

# Poetry

for our future!

For decades, writers have used poetry as a form of social commentary – to denounce long practiced traditions, values, laws, or societal complacency of the times; to expose corrupt governments in power; to advocate for social justice and change. Now you will too.

Write an original poem that conveys a theme about a **human or civil rights issue** or social practice, behavior/attitude, or injustice that relates to one. Think of your poem as an opportunity to raise awareness and educate your audience. You will be researching this issue to inspire you and help you develop your poem in a way that shows a knowledgeable and insightful perspective.

## Requirements



- Your poem must be 70 – 200 words in length, typed on a blank sheet of paper. In the top **left** corner of the paper, include your name in MLA format (double spaced). The poem itself should be single spaced except of course, when you begin a new stanza. Use the template set-up for you in Google classroom called Human Rights Poem.
- Record the word count in parenthesis in the bottom right corner. Number every third line in the left hand margins (1, 3, 6, 9, etc.). You may handwrite this in.
- Just like in novels, the speaker should be a character or voice **you create**.
- The arrangement or order of words, line breaks, punctuation and the grouping of lines into stanzas should be strategic – consider how they might help contribute to the meaning of your poem.
- While the whole poem does NOT need to rhyme, you must have at least **1-2 rhymes** embedded in your poem. Check out this online rhyming dictionary to help you find a word that rhymes with one you want to use --> <https://www.rhymezone.com>
- Use sophisticated diction, sensory language & words with rich connotations. No expletives or derogatory words.
- Use at least one **allusion** – an indirect reference to a **well-known** story, poem, song, myth, person, historical event, etc. Include enough **clues** to your allusion like specific names of people or places so that it is clear.
- Use at least **two additional stylistic devices from the following list**: simile, metaphor, personification, repetition, rhetorical questions, symbol, contrasting language, alliteration, punctuation
- End your poem with an unexpected twist or powerful flash of insight.
- **Give your poem an original title.**  
Think of the title as an additional way to add meaning to your poem. Titles can foreshadow the theme or be a clue to the hidden meaning of the poem and what you are really talking about. They can help create an “Ah-ha moment!” when the reader realizes the connection between the poem and title. The title can be a way to add context too helping the reader to understand the time and place or who the speaker is or is talking to. Consider a play on words or double meaning. There are lots of possibilities but the title is important and should not be an afterthought. Include the title in your word count.

### **Explication Essay (an analysis of your poem)**

Write a 500-600 word essay (typed, 2-3 page front side only double spaced) about your poem explaining how the stylistic devices you chose help convey your theme and how your poem ties in to today's world. The response should embed some of your research. A more in depth description of what this involves will be provided.

### **Works Cited Page**

Attach a Works Cited page listing all the sources you have paraphrased, quoted or used information from in your essay. You are required to have at least three. These may be different than the ones you initially researched for this assignment.

Once you have decided on a topic, you will need to narrow it. To do this, consider ... an event in history, a current event or law, or specific practices or behaviors. For example, if focusing on the environment, you might write a poem about the detrimental problems of aerosols to our ozone like the use of hairspray, insecticides and air fresheners that are pervasive in many people's homes. Or if you are interested in researching and writing about the rights of immigrants, your poem might focus on The Dream Act also called DACA (the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which has protected undocumented immigrants who arrived in the US as children (referred to as Dreamers) from deportation. LGBTQ rights could further be narrowed to specific issues like the current legal practice in some states of conversion therapy (pseudoscientific practice of trying to change an individual's sexual orientation from homosexual or bisexual to heterosexual using psychological or spiritual interventions). Your poem can also focus on exposing certain groups—large corporations, the media, specific leaders, etc. - for not acting more responsibly tying current practices to the violation of a specific human rights issue.

### **Labor rights/ fair wages**

- child labor
- forced labor / slavery
- working conditions
- exploitation
- human trafficking

### **Health**

- access to health care
- support for mental health
- euthanasia

### **Land Rights**

- rights of indigenous people

### **Rights of Immigrants**

- refugees seeking asylum
- sanctuaries
- US detention centers for children/ separation of families crossing the US border

### **Poverty**

- homelessness
- hunger
- access to natural resources like drinking water

### **The distribution of wealth & resources**

### **Gender Equality**

- child marriage
- domestic violence
- reproductive rights/ abortion
- gender stereotypes
- sexual harassment, assault & rape
- gender wage gap

### **Gender Identity & LGBTQ Rights**

- Discrimination in the workplace
- Harassment & bullying
- Violent hate crimes

### **Civil Rights**

- Rights of people with disabilities

### **Racism /Discrimination**

Hate crimes

### **Justice System**

- Excessive force/police brutality
- Right to a fair trial / due process
- Unfair detainment / detention
- The death penalty
- Racial discrimination in the justice system

### **Protecting our environment & nature resources**

\*integral to a wide range of human rights including our health and ability to survive & live (this is also connected to mass migration of people relocating because resources are insufficient to sustain them).

- recycling
- living green / reducing our carbon footprint
- climate change
- air and water pollution
- deforestation

### **Other Human Rights Issues**

- bullying / cyber bullying
- access to education / segregation
- freedom of speech & assembly
- right to privacy in a digital age
- gun violence

### **For more ideas:**

<http://hshonorsenglish2.weebly.com> -> Units --> Human Rights (scroll down to green box with links to global human rights organizations)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ DUE \_\_\_\_\_

H-1b

Research Your Human Rights Issue

Directions: Research your human rights issue and find at least 3 articles written in the last decade that are relevant to it. Your research can include articles related to specific incidents or events, violations, laws, general background information, history related to the human right, etc. Do not use Wikipedia as one of your three sources.

1. What human rights issue will you be writing your poem about? You may choose to focus on a specific incident or a larger pattern, but narrow your focus to more than just the human right (eg. child labor in the chocolate industry, the effect of car emissions on climate change, etc)

**Article #1:** Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Newspaper / Organization / Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

Date Written / Published \_\_\_\_\_ Date you accessed it \_\_\_\_\_

Write a one-sentence summary of what the article is about **moving beyond what the title of the text already tells us.**

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Record additional notes which may be written as bullets (5-7 bullet points) using quotation marks around language you copy from the source.

**Article #2:** Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Newspaper / Organization / Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_ -

Date Written / Published \_\_\_\_\_ Date you accessed it \_\_\_\_\_

Write a one-sentence summary of what the article is about **moving beyond what the title of the text already tells us.**

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Record additional notes which may be written as bullets (5-7 bullet points) using quotation marks around language you copy from the source.

**Article #3:** Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Newspaper / Organization / Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_ -

Date Written / Published \_\_\_\_\_ Date you accessed it \_\_\_\_\_

Write a one-sentence summary of what the article is about **moving beyond what the title of the text already tells us.**

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Record additional notes which may be written as bullets (5-7 bullet points) using quotation marks around language you copy from the source.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ DUE \_\_\_\_\_

### Planning Your Poem

Directions: Read through ALL the questions first before answering any of them then begin with the ones where you might already have some ideas about. You are not locked into these ideas when you write your poem. This process is designed to get you thinking about how you will intentionally craft your poem with purpose AND how you will use your research to create a poem that educates your reader.

1. What is the human rights issue you are writing about and more specifically what will your focus be?
  
2. What theme would you like to convey in your poem?
  
3. Will your poem be a literal representation of the events or a metaphorical one? What story will you tell?  
 "A Work of Artifice" is about a bonsai being pruned and cared for by a gardener but the poem is a larger metaphor for how women are viewed and treated in a patriarchal society. You might also consider using a play on words (eg. An industrial plant might be described as poison ivy for its toxic fumes poisoning the air and harmful effect on people as well as the invasive nature of this "plant" which is similar to how large industrial plants have spread, devastating our natural environment.)
  
4. How might you use your research to help you write your poem? Brainstorm **a list** of 3-4 moments, events or images that might occur in your poem that reference your research and **move beyond common knowledge**. \*Think of your poem as a series of snapshots that tell a story. What snapshots will your poem reveal?

B. Consider how **time** and **place** play a role in your poem. When and where is each moment, event or image occurring? Is your speaker remembering something from the past, speaking in the moment or looking to the future (or a combination)? Remember how Emma Watson speaks of when at 14, when 15 and when at 18 she experienced gender assumptions to show an on-going pattern? Consider flashbacks from present to past to present again.

5. Who is your speaker? Are there multiple speakers?  
The speaker in poetry is NOT the author, but a voice of someone the author creates. The speaker can be a real person living or dead, an inanimate object, an animal, or a character you create. Or like “A Work of Artifice,” some of the poem may be an unknown voice (although in this poem likely a female) with a more specific speaker in part of it like the gardener who speaks to the bonsai he is caring for.
  
6. Is your speaker talking specifically to someone? (a parent talking to his/her son or daughter, a former president saying goodbye to his country, a gay man or woman writing his vows to his future partner, a teacher talking to her class, etc.)
  
7. What kind of speaker, persona or character might best communicate the theme you are trying to get across? Consider the age, gender, and race as well as his or her lifestyle, background and identity. Is your speaker from a specific location?
  
8. A. In what ways is your **speaker** aware of or affected by this human rights issue?  
  
B. What is your speaker’s attitude about the human right issue you are writing about?
  
9. In what ways is your audience implicated in this issue? In what ways are social norms, attitudes or behaviors contributing to complacency or ignorance about this issue? How might you show this in your poem?
  
10. How will you create suspense, build tension or create an unexpected twist?  
Tips:
  - Create dilemmas, use time constraints, and focus on impending dangers
  - Use different or opposing points of views about goals, attitudes, values and perspectives.  
Ex: In “A Work of Artifice” we hear both the speaker’s disapproval and disgust for conventions that restrict women and the gardener’s voice who “croons” to the tree in a condescending tone about how lucky it is.

Last Name _____		First Name _____			
	Advanced (A)	Proficient (B)	Basic (C)	Below Basic (D)	Far Below Basic (F)
Content & Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your poem shows insight &amp; helps educate your reader about a relevant human rights issue.</li> <li>Implies a connection to the reader (eg. how this issue relates to or should matter to the reader).</li> <li>Evokes strong emotion.</li> </ul>	Theme is developed over the course of the poem & presents a knowledgeable perspective about a human rights issue.	Connects to a human rights issue but meaning of the poem is simplistic or based on a cliché (Don't judge a book by its cover).	Poem connects to a human rights issue but fails to convey strong meaning.	Has written a poem but content is not connected to prompt.
Poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All that a Proficient is + something extra.</li> <li><b>Examples:</b></li> <li>Effective use of multiple stylistic devices.</li> <li>Strong use of rhyme that contributes to the tone &amp; meaning of the poem.</li> <li>The form or structure of your poem is designed to convey meaning.</li> <li>The poem ends powerfully with an unexpected twist, irony or flash of insight.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops a strong point of view or character.</li> <li><b>Arrangement of words and line breaks</b> are strategic to support the sound, meaning or rhythm of the poem.</li> <li>Effective use of <b>allusion</b>.</li> <li>Effective use of 2+ stylistic devices</li> <li>Conveys a distinct tone.</li> <li>Word choice is precise; uses concrete words with strong connotative meaning.</li> <li>Meets all requirements (word count, title, typed on a blank sheet of paper, etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>Has all or most of the elements in a proficient including minimum word count, but <b>effectiveness is limited</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacks strong sensory details.</li> <li>Poem uses <b>too many</b> words that do not add meaning (the, of, a, an, is, are, was, it, you, by, of, etc.) or <b>abstract words</b> (freedom, liberty, etc.) that are too open to interpretation</li> <li>Comparisons in figurative language are obvious or lack a strong connection (ig. Leaves the reader wondering, "How is ___ like ___?")</li> </ul>	<p>Meets at least 50% of requirements including the minimum word count.</p> <p>Scores a 2 for any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written as if prose or <b>in sentences</b>.</li> <li>Writer uses language that lacks variety (overuse of repetition), is dull or very simplistic.</li> </ul>	<p>Arrangement of words appears random.</p> <p>Plagiarized</p> <p>Language is inappropriate.</p> <p>Meets less than 50% of requirements.</p>

A+	20
A	19
A-	18
B+	17.5
B	17
B-	16
C+	15.5
C	15
C-	14
D+	13.5
D	13
D-	12
F	0-11

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

	Advanced (A)	Proficient (B)	Basic (C)	Below Basic (D)	Far Below Basic (F)																										
Explication Essay	<p>All that a Proficient is +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of human rights issue, research and what is going on in the world today is woven skillfully throughout your essay as it connects to the parts of the poem you are discussing.</li> <li>• Analysis of stylistic devices is in depth &amp; insightful.</li> <li>• Discusses tone (including any shifts that occur) and how word choice or other stylistic devices contribute to it.</li> <li>• Makes connections between multiple parts of the text including the title.</li> <li>• Insightful theme that focuses on the significance, far-reaching consequences or implications of the message.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discusses research related to human rights issue throughout essay.</li> <li>• Explains how the theme is developed over the course of your poem discussing the text in order referencing specific words, phrases &amp; lines throughout your explication.</li> <li>• Quotes are smoothly integrated with context.</li> <li>• Moves beyond summarizes or paraphrasing text.</li> <li>• Explains allusion and how at least 2 stylistic devices in the poem contribute to the theme discussing specific language.</li> <li>• Uses transitions as you move from one idea to the next.</li> <li>• Closes with a theme or universal message.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides some background on the human rights issue.</li> <li>• Partially explains the poem and how the theme is developed.</li> <li>• Discusses most of the text in the poem <b>moving beyond summary</b>.</li> <li>• Some relevant context is provided, but is incomplete.</li> <li>• Points out stylistic devices and discusses specific words related to the stylistic device, but how these ideas connect to or add to the theme is unclear</li> </ul> <p>*Must have a Works Cited page to earn a C or higher.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on the literal meaning of the poem.</li> <li>• Discussion of text is very general, obvious or limited (only focuses on a few lines).</li> <li>• Context is mostly missing, irrelevant or repeating info already in the quote.</li> </ul>	<p>Essay is significantly incomplete or missing key elements.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>A+</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>A</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>A-</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>B+</td><td>17.5</td></tr> <tr><td>B</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>B-</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>C+</td><td>15.5</td></tr> <tr><td>C</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>C-</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>D+</td><td>13.5</td></tr> <tr><td>D</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>D-</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>F</td><td>0-11</td></tr> </table>	A+	20	A	19	A-	18	B+	17.5	B	17	B-	16	C+	15.5	C	15	C-	14	D+	13.5	D	13	D-	12	F	0-11
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Mechanics for Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a formal style &amp; tone</li> <li>• Precise &amp; engaging choice of words</li> <li>• Purposeful variety in sentence structure &amp; sentence length.</li> <li>• Mostly error free</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a formal style and tone.</li> <li>• Has appropriate and some variety in both vocabulary and sentence structure.</li> <li>• Has minor errors which can be easily corrected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has adequate but inconsistent use of language, using generally appropriate vocabulary and some variety in sentence structure.</li> <li>• Has frequent errors but overall, errors do not interfere with reader's understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks about self or parts of the essay.</li> <li>• Informal language, slang, abbreviations.</li> <li>• Vocabulary is simplistic &amp; repetitive; sentence structure lacks variety.</li> <li>• Errors interrupt reader's focus or cause confusion</li> </ul>	<p>Errors make writing very difficult to understand.</p>																										



**Introduction** (4-5 sentences)

Begin your response with the title in quotes and a description of what the overall poem is about identifying the human rights issue and more specific topic you are addressing.

- Your first & last name here          's poem "Title Here in Quotes" about \_\_\_\_\_  
calls attention to \_\_\_\_\_.

Provide more detail and explanation about the human rights issue bringing in some of your research. What is going on in today's world related to this issue and /or the event you are writing about? Identify the groups, populations and / or locations who are most affected.

- According to \_\_\_\_\_ (name of website, organization or author's last name).

**Thesis:** End this paragraph with the theme of your poem keeping in mind each of your body paragraphs must tie back to and support it.

- A major theme this poem conveys is \_\_\_\_\_

**3 Body Paragraphs**

- Begin each body paragraph with a topic sentence that ties back to your thesis.
- In the rest of your paragraph walk your reader through **each stanza or section of text in order or as it logically makes sense based on your topic sentence**, explaining how your poem calls attention to this issue, was informed by your research and shows your knowledge and understanding of it. Reference specific words, phrases and lines as you do so moving beyond just summarizing what your poem already tells us. Discuss how stylistic devices, the connotation of words, the tone, speaker / point of view, punctuation, dialogue, line breaks, rhyme, etc. contribute to the meaning. Use the G-9 sentence frames to help you.
- Continue to bring in research and NEW information about this human rights issue and what is going on in the world today your reader may be unaware throughout the rest of your essay as it relates to the stylistic devices you used and other elements of your poem. Avoid repeating what you have already said.
- As you bring up specific information you have acquired from other sources, acknowledge and cite your sources.
- When you quote poetry, blend the quote into a sentence you have written about the text using a slash to indicate line breaks and include the line numbers in parenthesis after the quote. See G-5

**Brief Conclusion** (2-3 sentences)

- Revisit your theme stating it using different language and a different sentence structure.
- Discuss the author's intent. Discuss the larger historical context of the times and how it relates to your poem. What types of thinking, attitudes, behaviors, lifestyle choices, etc. are necessary to make a change?)

**Works Cited Page** (Use BibMe.org)

- Attach a Works Cited page listing all the sources you have paraphrased, quoted or used information from in your essay.
- You are required to have at least three. These may be different than the ones you initially researched for this assignment.

Sentence Frames

- Topic Sentence: (this sentence should be a claim that ties back to and supports a part of your thesis)
- The poem begins by describing \_\_\_\_\_
- Through the stylistic device of \_\_\_\_\_, the author \_\_\_\_\_. As \_\_\_\_\_ (*explain the context*), the speaker / \_\_\_\_\_ (*then describe what is occurring/being described in the poem or quote the text*).  
Use G-9 to explain stylistic device.
- The reader begins to realize \_\_\_\_\_. This idea is further developed as \_\_\_\_\_.  
The description of \_\_\_\_\_ suggests that \_\_\_\_\_.

**Other Elements You Must Discuss Somewhere in Your Essay**

**Discuss the significance of the title.**

- This brings us to the significance of the title. Words like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are a reference to \_\_\_\_\_ suggesting that \_\_\_\_\_.

**Discuss your allusion, explaining what or who the allusion is to including any important information that will help your reader understand your reference.**

- The author's use of allusion also calls attention to the issue of \_\_\_\_\_. For example, the *phrase/words/name* "\_\_\_\_\_" tell the reader he/she is referring to \_\_\_\_\_ (*the historical event of* \_\_\_\_, *The Declaration of Independence, The Emancipation Proclamation, The Bible, the poem "Strange Fruit" by Abel Meeropol*). The reason the speaker is making this allusion is to \_\_\_\_\_ (*remind the reader* \_\_\_\_, *to prove* \_\_\_\_, *to see the similarity between* \_\_\_\_ *and* \_\_\_\_, *to show that* \_\_\_\_).

**Discuss the tone and any shifts in tone that occur somewhere in your essay.**

- The poem ends when \_\_\_\_\_ and the speaker, says, "quote here" (#). This last line helps us to understand the overall tone of the author is \_\_\_\_\_ about / by \_\_\_\_\_.