



Poetry of Resistance

Learning to Write Poems of Protest, Resistance,
and Empowerment

What is poetry?

Poetry is a type of writing that aims to evoke an emotional response in the reader through rhythmic language and form.

Have you read any poetry in the past?



What is poetry of resistance?

Any form of poetry that brings attention to and challenges a social or political injustice in the world.

These poems often address oppressive government regimes or issues like war, inequality, or racism.



Why is it important?

The most effective forms of protest poetry combine poetic qualities with a desire for change in order to stimulate the audience's interest and inspire action.

Can you think of any art forms—not just poetry—that have inspired you to act? Maybe a book or a film?

Why do you think that the arts can inspire us to act?

Example: Pablo Neruda

Pablo Neruda was a 20th century Chilean poet and politician whose poetry addressed the social and political oppression he witnessed around him.

His poetry examines social injustice, war, and the loss of freedom. It was meant to inspire people to challenge an unjust regime.



*You can cut all the flowers, but you
can't stop spring from coming*

What does this quote mean to you?
How does it make you feel?

Pablo Neruda (continued)

In 1934, Neruda wrote a series of poems in response to the Spanish Civil War. In “I’m Explaining a Few Things”, he captures the country’s tense and complicated political story.

*You will ask why his poetry
doesn't speak to us of dreams, of the leaves,
of the great volcanoes of his native land?
Come and see the blood in the streets,
come and see
the blood in the streets,
come and see the blood
in the streets!*



His collection reveals the political power of poetry and its capacity to inspire social change.

Example: Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou was a twentieth century American poet and civil rights activist. Her poetry addresses the cruelty of slavery and calls attention to the fight for civil rights in the US.

*You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

— “Still I Rise”, Maya Angelou



What does this quote mean to you? How does it make you feel?

Youth Poetry



Priscila Oliveira Nascimento

The Weapon of the Minorities

Land of few
Land of money
Land where the proletariat cries for help
In this unhappy brutal order

Land where my sisters of race
Are cowardly tortured
And when they finally get a voice
Their life is taken away

If they think they can stop us
If they think they're going to detain us
I'm sorry, they're mistaken
Resistance will arise

As long as there is breath
For equality we will fight
Do not confuse with terrorism
Our weapon has only love to offer.

What is the message of this poem?

How is this message conveyed?

How does it make you feel?

Youth Poetry

Shivani Deshmukh

I Am a Women

I am the one
You will never get to know
I have scars, scars of my own
Scars that make me beautiful.

Some say, my smile is pretty,
Others tell me that I am icky.
Society forced me to notice,
My imperfections— as they call them
But this same society failed to realise
That these imperfections are my identity
I love them every angle

They say I will remain gullible
But these imperfections,
Are something that make me *Me*

They say, beauty is face
I say beauty is happiness
Happiness is not the absence of problems
It's the ability to deal with them

Yes, I was stronger
As my merriment descended
They were happy, contended
Because of my dreams and desires
They bring me down
They get happy when I drown

But I promise, I promise
This queen will rise to fight back
I am a women
Strong I was born to be
Victory was and still is in my blood
I will leave you wonderstruck

I am who I am,
A tigress by birth
I neither play victim nor do I point fingers
I stand and fight and rise
I am a women
And not who you want me to be
I am me.

the Ladies"

What is the message of this poem?

How is this message conveyed?

How does it make you feel?

Youth Poetry

Thayse Souza dos Santos Santos

Upside Down World

The world is upside down
Everything strangely changed
ALL our rights are
Brutally disdained
Rights of years ago
ignored, masked!

It's always the same news
Early in the morning, all around the world
Today another human
Destroyed a family,
Reaped the life of others
This is becoming a worldwide norm.

Rights should serve
everyone, it does not matter who.
Unfortunately, you are well or poorly treated
depending on what you have.
There is no protection for anyone
Men, women and children, all the same...

Let's have perseverance
Fight with legitimacy
We cannot let prejudice invalidate
The rights of humanity...

What is the message of this poem?

How is this message conveyed?

How does it make you feel?

Discussion

Have you ever written poetry before?

Do you think it might be an effective form of empowering people to act?

Is there any specific topic you'd like to address in your poetry?

Now it's your turn to try!

We'll take 5 minutes to brainstorm and then 20 minutes to write.

- Choose a topic
- Identify the emotions you associate with it and the message you are trying to evoke
- Set the scene
- Who is the narrator (if there is one)? What do they want?

Your poem can take any form and go in any direction you like. Feel free to write about your own personal experiences!

Would anyone like to share?

Final Discussion

Whether we're poets, teachers, activists, students, or ordinary citizens, we have the power to transform the world through acts of artistic expression like poetry. Poetry can be part of the collective way we dialogue with the injustices we face in the world.

What did you learn from this activity?

How did writing make you feel?

Do you think poems like these can inspire people to act?