**Do now:**

1. **Who was Scrooge apprenticed to?**
2. **How many lines in a Shakespearean sonnet?**
3. **What poetic device is used here?**

*‘So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,*

*So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.’*

**Unseen Poetry**

In your literature exam (paper 2) the examiner is looking for you to:

* Show you understand the text.
* Write about techniques the poets’ use and their effect on the reader.
* Analyse the poem for language, structure and form.
* Support your points with examples from the text.
* Use the correct technical terms for the techniques used.

When you are faced with poems you have not studied before follow the same basic steps each time to guide yourself through the analysis. Always have you pen in hand and make notes, or annotate, as you go.

Look at the title – what might it suggest? What connotations of the words come immediately to mind? Run you eye over the poem before you read it, see if anything stands out to you, underline it, or write it down in your notes/plan. Look at the lines and stanzas; note the stops and gaps. Is there a rhyme scheme?

Always remember – All poets use imagery, mention this in your response to the question.

Also consider this as you analyse - poets do everything on purpose, for a reason. Why have they used a particular technique, word, phrase, structure, form?

**Read the following poem and then answer these questions** *(in complete sentences)***:**

1. What is the main idea in this poem?

2. How many stanzas are there?

3. What perspective is this poem written from?

4. What effect does the use of metaphor have in this poem?

5. What might the poet suggest about using our senses as suggested in this poem?

**Introduction to Poetry**

The title suggests that we may be being taught a lesson in this poem; we may learn how to analyse poetry. The writer might be a teacher or a writer perhaps.

I ask them to take a poem

The poem begins *‘I ask them…’* it is written in 1st person perspective. The tone is calm and friendly. The language is natural and easy, informal and relaxed. Readers can feel at ease; it does not feel like a challenging text.

and hold it up to the light

like a colour slide

or press an ear against its hive.

The 7 stanzas contain a series of metaphors.

Simile

I say drop a mouse into a poem

The underlining shows the speakers instructions. These imperatives are quite direct but are paired with light-hearted imagery.

and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem’s room

Repetition of ‘light’, the speaker suggest that examination may shed light onto the meaning, make it clearer, more obvious, easier to see (and therefore understand).

and feel for the light switch.

The metaphor in this tercet (3 lines of poetry) could suggest skimming the surface of the poem to get the simple meaning before diving in deeper to get a more meaningful or alternate meaning and understanding.

I want them to waterski

across the surface of a poem

waving at the author’s name on the shore.

Use of the conjunction ‘But’ in this stanza (a verse or paragraph of poetry) here shows use of a volta, a turn, indicating a change of tone, feeling, direction. Here the speaker is encouraging his students to tease a meaning out of the poem. ‘But’ changes the focus onto the students actions rather than the speaker’s directions.

But all they want to do

Is tie the poem to a chair with a rope

And torture a confession out of it.

They begin by beating it with a hose

Personification. Students want the poem to explain its meaning.

to find out what it really means.

*Billy Collins*

Listen to the poet reading his poem here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf69NbUlZXk>

**Exam question:**

**How does the poet present ideas on reading poetry in ‘Introduction to Poetry’?**

Model answer:

The poet uses a series of metaphors in his poem to explain how students should analyse poems.

In other words the speaker the speaker seems to want his pupils to explore and analyse instead of getting frustrated if a poem seems hard to understand. More specifically the metaphor ‘waterski across the surface’ could suggest that a good first step would be to skim and scan to get an idea of a meaning before looking further at the techniques and language used to get a poem’s meaning. Moreover the noun ‘surface’ could also mean that there is more to a poem than what first appears to the readers. The writer wants readers to not get too uptight at trying to analyse poems and to take different ways to find a meaning.

**Your turn** (aim for at least two, preferably three paragraphs)…