



Year 11 Revision Guide

Language	
Poetic Technique	Definition
Adjective	Describing words
Alliteration	Repetition of consonant sounds at the start of two or more words
Assonance	Repetition of vowel sounds within two or more words
Imagery	Visual pictures in the reader's mind
Juxtaposition	The use of contrasting images for effect
Metaphor	Saying something is something else
Onomatopoeia	The use of words which imitate a sound
Oxymoron	Two words of opposite meaning placed next to each other
Personification	Giving human qualities to inanimate objects
Sibilance	Repetition of the letter 's'
Simile	Comparison between two things using 'like' or 'as'
Verbs	'Doing' words
Structure	
Poetic Technique	Definition
Ballad	A poem that tells a story
Caesura	The use of punctuation within a line of poetry
Enjambment	When a sentence in a poem runs onto the next line
Form	The type of poem it is
Free verse	A poem with no rhyme scheme
Dramatic Monologue	A type of poem written as a speech from an individual or character
Repetition	The duplication of words or phrases throughout a poem
Rhyme Scheme	The structure of rhymes within a poem
Rhythm	The beat, pace or flow of a poem
Speaker/poetic voice	The person speaking in the poem – may be different from the poet
Stanza	A verse or paragraph of a poem
Tone	The feeling of the poem

Answering an Unseen Poetry Question

What do I do?

1. Read the question
2. Read the poem, checking the glossary for any words you are unsure of
3. Read the question again, highlighting any keywords.
4. Read the poem again, annotating any techniques and their effects
5. Plan your answer by mind mapping your ideas.
6. Write your answer
7. Check your answer

Useful Words and Phrases

- Here, the poet suggests...
- This conveys...
- This connotes...
- This word has connotations of...
- The use of... emphasises the idea that....
- The poet is implying that...
- From this we can infer that...

Writing Paragraphs

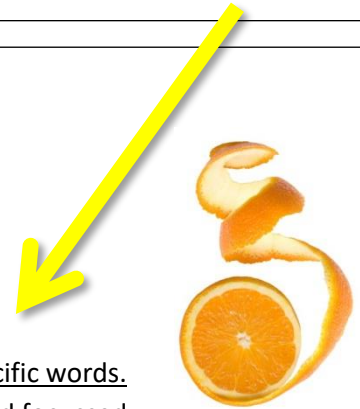
Use PEEL

Point: Briefly answer the question; you could also refer to poetic techniques here.

Evidence: Provide a quotation or reference to the poem to support your idea.

Explanation: Explore the effect of the poet's methods in detail, commenting on specific words.

Link: Make sure you link your ideas back to your point so that your answer is clear and focussed.



Example:

At the start of the poem, the poet uses a list to show the child's many other varied skills: "make sculptures...fabulous machines...invent games". The specific use of dynamic verbs and positive adjectives in the list show that at the start of the poem, the poet believes in the child's different abilities. By using the words "sculptures" and "invent", which are words that conjure up complex adult and artistic endeavours, the poet clearly sees the child as incredibly capable. In addition, the use of "fabulous" helps to show that what he puts together is worthy of high praise. As mentioned, at the outset of the poem, the poet clearly values the child. The poet does this in order to strongly show in the rest of the poem that the process of reading is only one of many difficult experiences that children have to learn and they may struggle in spite of their other valuable skills.

Structuring Your Answer

Introduction:

Explain what the poem is **about** and who is **speaking** in the poem, making sure you are briefly **answering the question** and introducing the **methods** that the poet is using.

Main body:

You should then aim to write three to five **PEEL** paragraphs, making sure that you comment the **effect of language** and **structural** features.

Conclusion:

Summarise the **main points** you have made, ending with a statement about what you think the **poet** is trying to say.

Reading the Question and Annotating the Poem

Question: How does the **speaker feel** about the **child learning to read** and **how does the poet present** these ideas?

Starts with pronoun 'He' – boy is subject of the poem

Tone changes here – shows he struggles to read

'toys' – implies it's a game, doesn't take it seriously

Compared to an animal – shows he just wants to be free

Compares reading to being reigned like a horse – it isn't good for him

Slow Reader

He can make sculptures and fabulous machines, invent games, tell jokes, give solemn, adult advice – but he is slow to read. When I take him on my knee with his *Ladybird* book he gazes into the air, sighing and shaking his head like an old man who knows the mountains are impassable.

He toys with words, letting them go cold as gristly meat, until I relent and let him wriggle free: a fish returning to its element, or a white-eyed colt – shying from the bit* – who sees that if he takes it in his mouth he'll never run quite free again.

VICKI FEAVER

List of positive skills – boy is multi-talented

Sibilance emphasises his lack of interest in reading

Broken into two stanzas possibly showing how incomplete and fractured his learning is

'cold' suggests emotionless engagement in reading

Simile implies reading is tough and not nutritious like gristle

* 'bit': the metal mouthpiece of a bridle, used to control a horse

Planning Your Answer

Para 1:

Stanza 1 begins positive and tone changes.

Stanza 2 – cold, dark imagery

Para 2:

Use of real life situations – 'toy'

Analyse language – 'cold'

Boy's attitude – gives up

Intro:

Multi-talented boy struggling to read – frustration of speaker

Child learning to read

Conclusion:

Some people struggle with reading

Problems also faced by teachers, parents etc.

Para 3:

Speaker's attitude to boy's learning – 'wriggle free'

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Clear introduction which summarises the poem and begins to answer the question.

Thoughtful comment on structure and how the tone changes

Ideas developed through close analysis of imagery.

Close analysis of the effect of specific words.

More analysis of the effect of specific words, adding to the level of detail and consideration of the poet's methods.

Consistent reference to the question and use of quotations to support ideas

Comment on the effect of the poet's methods on the reader is clear.

Conclusion summarise main ideas, commenting on the writer's purpose

Writing Your Answer

The poem 'Slow Reader' by Vicki Feaver is about a boy who is multi-talented at other things, but struggles to read. The poem explains the struggle and problems that the boy has and how he reacts to them. It explains the frustration at how he gives up and accepts that he has lost the battle, like a 'fish returning to its elements'.

The first stanza is explaining the wonderful things the boy can do, how he can 'make sculptures' and 'tell jokes'. The start of the stanza is full of positive things but as the stanza gets nearer to the end, the tone gets dropped into a negative atmosphere. It says that the barrier between the boy and being able to read is 'impassable' which ends the reader's hopes for the boy, wishing him to succeed in his quest. The second stanza carries on in the same vein with cold and dark imagery such as 'gristly meat' which makes the reader empathise with the boy because it plays with their senses.

Feaver uses real life situations to emphasise how the boy struggles with reading. She says 'He toys with the words/ letting them go cold'. This suggests that maybe the boy is not trying to learn as hard or as seriously as we first thought. The word 'toy' suggests it is just a game to him and the boy wants it to carry on in the same fashion. The word 'cold' could be interpreted as there is no joy for the boy when he is reading. Cold is the opposite of warm and warmth is usually associated with comfort and satisfaction so by using the word 'cold' it implies that the boy not feel these emotions when reading the words; they don't mean much to him. The last part of the quotation also suggests the boy has little or no desire to learn because he 'lets' it go cold. There is no fight in the boy to try and succeed.

The speaker also implies that they are trying to push the boy as hard as they can: 'until I relent/and let him wriggle free'. This shows the determination in the speaker to help the boy succeed in his mission to read, but sometimes it comes to no avail. The speaker tries and tries to push the boy to the limits, but sometimes he has let the boy 'wriggle free'. The reader can empathise with the speaker because they feel his dismay and frustration at the boy's lack of will and desire, or it could be interpreted that it is not the boy's fault and he is trying but again, the barrier is 'impassable'.

In conclusion, Feaver is trying to get across the meaning that some people do struggle with reading. Maybe she does this due to personal experiences or she has seen this happen to someone else. She tries to make the reader understand the problems that, not only the child face, but also the person that is trying to teach, whether it be a teacher, parent or another family member.