
Freedom is Where?

Student Sheet

Chitto jetha bhoishunyo [*Where the mind is without fear*] is originally a Bengali language poem written in 1910 by Rabindranath Tagore before India's independence from the rule of the British Empire which wasn't achieved until 1947. It represents Tagore's vision of a new and free India. Tagore's own English translation of the poem was published in 1912,

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action;
Into that heaven of freedom, My Father, let my country awake.

***Freedom is Where?* List Poem**

This is a model for writing a list poem on the theme of 'freedom'.

The title of this list poem becomes the question, and each line of your poem provides an answer/response to this. Using the beginning word *Where* for each line helps to provide a structure for writing, as well as a repetition for impact and effect.

Writing Your Poem

As with other list poems, a sensible idea is to write as many lines as you can without too much thinking about it. This is sometimes called 'stream of consciousness' writing. This allows you to produce content and detail without being slowed up by trying too hard to get things perfect from the start! You can at a later stage revisit and revise these lines.

Ideas

Use Tagore's lines from his poem as a guide. Most of his suggestions are metaphoric – in other words, more about ideas than actual things. For example:

Where words come from the depth of truth

is an idea – a good one about honesty – rather than a real/literal reference like *from the mouth*

though a line like *from the honest mouth* would make it more metaphoric/suggestive of an idea and ideal.

Think about those aspects of your life and/or those of other people where you feel you would like to see more freedom from

restriction
barriers
oppression
war and conflict
rules and regulations
poverty
poor conditions
homelessness
others' opinions
others' decisions

and so on.

Abstract Ideas

As a final suggestion, you can write an entirely abstract poem to still express ideas about freedom, or mix this in with a range of approaches. For example, more abstract ideas could be like,

Where the sky is always purple
Where truth is in what we wear
Where voices speak syllables of love
Where time moves beyond ends
Where night lights honest ideas....

Remember, a poem does not need to make literal sense!