

TP-COASTT: a mnemonic for poetry

Title	The title is part of the poem; consider any multiple meanings.
Paraphrase	Rephrase the poem using your words.
Connotation	Contemplate the poem for meaning beyond the literal.
Organization	Identify organizational patterns, visual, temporal, spatial, abstraction...
Attitude	Identify the tone—both the speaker's and the poet's attitude
Shifts*	Locate shifts in speaker, tone, setting, syntax, diction...
Title	Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level
Theme	Determine what the poem says

*Shifts

Signals Key words (*still, but, yet, although, however...*)
Punctuation (consider every punctuation mark)
Stanza or paragraph divisions
Changes in line length or stanza length or both

Types Structure (how the work is organized)
Changes in syntax (sentence length and construction)
Changes in sound (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance...)
Changes in diction (slang to formal language, for example)

Patterns Are the shifts sudden? progressive? recursive? Why?