**The SMILER approach: *Refining Your Response (AQA Lit P2c, Q1)***

**The ‘Smiler’ technique can, if you’re not careful, produce a very mechanical response that reads in a very predictable way. Use the advice below to add polish and originality to your response; and remember these key words if you want to get the highest grade:**



**INSIGHTFUL – *being able to see beneath the surface***

**CRITICAL - *being able to examine the details as well as the whole; using the right terminology***

**IMAGINATIVE – *exploring a variety of credible interpretations, finding a different way around the poem***

**ENGAGEMENT – *sounding genuinely interested in the poem and what the poet has to write***

**EVALUATIVE – *being able to express admiration for the poem and appreciate the poet’s craft***

1. **Subject – while answering the five questions in this section, also ensure that your sentences are well linked and follow on smoothly, rather than standing alone. This could be through using words such as ‘however’ , ‘nevertheless’ and ‘additionally’. Open up the question with your introduction, perhaps using a ‘hook’ or rhetorical question. Remember to include the terms of the question. Try to use an evaluative word i.e.: ‘This *powerful / moving / thought-provoking / multi-layered* poem…’ Another good idea, is to look at your first and second sentences, and see how the intro would read if they were swapped around. Is this a more attention-grabbing opening? Alternatively, try opening with: ‘In this (thought-provoking / beautiful / harrowing / clever) poem, (poet’s name) explores…’**
2. **Movement of Ideas – Look at the last sentence in your intro, and think about how you might link smoothly into this section. Eg: This overall message is broken down into a number of clearly-defined sections…’ Ensure that you have identified the key moods or tones that define the poem, and show a) how the poet moves between them and b) how the poet uses the FORM (type / stanza formation) and structure (order of events) to move from one to the other. Think of an IMAGINATIVE way to link this to the CONTENT of the poem. Again, use *evaluate* adjectives such as ‘rigid’, ‘free’ , ‘loose’ here. Remember to use technical words such as ‘structure’ ‘stanza’ ‘enjambment’ etc. Again, check your sentences flow on from each other.**
3. **Imagery – This is a good chance of using the technical terms ‘metaphor’ and ‘simile’, but use them in your ANAYSIS rather than the point. Lead with the content / idea, and mention the technique via your analysis. Eg: ‘The poet develops his metaphor further, by comparing the …’ make sure your points lead by the effect, not the techniques themselves. Also slip in some evaluative words : ‘this *highly-original* simile / *powerful figurative* image…’ [‘figurative’ is just an adjective describing something not literal]**
4. **Language – Remember that you’re not just poking your head under the bonnet of a car and listing parts here! Your POINTS should be a series of overall observations about how language is used THROUHGOUT the poem; and your examples give support to them, with an ANALYSIS of specific examples. These should be original and sharply observed. Try to spot things that others wouldn’t have done! Check that your expression is clear and really appreciates the poet’s style.**
5. **Emotion - Think of a good way of creating a LINK between LANGUAGE and EMOTION sections. Check that the words you are using to label the emotions felt are the appropriate ones. Try to use a thesaurus to find more effective alternatives. Also, realise that this section is your chance to really show an appreciation of what the poet / character is feeling, and to identify HOW these are being expressed. BUT – check that you are writing clearly and well.**
6. **Response - ensure that your conclusion is powerful and that you have expressed your views in a way that shows INSIGHT and demonstrates ENTHUSIASM for the poem. Try adding words that do this and end on a high! You could also use the response section to explore other ways of interpreting or feeling about the poem.**

**SUMMARY – A CHECKLIST**

* **Intro – enthusiastic / evaluative / engages with terms in the question**
* **EACH SECTION – clearly written, uses blended quotations, explores alternative meanings**
* **Sections LINK – using words and phrases such as ‘initially’, ‘additionally’ , ‘complimenting this’ , ‘finally’…**
* **Evaluative ADJECTIVES and ADVERBS are added : *powerfully, moving, startling , subtle , cleverly…***
* **You refer to the poet by surname and use a variety of verbs to show what the poet is doing: the poet *evokes / creates / hints / implies / sketches / paints / describes***
* **The ending is the peak and culmination of the essay and builds all ideas together as one, rather than merely summarising. Avoid ‘In conclusion’ or ‘in summary…’**
* **IS THE RESPONSE: *critical ? imaginative? evaluative? insightful?***