

- The speaker can address a character who is not present or who is dead.
- The speaker can address you, the reader.

You should try to know who the target of the speaker is. Every poet has an intention out of writing his poem and every poem conveys an experience or attempts to rouse certain feelings in the reader.

**NB:**

It is often impossible to define a poet's 'true' intention. Your interpretation of a poet's aim is, therefore, largely a personal matter.

**2-Content/Theme:**

In simple terms, the **content** of a poem is what it is all about—the ideas, themes and storyline that it contains.

**Theme-** the central idea, topic, subject, and the statement the poem/poet makes. Theme is often used interchangeably with meaning and idea.

We have two types of meaning, general and detailed:

**\*General meaning:** This is sometimes referred to as the **surface meaning** of the poem. Establishing this surface meaning will give you a framework on which to build the more detailed and complex ideas that form the detailed meaning.

**\*Detailed meaning:** This should be given stanza by stanza without necessarily paraphrasing the whole poem. The detailed meaning could take the form of a paragraph made up of simple but accurate sentences. You should, for example, show how the poet begins, how he develops his theme, and then how he concludes it.

**NB:**

What if the poem is not divided into parts –stanzas!

**3-Tone and Mood:**

The effect that a poem has on the reader is very closely determined by the tone and mood that it creates. As has been mentioned above, a poem contains a 'voice' and like any voice it can project a certain **tone** that gives the listener (reader) certain messages. Obviously, there are many different kinds of tone. The tone might be angry or reflective, melancholy or joyful, bitter or ironic. Just as the tone of voice in which someone speaks tells us a good deal about the way that person feels, so the tone of the 'speaker' of the poem or 'poetic voice' informs us on how the poet or the narrator of the poem feels.

**\*Tone:** is also the poet's attitude toward the subject of the poem. One of the keys to identifying and describing the tone of a poem is by noting the author's use of diction and rhythm.

**\*Mood:** The mood, on the other hand, although very closely related with tone, is not quite the same thing. When we refer to the mood of a poem, we are really talking about the **atmosphere** that the poem creates.