Though wise men at their end know dark is right, (line 4)
Because their words had forked no lightning they (line 5)
Do not go gentle into that good night. (line 6)

Step Two

The second step to analyzing a poem is to read it. Once in your head and then a second time out loud. If the poem is particularly complex or long, you may find that reading it aloud several times helps you to better comprehend and identify formal elements such as rhythm or enjambment, which are key components explored below.

Where was your attention drawn?

Was the word choice engaging?

Is the author making use of enjambed or end stop lines?

Did the poem make use of concrete or abstract language?

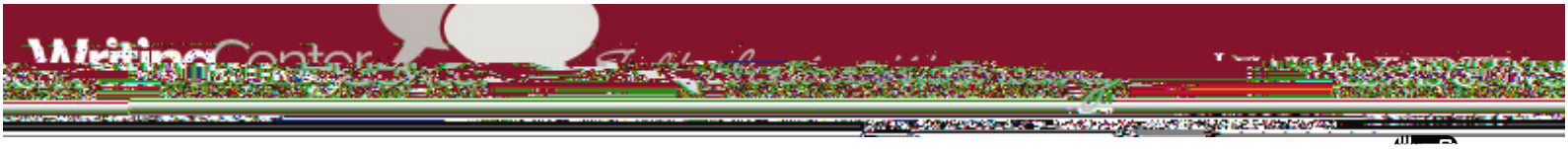
concerns how a poem is stressed. When you read a poem aloud, you may notice certain words which you emphasize; these words are considered stressed. The stresses may vary depending on the speaker. Some speakers may speak slower whereas other speak more quickly. Some speakers may take longer pauses where others keep pauses more brief.

is like the melody of the poem. As you read a poem aloud, you may notice certain words resonate with complimentary sounds; when words either sound similar or mimic each other's sound, they rhyme. Rhyme scheme is often shown by using letters. There are many different types of rhyme, but here are some of the most common:

Internal Rhyme: Internal rhyme occurs when two or more words within a single line rhyme.

End Rhyme: End rhyme occurs when words at the end of a line rhyme.

Exact Rhyme: The most noticeable form of rhyme, exact rhyme occurs when two words mimic the same sound E.g. break and take.



is language that engages any of the five senses taste, touch, sight, smell and hearing through description.

is language that leads to a sentimental feeling or nostalgia. It can also be words that are vague in meaning, such as: dream, love, nightmare, hate.

an excerpt from Edgar Allan Poe's "A Dream Within a Dream"

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand ð
How few! Yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep ð while I weep!

Notice the concrete language ð "amid the roar," "surf-tormented shore" and "Grains of the golden sand." These three lines each touch one of the senses. "Amid the roar" makes use of hearing, while "surf-tormented shore" evokes sight because you can picture a beach while in a storm. The last line, "Grains of the golden sand," also makes use of sight because we can imagine the color of the sand.

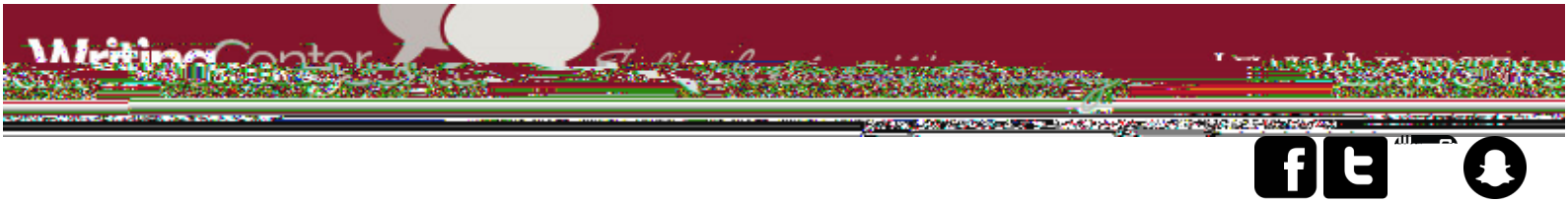
Sample Poetry Analysis

Source: Gwendolyn Brooks' "We Real Cool"

The Pool Players
Seven at the Golden Shovel

We real cool. We
Left school. We

We Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.