

RESPONDING TO LITERATURE: POETRY

When tests or teachers instruct you to “respond to literature,” they want you to **give your reactions based on the words** that you read. This means that you need to **refer back to the words** that made you think/feel the way you did. **THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS AS LONG AS YOU CAN SHOW THE PART IN THE READING THAT CAUSED YOUR REACTION.** You may respond to the form of the poem (the way it looks on the page), specific words, or poetic devices such as imagery, metaphor, simile, alliteration, assonance, repetition of words, etc. Use this worksheet to help you think, reflect and respond.

	READ & THINK	JOT NOTES ABOUT YOUR THOUGHTS HERE
1	Write down the poem’s title. Ask yourself, “What <u>might</u> this poem be about?”	Title _____
2	Look at the poem on the page. What form does it have? (quatrain, haiku, free verse?) Is there unusual capitalization or punctuation? Is there a rhyming pattern?	
3	Read the poem (aloud if possible) without stopping to analyze it. What is your first impression?	
4	Write down words you don’t know. Look up at least 3 and write their definitions.	_____ _____ _____
5	Read the poem again. Who is the narrator? How do you know? What is the tone (feeling) of the poem?	
6	Look for poetic devices. What images strike you? Are there similes, metaphors, repetition of words? Write down the words that strike you and put quotation marks around them.	
7	Look for patterns. Watch for repeated, interesting or unfamiliar use of language. Ask, “What is the poet trying to show through this pattern?”	
8	Look for changes. Do you notice a sudden change in tone, focus, narrator, structure or pattern? Ask “What has changed and what does it mean?”	
9	Find the crucial moments. A pivotal moment might be as small as the word “but” or “yet”. Such words often act like hinges to swing the poem in a whole new direction.	
10	Check for understanding. Look at the title again....now what do you think the poem is about? How does it relate to the title?	