 Resource 2

How to annotate a poem

Below is one process to follow when given a Poem for the first time. During this Module you will follow this process, initially guided by the teacher, then in groups or pairs, until you are comfortable and able to do it yourself.

1. Read the poem and think about its meaning and imagery. Write your initial reactions down.
2. Work your way through the poem.
   * - Structure: How many stanzas does it have? Do the stanzas have the same number of lines each or another pattern? Is it a Sonnet or other specific structure?
   * - Rhyme: Does it have a regular Rhyme Scheme? If so, work it out. Does it use end-rhyme, internal-rhyme or is it free verse?
   * - Rhythm: Does it have a regular rhythm? If so, how many beats per line?
   * - Techniques: label poetic techniques used and highlight examples of these. What effect does each have? Perhaps create TEE tables (Technique, Example(quote), Effect)
   * - does the poem do anything else interesting? Eg. Change POV or speaker, change Tone or Mood, change structurally part way through etc? If so, why may this have been done?
3. Discuss your annotations and ideas with others. Add to and improve your notes/annotations.
4. Research the poem and scholarly analysis of it. Keep a list of URLs you gained information from. Add insights to your notes/annotations.
5. Go back to your initial reactions. Add a “Further reflection” heading and anything you have now realised or learned about this poem and/or its connection to the others we are studying.