

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION  
- POETRY -

1. Who is the *speaker* in this poem? What kind of person is he or she?
2. To whom is he or she speaking? In other words, describe the speaker's *audience*.
3. What is the *situation* and *setting* in time (era) and place?
4. What is the *purpose* of the poem?
5. State the poem's *central idea* or *theme* in a single sentence.
6. Indicate and explain (if you can) any allusions. Do the *allusions* share a common idea?
7. Describe the *structure* of the poem. What is its *meter* and *form*? (scan it.)
8. How do the structure of the poem and its content relate?
9. What is the *tone* of the poem? How is it achieved?
10. Notice the poem's *diction*. Discuss any words that seem especially well chosen
11. Are there any predominant *images* in the poem?
12. Note *metaphors*, *similes*, and *personification*, and discuss their effect.
13. Recognize and discuss examples of *paradox*, *overstatement (hyperbole)*, and *understatement (litotes)*.
14. Explain any symbols. Is the poem *allegorical*?
15. Explain the significance of any *sound repetition (alliteration, consonance, assonance, etc.)*.
16. Discuss whether or not you think the poem is successful.



-- adapted from

Greenblatt, Ellen. "The Sonnet As a Doorway to Poetry." Advanced Placement Program: 2004-2005 Workshop Materials (2004): 46-52.