Analyzing Diction
• First, take note of the specific words that most resonate with you as the reader. What sorts of words does the speaker use? Are the words informal or formal? Do the words deal with a specific subject, issue, or area of study? Do some words have multiple meanings? Are the words used offensive or euphemistic?
• Explain why the speaker uses the words he/she uses. Explain the effects of these words on the reader and note any patterns or changes in the kinds of words used throughout the speech or poem.

Analyzing Syntax
• First, map out each individual sentence, noting whether the sentences are long or short, simple, complex, or compound. You may also want to consider looking at verb tenses and whether the author speaks in the active or passive voice.
• Then, consider and explain what the effects are of the syntactical structure of the excerpt. For instance, a short sentence amid several long, convoluted sentences will often be emphasized. Therefore, the speaker is trying to emphasize the content of that sentence to his audience.

Analyzing Similes and Metaphors
• Identify the two unlike things being compared
• Explain the significance of the comparison; how does this comparison of two things that aren’t typically compared elucidate some idea? How does it make the idea of the line clearer?

Analyzing Hyperboles
• Establish that it is indeed a hyperbole by clarifying what is being exaggerated. Show that the exaggeration is not meant to be taken literally.
• Explain the significance of the hyperbole – what idea does it reinforce or illuminate?

Analyzing Allusions
• First clarify what the reference is (who or what is being referred to; what do we need to know about this reference to understand it?)
• Explain why the author alludes to that person or thing; what is the significance of the allusion in creating the broader message or meaning.

Analyzing Personification
• First identify what inanimate object or abstract idea is being personified. Explain the human qualities it has been given.
• Analyze how giving that object human qualities is meaningful. What does it add to the overall meaning of the piece?
Analyzing Imagery
• It can be helpful to identify what type of image you are observing: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, kinetic, etc.
• Don’t just say the image creates a strong picture in the reader’s mind (in fact, don’t discuss the reader’s mind at all)
• Instead, analyze why the author uses that image, what effect it creates, why creating an image (showing vs. telling) is effective.

Analyzing a Paradox
• When you identify a paradox, clarify what about it is paradoxical. What makes it seem contradictory on the surface?
• Then, even though it seems contradictory, explain how it reveals some truth.

Analyzing Epiphanies
• First, an epiphany is not any realization a person has. It is a realization that is eye-opening and profound.
• When discussing an epiphany, it is helpful to pinpoint the cause(s) of the realization; what led the writer to that epiphany? Finally, it is important to discuss how the epiphany affected him/her.