

Evaluating Poetry

1. Sound
 - Does the poem draw the child in; does it cause the child to clap, join in or respond in some other way to the language and rhythm of the poem?
 - If the poem rhymes, does it sound natural or contrived?
 - How does the sound of the poem add to the meaning?
 - Does the poem use alliteration, onomatopoeia, repetition?
2. Language
 - Does the poem use language that conveys ideas and images that children can understand and enjoy?
 - Does the poem create sensory images of sight, sound, touch, taste, smell? Are these related to children's delight in their particular senses?
3. Figurative Language
 - What is the quality of imagination in the poem? Does the poem make the child see something in a fresh, new way, or does it rely on tired clichés?
 - Are the similes and metaphors ones that a child would appreciate and understand?
4. Tone
 - Does the tone patronize childhood by looking down on it? Is it didactic and preachy?
 - Does it see childhood in a sentimental or nostalgic way?
5. Structure
 - Does the shape of the poem – the placement of the words – contribute to the poem's meaning?
6. Purpose
 - Is the poem appropriate for children?
 - What is the purpose of the poem? To amuse? To describe in a fresh way? To comment on humanity? To draw parallels in our lives?
 - How well has the poet achieved this purpose?
7. Test of Time
 - Will the child be apt to remember (but not memorize) the poem and want to hear it repeated again and again?