

4. Learn how to embed short quotations with ease. This saves time, words, and adds a sophistication to your analysis. Avoid phrases like “there is a metaphor in the second stanza.” Instead, put something like, “The metaphor ‘blah blah’ creates a strong sense of and implies that the narrator.... The specific use ofenables the reader to question ... and is effective in”
5. Know your literary devices. It is simply a case of learning the terminology that examiners expect to see. Having said that if you can’t remember a term, you can still comment on the aspect of writing. Instead, simply use the quote and comment on the effect created by it. Alternatively use the generic the ‘choice of language creates an effect of”
6. Be confident in your interpretation of what the whole poem is about, but don’t be afraid if you don’t understand every line. The lack of certainty can, in fact, be an opportunity to offer alternative viewpoints. For example, “....” can be interpreted as blah. Alternatively, the emphasis on may suggest blah blah....
7. You only have forty minutes or so. If there is something small you don’t quite understand don’t write about it. You don’t have to comment on every single device or image to do well. Having said that, you do need to include plenty of content. Unless you are an amazing writer who can be incredibly concise, it is a good idea to aim to write a decent amount. The exam booklet you are completing your work in should, in my view, be full.
8. Don’t assume the tone and mood will be the same. They often are, but not always. The tone that the narrator uses creates the mood. Similarly, be sure to comment on how the tone and mood changes. There is often a working through ideas that leads to resolution or statement at the end of the poem, that differs to the beginning.
9. How to say this ... read the poem aloud, in your head! Listen out for sudden changes of pace, rhythm, the sounds of sibilance, assonance, alliteration, enjambement or end-stopped lines. Be sure to comment on their effectiveness.