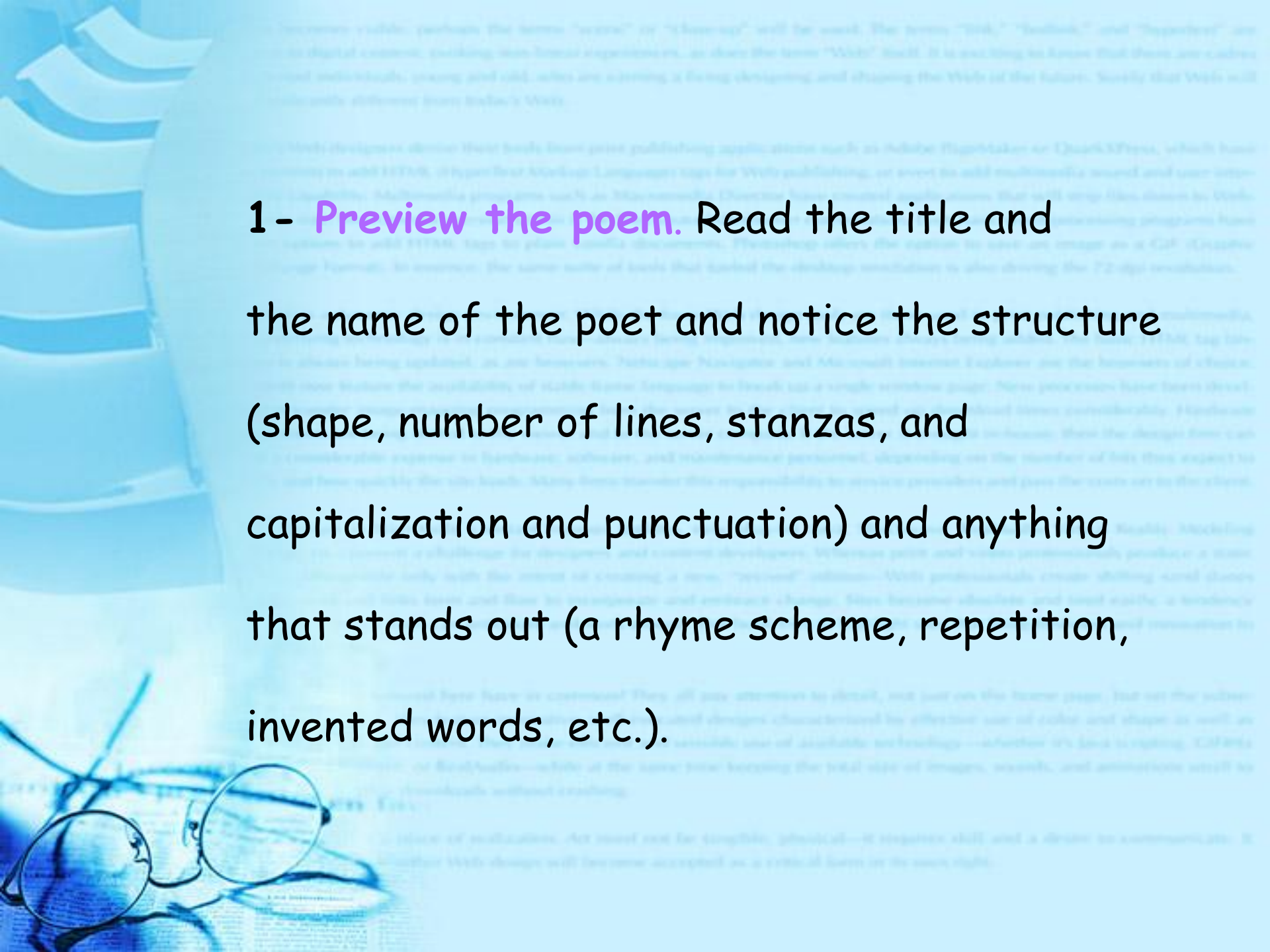
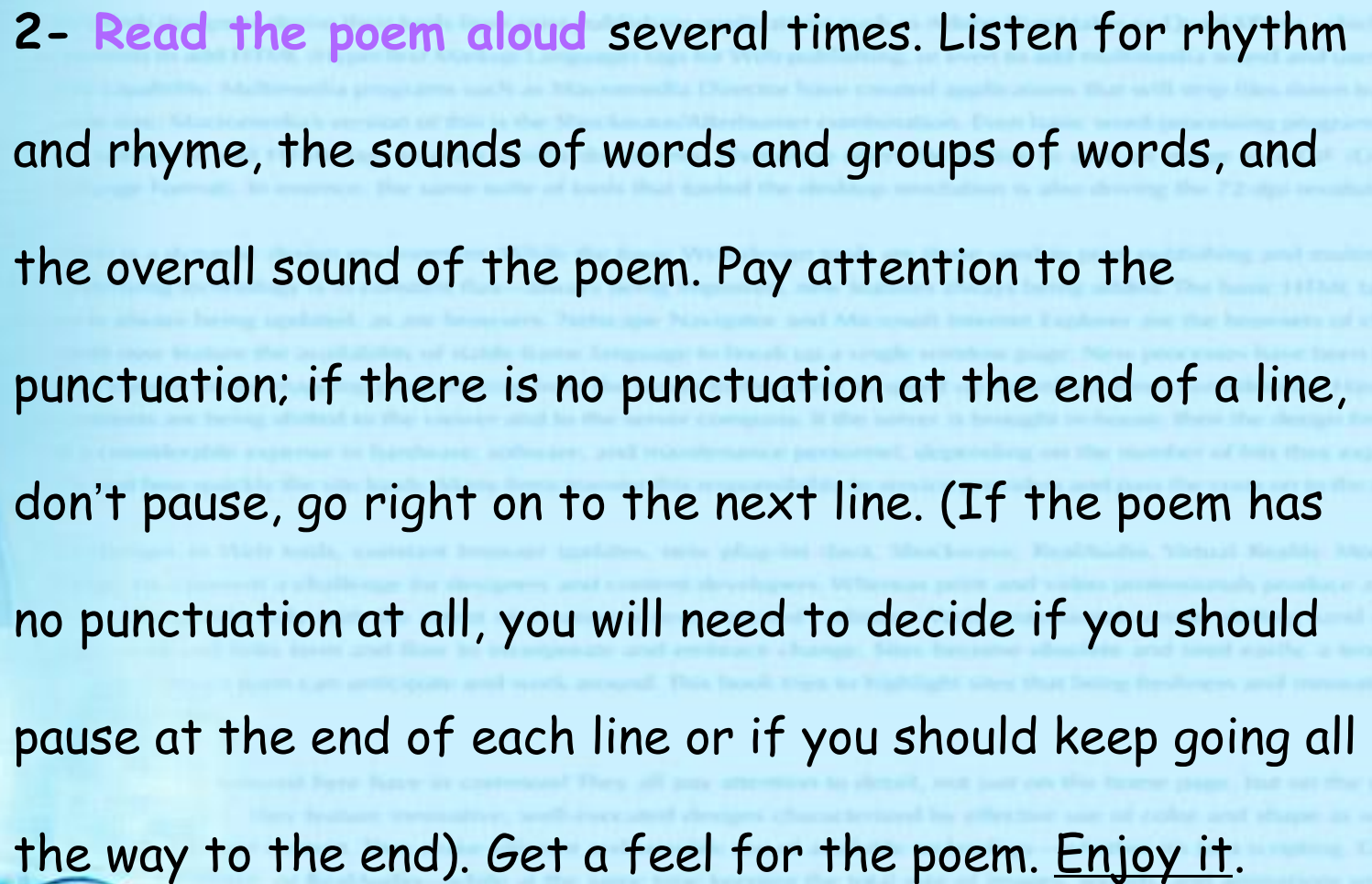




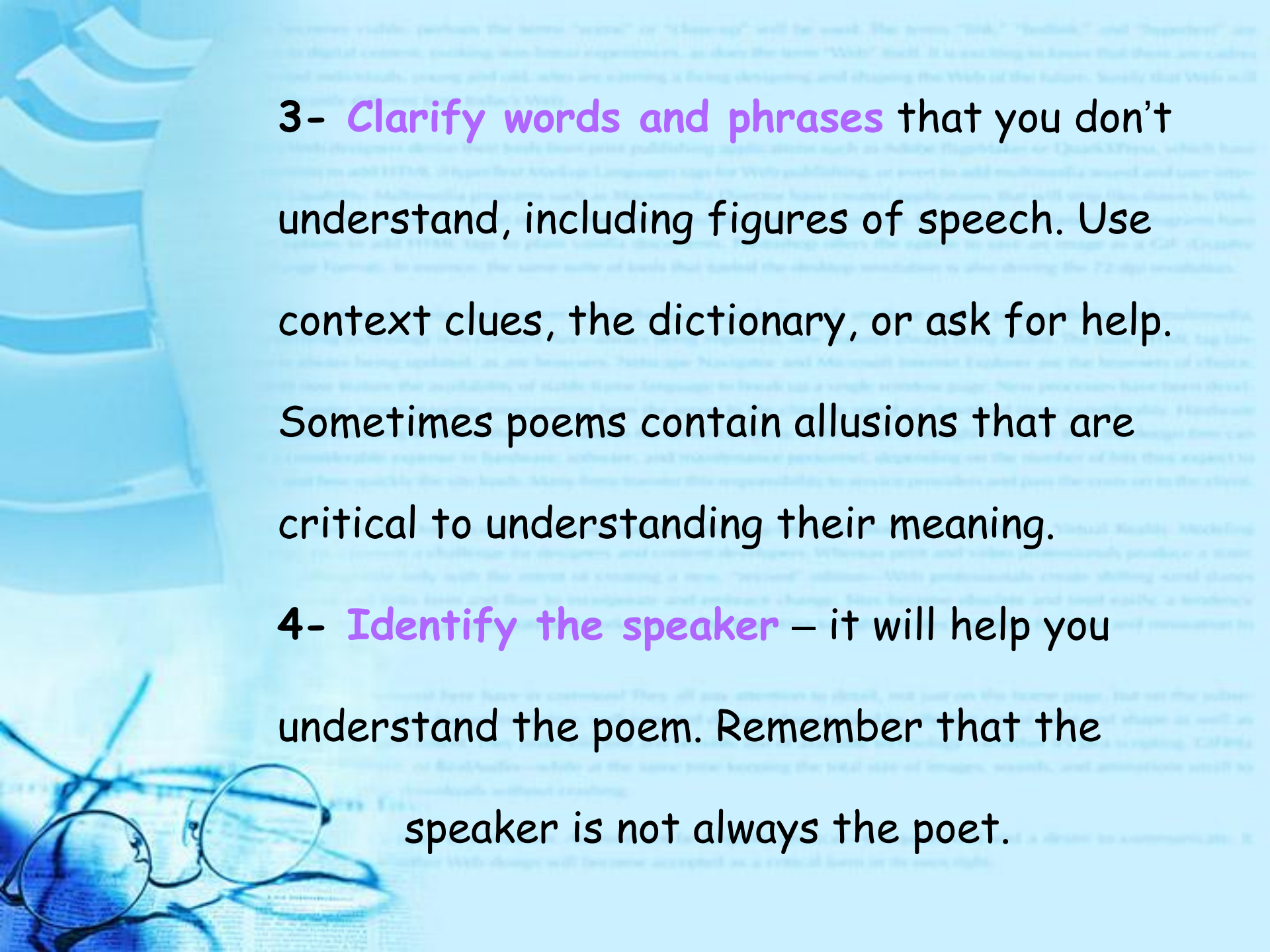
TIPS FOR READING
AND UNDERSTANDING
POETRY



1- Preview the poem. Read the title and the name of the poet and notice the structure (shape, number of lines, stanzas, and capitalization and punctuation) and anything that stands out (a rhyme scheme, repetition, invented words, etc.).



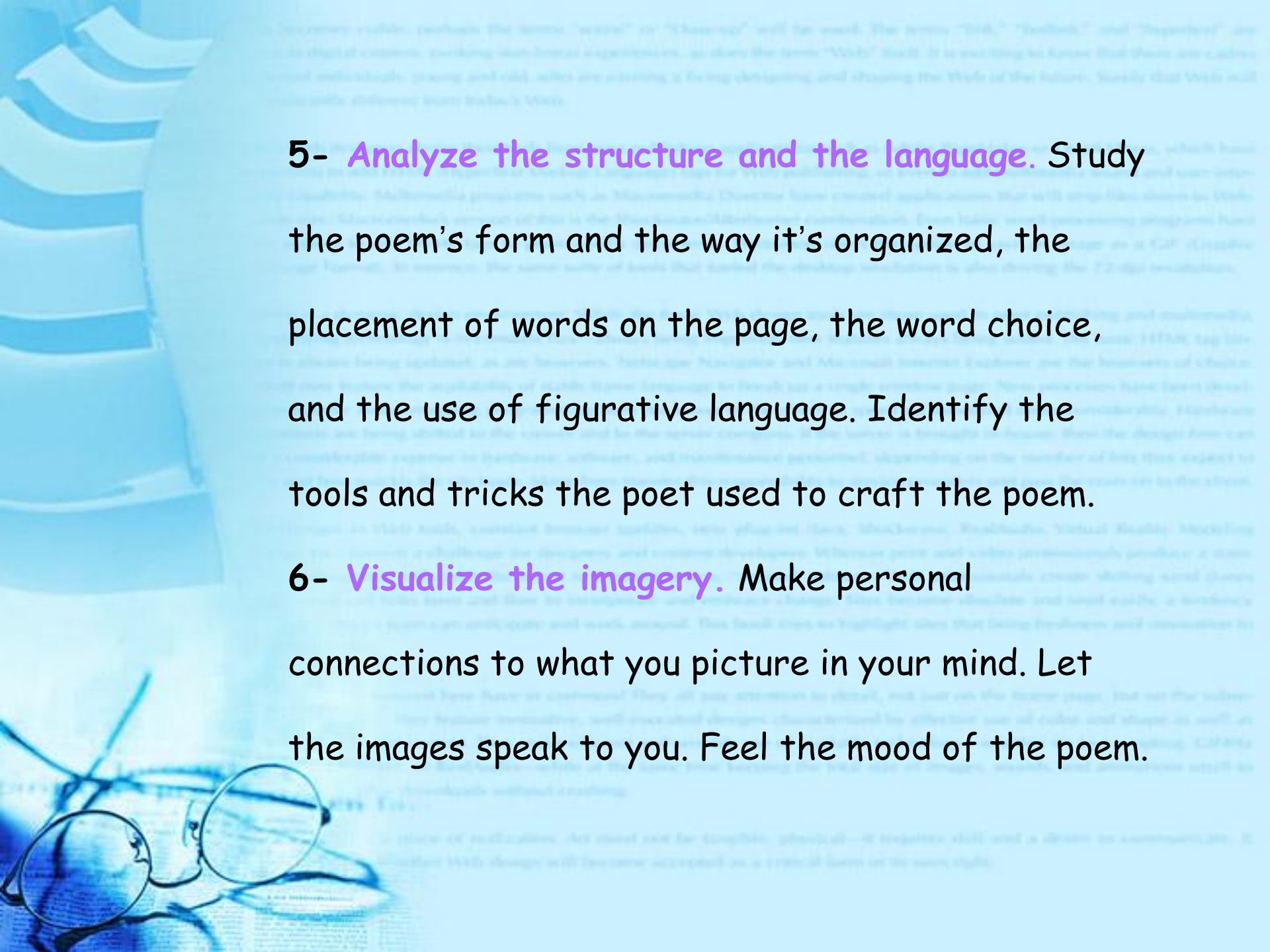
2- **Read the poem aloud** several times. Listen for rhythm and rhyme, the sounds of words and groups of words, and the overall sound of the poem. Pay attention to the punctuation; if there is no punctuation at the end of a line, don't pause, go right on to the next line. (If the poem has no punctuation at all, you will need to decide if you should pause at the end of each line or if you should keep going all the way to the end). Get a feel for the poem. Enjoy it.



3- Clarify words and phrases that you don't understand, including figures of speech. Use context clues, the dictionary, or ask for help.

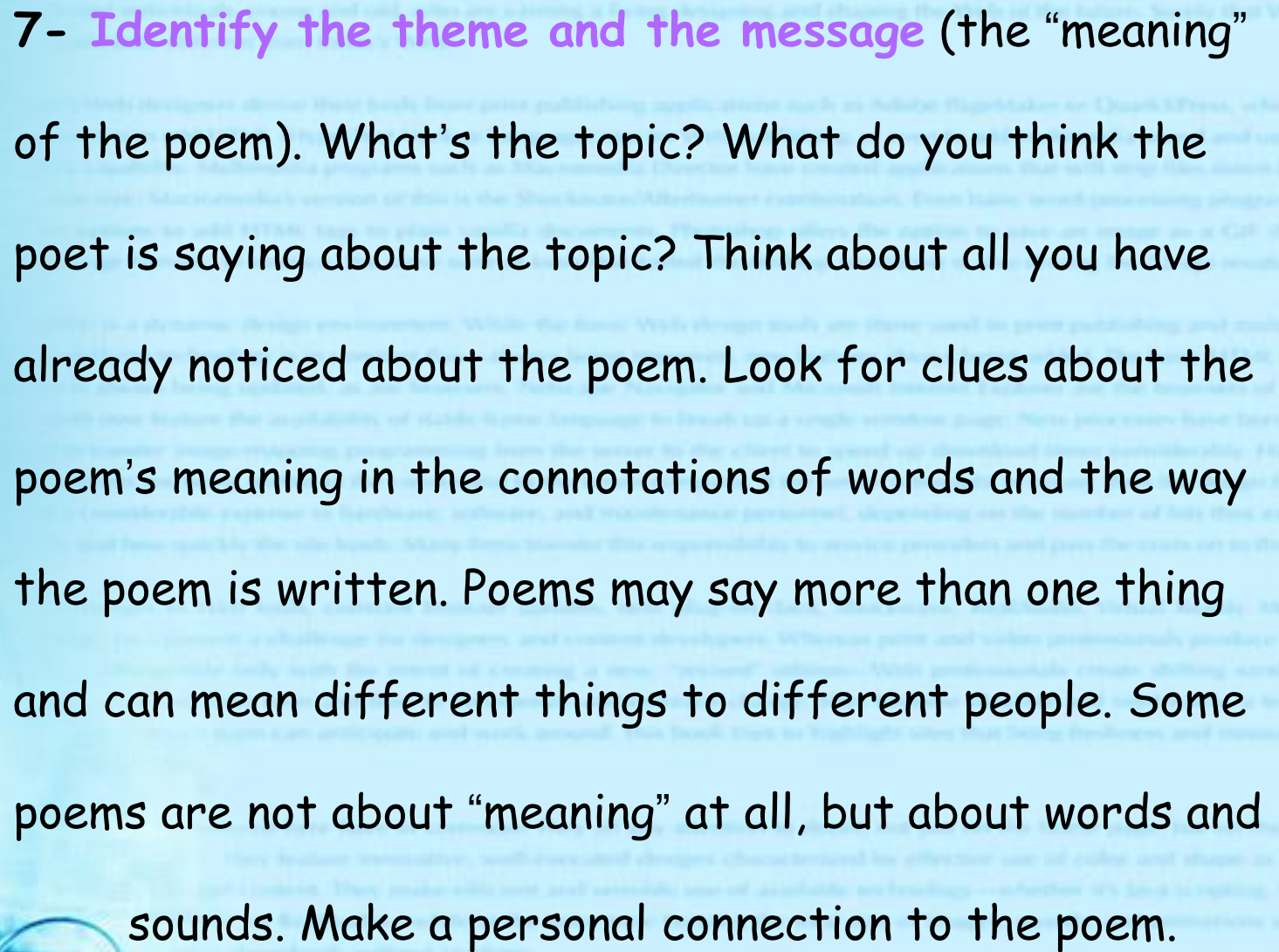
Sometimes poems contain allusions that are critical to understanding their meaning.

4- Identify the speaker – it will help you understand the poem. Remember that the speaker is not always the poet.



5- Analyze the structure and the language. Study the poem's form and the way it's organized, the placement of words on the page, the word choice, and the use of figurative language. Identify the tools and tricks the poet used to craft the poem.

6- Visualize the imagery. Make personal connections to what you picture in your mind. Let the images speak to you. Feel the mood of the poem.

A pair of glasses and a stack of papers are visible in the bottom left corner of the slide. The background is a light blue gradient with faint, illegible text.

7- **Identify the theme and the message** (the “meaning” of the poem). What’s the topic? What do you think the poet is saying about the topic? Think about all you have already noticed about the poem. Look for clues about the poem’s meaning in the connotations of words and the way the poem is written. Poems may say more than one thing and can mean different things to different people. Some poems are not about “meaning” at all, but about words and sounds. Make a personal connection to the poem.

What does it say to you? Why?

1- **Evaluate the poem** and perhaps share it

with others. Do you think it's well crafted?

What do you like about it? Would you include it

in your collection of favorite poems? Would you

like to share it and discuss it with a friend?



From "Introduction to Poetry" by Billy Collins:

I ask them to take a poem

and hold it up to the light

like a color slide

or press an ear against it

I say drop a mouse into a poem

and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside a poem's room

and feel the wall for a light switch.

Poetry Guides and Poetry Anthologies

Reader's Handbook by Great Source Education Group (pages 408-468)

Immersed in Verse by Allan Wolf

A Kick in the Head - edited by Paul B. Janeczko

A Child's Anthology of Poetry - edited by Elizabeth Hauge Sword

I Feel a Little Jumpy Around You - by Naomi Shihab Nye and Paul B. Janeczko

Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems - edited by Lori M. Carlson

This Same Sky - international poems selected by Naomi Shihab Nye

Heart to Heart - poems inspired by 20th century art - edited by Jan Greenberg

The Oxford Illustrated Book of American Children's Poems - edited by Donald Hall

The Series Poetry for Young Children by Scholastic

Poetry 180 - an anthology of contemporary poems selected by Billy Collins

An Invitation to Poetry - edited by Robert Pinsky and Maggie Dietz

This PowerPoint presentation

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