Reading a Blake poem

1. Read through the poem and quickly jot down any thoughts that come into your head while you are reading it.

2. Highlight or underline any images or symbols that appear in other Blake poems you have read. Make a note of which poems these are and whether the references are similar in idea or different.

3. What is the message of the poem? Is it similar to any other poems you have studied? What does this suggest about Blake’s poetry?

4. Look at the form and rhythm of the poem. How does it compare to other poems you have studied? How does Blake use some or all of the following:
   - sound patterning (alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition)
   - punctuation (caesura, enjambement, end-stopped lines)
   - metre (feet to the line, pattern of beats, number of stanzas, number of lines per stanza).

5. What voices or viewpoints does Blake use in the poem? Have you noticed a similar pattern in other poems? What is the effect of his employment of different voices or viewpoints?

6. How does Blake use imagery in the poem - through direct description, simile or metaphor, personification, or symbols? How does he use connotations to convey his underlying meanings?

7. How does Blake juxtapose his images and ideas in the poem? What is the effect of the juxtaposition?

8. Examine the lexis (vocabulary) and semantic fields within the poem. What do they suggest about Blake’s meaning? How effective is Blake’s employment of them?

9. What can you infer from the poem about Blake’s opinions of the society in which he lived? His ideas about childhood? His views of religion? His ideas about love? His views on spirituality?

10. Consider the illustration that accompanies the poem. What does it add to the ideas that you found in the poem itself?