Name & Surname: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Reading Poems Closely

Spot conventions and explain their effects

About 45 minutes Level ★★★☆☆

What Poets Choose on Purpose

Poets choose **conventions** to shape meaning and feeling. A convention is a repeated tool or pattern that readers learn to recognise. To analyse a poem, name the convention and explain its **effect** on the reader.

- Image-making language: simile compares using like or as, metaphor says one thing is another, personification gives human feelings to objects, imagery builds a picture in the mind
- Sound effects: alliteration repeats opening sounds, sibilance repeats soft s and sh sounds, assonance repeats vowel sounds, rhyme links line endings, rhythm is the beat of the line
- Shape and structure: stanza means a verse block, enjambment is when a sentence runs on without a pause at the end of a line, free verse has no regular rhyme or rhythm
- Structure ideas: the poet establishes an idea at the start, builds on it in the middle, and ends with a final message or feeling



Task A

Example done for you

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Sort each example by its main job: does it mostly create an image or sound and shape?

● **Creates an image**: colour it blue or draw ●

▲ **Creates sound or shape**: colour it orange or draw ▲

as slow as a cloud ●	a host of golden daffodils	windows stare like blind eyes	ivy fingers clutch the cracked wall
big, bold, blue sea	soft, sad, sighing draughts	light / night at line ends	sentence runs on past line end

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Key Poetry Words

Find the terms you will need for your analysis.

Key words

simile: a comparison using like or as

personification: giving human feelings to an object

stanza: a block of lines in a poem

metaphor: saying one thing is another thing

alliteration: repeating the same opening sound

enjambment: a sentence running on past a line end

Task B

/9

Find these 9 poetry terms hidden in the grid.

S	H	W	S	B	E	M	O	O	D	N	N	C	Y
M	R	R	U	U	E	A	G	E	T	M	G	O	T
E	U	K	S	I	B	I	L	A	N	C	E	A	D
T	R	F	A	I	G	N	I	M	A	G	E	R	Y
A	B	A	J	R	S	Y	A	S	I	M	I	L	E
P	D	H	C	G	B	W	G	H	U	G	J	R	I
H	K	D	C	W	D	S	T	M	J	C	C	I	E
O	H	A	L	L	I	T	E	R	A	T	I	O	N
R	M	I	G	S	F	A	T	P	S	J	O	R	T
C	P	R	E	N	J	A	M	B	M	E	N	T	K
E	K	C	S	Y	G	O	C	F	J	G	A	L	Y
S	L	R	B	F	G	H	L	W	S	Y	W	O	O
C	U	S	T	A	N	Z	A	W	L	T	E	U	H
P	T	H	V	R	H	Y	M	E	J	L	O	P	L

- ☐ ALLITERATION
- ☐ ENJAMBMENT
- ☐ SIBILANCE
- ☐ METAPHOR
- ☐ IMAGERY
- ☐ SIMILE
- ☐ STANZA
- ☐ RHYME
- ☐ MOOD

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Poet's Choice Mystery

Sort the clues to explain why the form matches the meaning.

Task C /3

Read the clue cards about a poem on endless rain, then answer.

Why does the poet let one long sentence run across stanzas in a poem about endless rain?

Cut out the cards.

One sentence runs for six lines with no full stop.	The lines flow on without a pause at the line ends.	The poem is about rain that will not stop for days.
The poet establishes steady rain, builds on flooding and ends with tired streets.	This technique is called enjambment.	Readers say they feel they cannot rest when reading it.
The rhythm feels continuous, like falling water.	The poet wants the form to copy the meaning.	The poet likes the colour blue.

Your answer, using the clues:

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.....

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The Empty House

Read the poem, order the method, then analyse it.

The Empty House

Stanza 1
Old and alone on the grey street,
The house holds its breath behind shut doors,
Its tall windows stare like blind eyes,
Dust lies soft on the silent stairs,
No warm light answers when the cold wind calls,
And ivy fingers clutch the cracked wall,
The gate hangs loose and will not close,
While nettles guard the narrow path.

Stanza 2
I wandered past as slow as a cloud,
And heard the gate creak a thin hello,
The letter box gaped like a tired mouth,
Soft, sad, sighing draughts slipped through the hall,
The kitchen clock had lost its ticking voice,
Yet still it watched from its pale wooden face,
A cracked cup waited on the dusty shelf,
And kept its small, cold, empty smile.

Stanza 3
Inside, a crowd of dry leaves had gathered,
They fluttered and danced in the thin breeze,
Each corner kept a whisper of the family,
A small chair, a torn coat, a faded rug,
The rooms ran on without a pause or rest
into each other, door after empty door,
No voices rose to break the long hush,
Only my steps replied on the bare boards.

Stanza 4
Then evening pressed its dark hand on the roof,
The floorboards settled with a low, long moan,
I left the house to its unchanging night,
And felt how quiet can press heavy and deep,
For empty rooms can teach a passing heart
how lonely walls remember us at last,
how silence stays when people go.

Task D Example done for you /5

Put these analysis steps in the best order.

- [ ] Find the structure: stanzas and where ideas change
- [ ] Note sound effects like alliteration and sibilance
- [ ] Write up what the poet establishes, builds on and ends with
- [ ] Highlight image-making language like simile and metaphor
- [1] Read the whole poem once for subject and mood
- [ ] Link each convention to its effect on the reader

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Reading Poems Closely

Task E /4

Answer about The Empty House using evidence from the stanzas.

1. **In stanza 1, what is the subject of the poem? Quote two details.**
   The subject is… For example…

2. **What mood is created in stanzas 1 and 4? Give one quotation.**
   The mood is… The words… show this because…

3. **Find one simile in stanza 2. What picture does it create?**
   The simile is… It creates…

4. **In stanza 3 the lines "The rooms ran on without a pause or rest / into each other" use enjambment. What is its effect?**
   The enjambment makes the reader feel… because…

Spot the Difference

Check your understanding and explain tricky pairs.

Task F

Example done for you

/6

Complete the summary using the correct terms.

establishes | metaphor | ~~simile~~ | ends | structure | Personification | builds

A simile compares two things using like or as. A _____ says one thing is another thing. _____ gives human feelings to an object. The _____ of a poem is how it is put together. The poet _____ an idea at the start, _____ on it in the middle and _____ with a final feeling.

Task G

/6

Explain the difference clearly for each pair.

simile vs **metaphor**

The difference is…

alliteration vs **sibilance**

The difference is…

subject vs **mood**

The difference is…

How did I do?

Circle a face for each line.

I can recognise common poetic conventions

I can explain how a convention creates an effect

I can structure a short analysis of a poem

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Answer sheet: Reading Poems Closely

Task A

Creates an image (blue ●): as slow as a cloud, a host of golden daffodils, windows stare like blind eyes, ivy fingers clutch the cracked wall

Creates sound or shape (orange ▲): big, bold, blue sea, soft, sad, sighing draughts, light / night at line ends, sentence runs on past line end

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Task B



Words: ALLITERATION, ENJAMBMENT, SIBILANCE, METAPHOR, IMAGERY, SIMILE, STANZA, RHYME, MOOD (see the grid)

Task C

The poet uses enjambment so the sentence feels endless and restless, which copies the endless rain and makes the reader feel its tiring effect.

Red herring: The poet likes the colour blue.

Task D

1. Read the whole poem once for subject and mood 2. Find the structure: stanzas and where ideas change 3. Highlight image-making language like simile and metaphor 4. Note sound effects like alliteration and sibilance 5. Link each convention to its effect on the reader 6. Write up what the poet establishes, builds on and ends with

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Task E

1. The subject is an old, empty house left alone. Details include shut doors and windows that stare like blind eyes and dust on the silent stairs.

2. The mood is lonely and gloomy. Quotations such as Old and alone or unchanging night show emptiness and sadness with no people or light.

3. As slow as a cloud or like a tired mouth. As slow as a cloud creates a picture of slow, drifting movement past the house; like a tired mouth pictures the letter box hanging open and worn out.

4. The sentence running on past the line end makes the rooms feel endless and unchanging, with door after empty door, so the reader feels the emptiness goes on without rest.

Task F

A [SIMILE] compares two things using like or as. A [METAPHOR] says one thing is another thing. [PERSONIFICATION] gives human feelings to an object. The [STRUCTURE] of a poem is how it is put together. The poet [ESTABLISHES] an idea at the start, [BUILDS] on it in the middle and [ENDS] with a final feeling.

Task G

1. A simile uses like or as to compare, e.g. as slow as a cloud; a metaphor says one thing is another without like or as, e.g. a host of daffodils or a crowd of leaves.
2. Alliteration is any repeated opening sound, e.g. big, bold, blue; sibilance is repeated soft s, sh or z sounds, e.g. soft, sad, sighing, to create a hissing, whispering effect.
3. Subject is what the poem is about, e.g. an empty house; mood is the feeling it creates for the reader, e.g. lonely or gloomy.

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