### **The SMILE Method**

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| **Structure** | * Does the poem literally have some kind of shape? * Is it in free verse or set in a traditional meter? * What kind of rhyming pattern and punctuation (if any) does it use? * Is there any repetition? * How long are the lines, and what/where are the line breaks? * *Anything you notice about the poem’s structure will also relate to the next point…* |
| **Meaning** | * What is the subject of the poem? How do you know this? What details are pointing us to that meaning? * Who is the character speaking in the poem? (Hint: it is rarely the poet themselves!) * Create a hypothesis (and a secondary hypothesis, if you like) on what the meaning of a poem is and then try to show how everything else you mention relates back to this meaning. For example, if the poem is about how old age can be lonely, the structure of the poem (perhaps lines gradually decreasing in length) may reflect this. |
| **Imagery** | * How are things described? * Underline or highlight where you note imagery. The poet has created that imagery to deliberately draw your attention to it. * Note what kind of imagery you see - is it visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, kinesthetic, etc.? |
| **Literary Devices & Language** | * What literary devices and language are in the poem? Metaphors, similes, alliteration, personification, sibilance, assonance, word-class analysis (noun, adjective, adverb, verb), connotations or words, strings of certain word-types? * Is the poem written in a dialect? Does it use foreign words that you need to look up? * Does it make allusions you need to look up to understand? * Why do you think the poet has specifically chosen each particular device, and how do they contribute to the meaning of the poem? |
| **Effect & Emotion** | * How do you, as the reader, feel or think after reading the poem? * Does the language make you feel something for the subject of the poem? If so, what? * Does you see something in a new light? |

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Important note re: SMILE: this is not an exhaustive method of tackling a poem, but it’s a good place to start jotting down ideas, even if not in that particular order. If you’re comparing two poems, it’s a quick way to see – and then show – how the same devices can be used to different effect, or similar meanings be backed up by different uses of language.

Text adapted from: <https://www.mytutor.co.uk/blog/poem-analysis-smile/> & <https://slideplayer.com/slide/14286693/>

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| **Engussi Wedzin Kwah** by Jennifer Wickham, Gidumt’en of the Wet’suwet’en  She is my healer  a consoling friend  a life giver, a grandmother  a sister to the ancient ones  she heard the songs and touched the skin  of the original Wet’suwet’en  sacred knowledge in every drop  but we forgot  we try to listen with our ears  time has made us deaf to her  there’s too much background noise  the smog is in our souls  Engussi Wedzin Kwah  shhhhhhhhhhhh….. can you hear her cry for you?  I need a job, I need a new car  I just bought an eco-friendly travel mug from \*fill  in the blank\*… it’s funny right?  the love of my life is not my cell phone  a flat screen tv or my shoes  Engussi Wedzin Kwah!  I don’t need to tell you how beautiful she is  how her clear blue/green sparkles in the sun  or how her glacial currents take your breath away  and jumps starts your soul and every cell in your body  how her voice sings you alive  this isn’t that kind of love poem  Let’s get back to listening…..  What are the names of your rivers?  Can you hear them inside you?  Let’s resurrect those words together  ALL our words, all at once  I want to feel all those hard and soft sounds  hitting me at the same time  just let me absorb the words of our ancestors  like Wedzin Kwah  but I’m not a river  I am a Wet’suwet’en woman  and my purpose is clear  Like ancient protocol and boundaries  I’ll show you where the line is  we were born her guardians  warriors watch over Wedzin Kwah | **Structure** |  |
| **Meaning** |  |
| **Imagery** |  |
| **Literary Devices & Language** |  |
| **Effect & Emotion** |  |