One way of approaching Paper 1

- Read the poem (don’t consciously try to work out a meaning – just try to feel it)
- Read and annotate the poem
- Identify the voice – who is speaking? – what do they sound like?
- Pick out key images
- Start to pick out ideas
- Start to pick out supporting ideas (you are beginning to build a framework of what it may be about)
- Look at the language that supports this idea
- Look at how the words are working (not just what they mean or are trying to explore)
- Try to suggest/think about the overall intention of the poem (what is the poet trying to say?). Sometimes the last verse can tend to give a good indication of what it is about.

Structuring the response

Think in terms of:

- **VOICE** = who is the speaker? What does he/she sound like? What is their concern? Does the tone of voice change over the course of the poem? Why does it change if it does?
- **STYLE** = the style is something that is particular to the poet – how do you know that this is this poet – what does he/she use in a particular way that is particular to him/her (it’s a bit like being able to recognise someone on the ‘phone – how do you know that is a particular person speaking – it’s about what they sound like and how they say it eg: use of language, use of images, use of rhythm, structure of ideas etc
- **IDEAS** = what are the ideas explored? – they may seem connected, but may not, they all should somehow lead to an intention
- **INTENTION** = what is the poet trying to say?

**INTRODUCTION**

You must include all of the above. If possible include all of the above in every sentence – although a repetition of the intention can be laborious so you need to repeat that in a subtle way. In alluding to the ideas or a particular voice or style you will naturally be giving yourself the signposts for the rest of the essay. Sometimes starting with what you consider the key line or idea can provide a punchy start.

**BODY PARAGRAPHS**

In every sentence you must refer to a combination of voice, style, ideas or intention. Too much of either will labour your response, too little and you will not achieve in that criteria.

**CONCLUSION**

Again try to give it a bit of a punchy end – perhaps go back to the key idea and show how appropriate it is to the overall intention and support it with voice and style – that’s one way ……..

But there are so many ways of skinning a cat!