

the image, then the idea it carries



What a Flamingo poetry question tests

- class 12 poems lean more on a single controlling image than a story, so the question tests reading that image
- a stanza question wants the image explained, then the idea the image is standing in for
- a device question still needs the exact words quoted, then the effect explained in the reader's own terms
- several of these poems argue a position, on the self, on stillness, on the past, name it plainly when asked

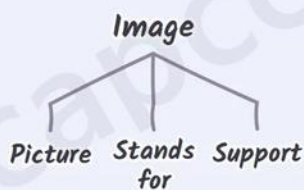
Reading a Flamingo poem for the answer

- find the poem's one controlling image early, most of the poem builds around it
- note where the poem turns from describing to reflecting, that turn usually carries the theme
- a poem's title is rarely decorative here, check what it adds once you've read the whole piece
- read the last stanza twice, it usually states or restates the poem's position

Poem	Poet	Built to teach
My Mother at Sixty-six	Kamala Das	a single image carrying fear of loss, explained in stages
Keeping Quiet	Pablo Neruda	an idea built through repetition rather than through a story
A Thing of Beauty	John Keats	an argument stated, then supported stanza by stanza
A Roadside Stand	Robert Frost	two worlds set side by side to argue a position
Aunt Jennifer's Tigers	Adrienne Rich	a symbol read through what it lets its maker not be

Image explanation vs poem's argument

Explaining an image



a root box labelled Image branching down to three labelled children: Picture, Stands for, Support

- describe the image literally first, what is actually pictured
- say what larger idea the image stands in for
- support the link with the poem's own words

The poem's argument



three stops in order along a dashed path: Position set, Built up, Restated, the shape a Flamingo poem's argument usually follows

- state the position the poem is taking in one line
- trace two stanzas that build toward it
- close by tying the position to the poem's final lines

an image question and an argument question use the same poem differently, check which the question names