. They can resonate with the reader’s experiences, beliefs, or emotions, amplifying the poem’s effect.

Maya Angelou uses a metaphor in her poem, ‘Caged Bird’.

This metaphor creates a powerful symbol of incarceration.

The poem is preoccupied with the contrasting experiences of black and white Americans.

Angelou’s metaphor symbolizes the plight of black Americans, who are oppressed by racism.

Maya Angelou and ‘Caged Bird’

Maya Angelou uses an extended metaphor in her poem, ‘Caged Bird’, in order to create a symbol of incarceration and oppression. This symbol is intended to reflect the experience of African Americans who were oppressed by racist policies and attitudes.
**Intended Impact**

It is essential to consider the poet’s intentions and the effect they aimed to achieve. Understanding the poet's purpose or desired impact can provide insights into the overall emotional experience the poem is meant to evoke.

| F | Eavan Boland uses sibilance throughout her poem, ‘Amethyst Bead’s’. |
| L | This creates a sinister atmosphere due to the sound's negative connotations. |
| A | The poem describes Persephone’s feelings after her kidnap. |
| M | The sibilance evokes the evil that motivated the decision to abduct Persephone. |

**Eavan Boland and ‘Amethyst Bead’s’**

Eavan Boland’s use of sibilance imbues her poem, ‘Amethyst Bead’s’, with a sinister atmosphere due to the sound connotations of deceit and villainy. This technique was used to emphasize the villainy that lay behind the decision to abduct the young Persephone and take her from her home and loved ones.
Conclusion

There you have it: a one-stop methodology that you can apply to any poem, new or old, long or short. You will find a sheet below, which you can use again and again for every new poem you encounter. Remember to follow each step in turn, as each one will allow you to understand the next better.

It’s also important to remember that the more poems you analyze using the F.L.A.M.E. method, the more natural it will feel. When our analysts go about reading a new poem, the steps are so deeply ingrained that they barely realize they’re using a methodology at all! So don’t worry if it takes a little getting used to, as we promise you’ll get there eventually.

Finally, you can read our filled-in worksheet below for the poem, London, by William Blake if you need any additional help applying the steps. We wish you the best of luck in your poetic endeavors!
Consider the organization and structure of the poem, including rhyme scheme, meter, line length, stanza structure, punctuation, and overall shape.

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<th>Form:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rhyme Scheme</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Line Length</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Punctuation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Shape</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examine the poet's choice of words, diction, and figurative language devices to reveal their style, tone, and intended effects.

The poet uses a metaphor when describing the “mind-forg’d manacles” of the inhabitants of the city. He also uses an oxymoron at the end of the poem when describing the “marriage hearse”.

Blake uses anaphora in the second stanza. He also uses sibilance in the third stanza when describing the “hapless Soldiers sigh”.

Explore the consequences of the various techniques in the poem that you have identified up to this point.

The ABAB rhyme scheme creates a dull, monotonous effect, mirroring the pattern of footsteps.

The enjambment increases the pace of the poem as it draws towards its conclusion.

The metaphor suggests the minds of the people in the poem are somehow imprisoned.

The oxymoron evokes a sense of conflict by contrasting events with connotations of life and celebration against an event associated with sorrow and death.

The sibilance evokes a sinister atmosphere due to its association with snakes and other villain figures from classical and biblical literature.
**Meanings:**
Focus on the poem’s overall message, theme, or central idea to understand what the poet is conveying and the deeper implications within the poem.

The poem is concerned with the divided nature of the city of London, with the rich able to dominate the city and the poor left to suffer within its confines.

The poem explores themes such as conflict, poverty, and urban life. Moreover, Blake’s disdain for the Church of England is palpable as he believed that the institution was failing to express proper Christian values.

**Effects:**
Consider the overall impact or emotional response the poem elicits from the reader, including mood, atmosphere, shifts, and techniques.

The rhyme scheme mirrors the footsteps of the narrator to showcase how far through the city he has traveled, proving that the poverty he witnessed was everywhere. Likewise, the monotonous beat suggests that the lives of the poor are unlikely to improve.

The increased pace caused by the enjambment creates a sense of flow and momentum as the reader moves through the poem, possibly reflecting a growing sense of outrage at the city’s injustices.

The metaphor implies that the people are somehow imprisoned, though their chains cannot be seen. This implies that they have been so beaten down that they cannot even harbor thoughts of a better life, let alone achieve it.

The oxymoron established a contrast between weddings and funerals. The contrary connotations of these events represent the respective life chances of a rich and poor person in the city. Rich people’s lives will be full of celebration and joy, whereas poor people’s will be defined by pain and loss. Finally, both weddings and funerals took place in churches, just as these juxtaposed lives took place in the same city, making this oxymoron a microcosm of the entire poem.

Blake’s use of sibilance in the third stanza evokes a sinister atmosphere to create a sense of betrayal and abuse. This could suggest that he believed the people of London were being misled or betrayed by the people who were supposed to protect them.

**Additional notes:**

The poem was written during the industrial revolution, when the population of London grew rapidly with an influx of poor workers.

Blake was considered politically radical and was highly critical of the monarchy and the Church of England.
Poem Title _____________________________  Poet Name _____________________________

**Form:**
Consider the organization and structure of the poem, including rhyme scheme, meter, line length, stanza structure, punctuation, and overall shape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhyme Scheme</th>
<th>Meter</th>
<th>Line Length</th>
<th>Stanza Structure</th>
<th>Punctuation</th>
<th>Overall Shape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Language:**
Examine the poet’s choice of words, diction, and figurative language devices to reveal their style, tone, and intended effects.

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**Analysis:**
Explore the consequences of the various techniques in the poem that you have identified up to this point.

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Meanings:
Focus on the poem’s overall message, theme, or central idea to understand what the poet is conveying and the deeper implications within the poem.

Effects:
Consider the overall impact or emotional response the poem elicits from the reader, including mood, atmosphere, shifts, and techniques.

Additional notes: