

6 How to Annotate a poem.

underline or highlight key sentences,
important ideas.



arrow → to show related ideas

numbers 1. steps
2. lists
3. details

write notes, thoughts, interpretation and short summary in the margin

brackets } important paragraph

! note idea that you disagree with

* asterisk this is very important

? question mark key words and ideas you don't understand

Circle keyword



Successful annotation is clear and meaningful:

- Clear identification of methods AND some comment on meaning or impact.
- Explanation of key ideas/ connotations of words
- Questions you need to consider further
- Alternative interpretations

Powerful simile – no longer strong, young men. Starched uniforms have become rags.

Simile – compares men to ugly old women ("hags") in their coughing – reader must remind themselves that these are in fact young men.

Caesura, a pause created for emphasis

Persona introduced – one of the men.

Powerful verb ("cursed") – we have an image of men at breaking point trudging in the mud

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs –
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

What kind of rest? ?

Image of men walking beneath the flares used to light the battlefield

"Shod" – term used for horse shoes. Men barely human with bloodied feet. Image supported by the word "lame", also used for horses

War does sound like Wagner, it is "tired". The men are strangely immune to the sound. The crashed of shells is reduced to "tired, outstripped Five-Nines".

Stanza ends with a slow rhythm, reflecting the tiredness of the men.

8 Key Poetic Techniques and a good starting point for annotations

Rhyme
Rhyming words occur very often in poems, sometimes in patterns.

Rhythm
The flow of a poem, often effected by the punctuation and shape of a poem.

Tone and Pace
Have a big impact on rhythm and effected by punctuation.

Onomatopoeia
When a word imitates the sound it makes (e.g. BANG, SPLASH)

Repetition
When words and phrases are repeated multiple times.

POETIC TECHNIQUES

Similes
Compares two different things, using the words "like" or "as".

Metaphors
Identifies something as being the same as something else.

Alliterations
More than one word beginning with the same letter (close together in text).

