A SIMPLE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO PAPER ONE COMMENTARIES

- Read the poem
- Read the poem again
- Read the poem again marking anything you do not understand
- Read the poem again marking things that stand out (images, words, phrases)
- Identify the speaking voice – what does it sound like – what mood is being established
- Identify the style of the voice and the structure – what is particular about this poem?
- Identify key images
- Identify what might be a key idea
- Identify what may be supporting ideas
- Identify what could be the message of the poet (sometimes if you have ‘no idea’ go to the last few lines – these can often bring the whole poem together and clarify ideas – but it is not always the case)
- Explore how the language supports the key ideas
- Plan how you are going to present a response
- Form a thesis – of what you think this poem is about and how it goes about exploring this message

There are many ways of writing a response – it can be linear, it can be through ideas but at all times you must provide a central thread which connects the whole response – this central thread is at all times connected to the thesis and forms part of the thesis.

Remember the examiners are looking for these three dot points to be in almost every sentence:

- Thought and feeling
- Ideas
- Language (style)