First, read the poem a few times, then take out a pen and begin to annotate.
* You may want to take out a few different pens, and use a different color for each step.

**STEP ONE: The Title**
- Comment on the title. Is it significant? How does it relate to the poem?
- What do we learn through the title, before we even read the poem?
- Reflect on the connotations of words in the title; underline significant ones.

**STEP TWO: Understanding the Meaning**
- After each stanza, briefly summarize the meaning (try to do this in a few words only).
- Try to paraphrase the whole poem in one line.
- Identify the speaker; highlight words which relate to the speaker.

**STEP THREE: Stanza Structure and Rhyme Scheme**
- Indicate how the poem is divided (or not) into sections. Is it regular or irregular?
- Note the rhyme scheme (use corresponding letters for end rhymes: e.g. ABAB CDCD etc.)

**STEP FOUR: Line Structure**
- Identify the syllable stress, foot and meter.
- Comment on the length of the lines (highlight any lines which are particularly long or short).
- Highlight any line breaks which are significant.
- Identify any examples of enjambment or any caesuras.

**STEP FIVE: The Language**
- Underline and comment on any figurative language techniques (metaphors, similes, alliteration, assonance, hyperbole, oxymorons, anaphora, onomatopoeia etc.).
- Comment on the diction: elements of formal or informal language, colloquialisms, dialect etc.
- Circle any notable uses of punctuation and comment on them.
- Identify any repetition (of single words, phrases or whole lines).

**STEP SIX: Identifying Tone**
- Circle any words which contribute to the tone of the poem.
- At the end of each stanza, write adjectives which describe the tone / mood at that point.
- Identify any changes in tone.

Once you have annotated and analyzed the poem as much as you can, you will be more able to interpret it and find links between the structural elements identified and the meaning.