**ENG 3CI**

**Steps to Understanding a Poem**

1. **Literal Level**
   1. What is the poem about literally?
   2. Look up any unfamiliar words
   3. Put lines or stanzas in your own words.
2. **Poetic Devices and structures**
   1. **Rhyme**
      1. End rhyme: single (love/ dove), double (napping/ tapping)
      2. Internal rhyme:occurs inside a line (to beat the heat
   2. **Sound Devices**
      1. Alliteration: Words begin with the same consonant sound (In a summer season, where soft was sun)
      2. Onomatopoeia: When words sound like meanings (drip, whisper, swish, crackle)
   3. **Imagery**
      1. Metaphor: Comparing two unlike things (The river is a snake that coils on itself.)
      2. Simile: Comparing two unlike things using “like” or “as” (The man paced like a hungry lion)
      3. Personification: Giving human qualities to things (The trees danced in the breeze.)
      4. Irony: Saying the opposite of what is true or of what is intended (War is kind)
      5. Allusion: Referring to Persons, places or things from literature, history, religion or mythology (A collection of animals like Noah’s.)
   4. **Form and Structure**
      1. Rhyme Scheme: Indicated by capital letters to show rhyming words (ABAB, AABB, ABCABC, etc)
3. **Figurative Level**
   1. What is the poet suggesting?
   2. Are there any symbolic aspects of the poem?
   3. Does anything in the poem represent something else?
4. **Explication**:
   1. What is the tone of the poem? Is it optimistic, judgemental, critical, disappointed, lighthearted or?
   2. What is/are the **theme(s)** in the poem?