

My Apologies

A poem about deciding what's worth it

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, R.5, 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

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.

Write a short note to yourself or to another person, place, or thing, apologizing for something you did. You can write about something serious, but you can also keep it light. Here are some examples:

- *apologize to yourself for staying up too late and making yourself tired*
- *apologize to your brother for leaving your stinky socks on the bathroom floor*
- *apologize to your glasses for breaking them*

In your note, be sure to state the following:

1. *what you did*
 2. *why you did it*
 3. *whether you'll ever do it again*
- 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. How many stanzas are there? *four*
2. How many lines are in each stanza? *seven*
3. Does the poem have a pattern of rhymes, or is it free verse? (Free verse is poetry that does not have a regular pattern of rhymes.) *It is free verse.*
4. Can you find an example of repetition in the poem? *Hint: Look at how each stanza begins. Each stanza begins with "To _____: I..." and the blank is always filled in with one of the speaker's body parts.*
5. In this poem, the speaker makes four apologies. How sorry does the speaker seem to you? In other words, do they seem really and truly sorry, a little bit sorry, or not sorry at all? Explain what makes you say so. Answers will vary, but students are likely to say the speaker sounds only a little bit sorry, if they are sorry at all. The first two apologies they make, they follow with an admission that they are going to repeat the offense: After apologizing to the roof of their mouth for having repeatedly burned it on pizza, they say they will do it "again and again," and after apologizing to their feet for wearing uncomfortable shoes, they say "the thing is" and go on to explain why they are planning to wear the shoes again. When they apologize to their wrist for spraining it, they start to reflect on how they could have prevented the accident, but then seem to dismiss that train of thought, saying "ah, well, the past cannot be changed" and noting that their wrist seems to be healing well. They do not sound particularly concerned about it. They sound more earnest in their apology to their heart, saying "I have failed to protect you many times" and "it is never my wish to see you in pain," but even here, they justify the harm they have done, telling their heart that they have put it at risk for its own good and that they know it is strong—in other words, that their heart can handle being hurt.
6. When the speaker apologizes to the roof of their mouth, they are apologizing for physically injuring it. It's the same thing with their feet and their wrist: They are apologizing for physically injuring those body parts. What about when they apologize to their heart? Are they apologizing for physically injuring that organ? If not, what do they mean when they say, "I have failed to protect you many times. You are fragile, and it is never my wish to see you in pain"? The speaker is not talking about having physically injured the organ of their heart—they're talking about causing themselves to feel disappointment, loss, sadness, fear, or some other kind of emotional pain. In other words, they are using their heart as a metaphor for their feelings and emotions.
7. In the fourth stanza, what do you think the speaker means when they tell their heart, "it is only by putting you at risk that I can set you up for bliss"? The speaker is saying that true

happiness, joy, satisfaction, growth, etc., cannot occur without taking risks. They mean that if they never took any risks—never did anything that could lead to disappointment, frustration, heartbreak, etc.—they would be depriving themselves of opportunities that could also lead to great joy.

8. **At the end of the poem, the speaker says to their heart, “Besides, while you may be fragile, you are also strong.” Explain what they mean.** *The speaker is saying that while they know they are sensitive and that their feelings can easily be hurt, they also know that they have the strength to deal with life’s challenges and disappointments.*

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 a poem titled “My Apologies.” Your poem can be to yourself, to a part of yourself, or to another person, place, or thing.