

Understanding poems and songs

Interpretation is part of your everyday life: When you talk to a person, you listen to what they say, but you also interpret how they speak or how they behave.

Use that skill when you read a poem or listen to a song: Find out the message behind it, but also try to pay attention to the form. This will help you get a deeper understanding of the text. Different people can interpret a poem or a song in different ways – there's no one 'correct' meaning. But it's important that you can prove your interpretation from the text.



1 Formal elements of poems

Read the text and fill in the gaps.

pause free verse stress (2x) rhyme scheme ABAB rhythm (2x) atmosphere

When you read a poem, form is usually more important than when you read a story. Take a close look at the structure and find out how the lines are connected.

Poems which rhyme have a _____.

It's the pattern of rhymes at the end of each line. Typical ones are: AABB, ABCB or _____ like the example on the right.

A rhyming poem has a _____ with the same _____ in each line.

Not all poems have to rhyme. Poems which don't rhyme at all or don't have a clear structure like ABAB are called _____ poems.

Don't forget to read poems out loud to yourself. This gives you a feeling for the _____ and _____.

Try out where the _____ should be, and where you need a _____.

My love is **real**
My love is **true**
My heart is **steel**
Melting for **you**

Waiting in the **sun**
Waiting in the **rain**
Staring at the **door**
Feeling so much **pain**

My heart flies to you
Like a moth to the light.
But it burns its wings
And falls down to the ground
While your light keeps shining.

You **think** I'm too **young**,
Too **short** or too **loud**?
I **am** who I **am**,
And **that** makes me **proud**.

interpretation [ɪn'tɜːprɪ'teɪʃn] Interpretation to interpret [ɪn'tɜːprɪt] interpretieren steel [sti:l] Stahl moth [mɒθ] Motte to burn one's wings ['bɜːn wʌnz ,wɪŋz] sich die Flügel verbrennen to keep [ki:p] hier: weiter-



2 Use of language

- a) Read the text and fill in the gaps.
b) Match the definitions with the right examples. Draw lines.

play on words symbol simile metaphor

The language of poems and songs is usually not as direct as our everyday language. Words and phrases can have a different meaning or more than one meaning. This attracts our attention and makes it easier to imagine things or to identify with the speaker of the poem.

1. A _____ represents something,
e.g. a feeling, an idea or an action.
2. A _____ is a comparison of two things
with 'like' or 'as'. It shows that two different things
are similar.
3. A _____ is a comparison of two
things without 'like' or 'as'.
4. A _____ can be a
humorous use of a word that has two meanings.

a) Our friendship is
my safe harbour.

b) My nose is running. I think
it's training for a marathon.

c) You are sweet as pie.

d)  = love

3 Songs

Read the text and fill in the gaps.

lyrics tune melody catchy

Songs are similar to poems, but the music is especially important. When you listen to a song, focus on the words and the main message first and then think about how the music matches the message.

The words of a song are called _____.

The musical sounds are the _____ or the
_____.

Some songs make you feel happy or you can't get them
out of your head. They are _____.



attract [ə'trækt] anziehen ○ to identify with sb [aɪ'dentɪfaɪ wɪð] sich mit jmdm. identifizieren ○ humorous ['hju:mərəs] humorvoll