

A List of Things That Will Set You Free

A simple poem that overflows with meaning

About the Poem

Learning Objective: Students will analyze a poem, then use it as a model to write their own.

Featured Skill: analyzing and writing poetry

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.4, W.4, W.5

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Poem read-aloud
- Text-to-speech

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Poetry Analysis
- Featured Skill: Poetry Planner

Connected poems from the Scope archives:

- "A Poppy Blooms"
- "Mistake"
- "Over the Weather"
- "When My Noisy Mind Quiets"
- "Song of Bravery"

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (5 minutes)

Do Now: Journal and Discuss (5 minutes)

- Project the following prompt on your whiteboard for students to respond to in their journal or on a piece of paper. Alternatively, have students respond on sticky notes and place them on the board.

Fill in at least one of the blanks below:

Something that makes me feel happy: _____

A piece of advice someone has given me: _____

A piece of advice I've given to someone else: _____

Something I have to remind myself of sometimes: _____

Something that makes me feel better when things feel difficult: _____

- Invite volunteers to share their responses.

2. Read and Discuss (30 minutes)

- Have students follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**, located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- For a second read, invite students to read the poem silently to themselves. Then discuss the following questions.

Poetry Analysis

(25 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

- 1. What do you think the title of the poem means?** *The title of the poem is about how to be “free” of feelings and situations that weigh you down—that make you feel unhappy, stuck, burdened, overwhelmed, etc. The title also sets up the structure of the poem, which is literally a list of things.*
- 2. Consider the first two lines. How might “feet” and “wheels” set someone free?** *Both feet and wheels (such as on a car, a skateboard, a bicycle, or a bus) can help you move away from a bad situation. But also, moving and traveling allow you to explore and experience new things.*
- 3. How could “wind” and “sunshine” set someone free?** *There’s something about being outside in nature that can lift our spirits. We might feel inspired by the beauty of nature. Being outside can also help us disconnect; it can help take our minds off whatever might be troubling us.*
- 4. The poet writes that you can say to yourself, “It’s not my fault” and “It is my fault, and I will fix it.” What do you think the poet means in these two lines?** *In some situations, we are not to blame; some situations are out of our control. Worrying or beating ourselves up about something we can’t control accomplishes nothing. On the other hand, we all make mistakes. What is freeing is realizing that we can “fix” our mistakes, whether by apologizing or taking some action to resolve the situation.*
- 5. Look at the illustrations that accompany the poem. Choose one or two to analyze. How do they connect to the poem?** *Answers will vary. Students may say the birds flying out of the cage connect to the title—the birds are flying free and are no longer kept inside a cage. The girl is holding a megaphone, but it’s flipped, as though it is speaking to the girl. This could represent the stanza about what you can say to yourself.*
- 6. What are some other actions or ideas that can “set you free”?** *Answers will vary.*

3. Write Your Own (30 minutes)

- Have students complete the **Featured Skill Activity: Poetry Planner**. This activity will help them brainstorm ideas and provide tips for writing their own poem in response to the prompt:

Write your own “A List of Things That Will _____” poem, filling in the blank however you like. Use Sidman’s poem as a model.

Other poems from the Scope Archives to “set you free”:

- [“A Poppy Blooms”](#) by Tachibana Hokushi
- [“Mistake”](#) by Linda Mitchell
- [“Over the Weather”](#) by Naomi Shihab Nye
- [“When My Noisy Mind Quiets”](#) by Georgia Heard
- [“Song of Bravery”](#) by Joyce Sidman