

**FOCUS ON WRITING POETRY**  
**At The Conclusion of WAR AND CHILDREN**

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Write an **I Wish poem**. Start your poem with "I wish" and complete this statement, expressing your own wishes for an end to the suffering of children caused by war.

Here are some examples:

**I wish**

that a flying saucer king  
would fly around the earth  
turning bullets into popcorn  
and gunpowder to ice cream

**And I wish**

men would be so happy eating them  
they'd forget all about war.

**I wish**

I were a gardener  
Who could inform a rose  
How beautiful it is...  
Who could explain to a weed  
What it's doing wrong-

if anything.

**Source:** Ronald Gross, published in ed. O'Donnell, James. J. (1971) *Now Poetry*  
*Try a Haiku Dig a Grook* Kitchener, Ontario: Edu-Media Ltd.

## Write a poem inspired by one of the Greatest Words In Our Language.

Choose a word: one that is significant, powerful, and influential. There is no "right answer".

Here are some sample words:

|           |               |             |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| life      | freedom       | trust       |
| power     | hate          | family      |
| happiness | understanding | hope        |
| unity     | knowledge     | harmony     |
| peace     | justice       | strength    |
| death     | war           | belief      |
| future    | tolerance     | negotiation |

Build short poems around your selection(s).

*Love*

There is one lifeline  
Spanning the open sea,  
To which have come desperately  
The people of all the centuries.  
So thin, so easy to be cut;  
Many have drowned when it broke for them  
Because no one has learned how to swim without it.

**Source:** Bill Snow, published in Powell, Brian. (1976) *Their Own Special Shape*. Don Mills: Collier Macmillan.

Write a **Song of Thanks** in which you reflect on the differences between your life in Canada and those of your same age in war torn countries.

Write a **Strangest Dream poem**, modeled on this song by Simon and Garfunkel. **What is your dream for an end to trauma and deaths of children in war?**

Last night I had the strangest dream  
I ever dreamed before  
I dreamed the world had all agreed  
To put an end to war  
I dreamed I saw a mighty room  
The room was filled with men

And the paper they were signing said  
They'd never fight again

And when the papers all were signed  
And a million copies made  
They all joined hands and bowed their heads  
And grateful prayers were prayed  
And the people in the streets below  
Were dancing round and round  
And guns and swords and uniforms  
Were scattered on the ground

Last night I had the strangest dream  
I ever dreamed before  
I dreamed the world had all agreed  
To put an end to war

### **Neighbours at War**

Watch the 1952 9 minute National Film Board [Neighbours](#)

1. What is the message of this short film?
2. Is this film effective today, despite the fact that it was made in 1952? Why or why not?
3. Write a poem describing the action in the film *Neighbours*, modeled on *Parable*, by William Soutar. Follow the line length and rhythm.

### **Parable (1937)**

Two neighbours, who were rather dense,  
Considered that their mutual fence  
Was more symbolic of their peace  
(Which they maintained should never cease)  
If each about his home and garden  
Set up a more substantial warden.  
Quickly they cleared away the fence  
To build a wall at great expense;  
And soon their little plots of ground  
Were barricaded all around:  
Yet still they added stone to stone,  
As if they never would be done,  
For when one neighbour seemed to tire  
The other shouted: Higher! Higher!

Thus day by day in their unease,  
They built the battlements of peace

Whose shadows, like a gathering blot,  
Darkened on each neglected plot,  
Until the ground, so overcast,  
Became a rank and weedy waste.

Now in obsession they uprear;  
Jealous and proud, and full of fear:  
And, lest they halt for lack of stone,  
They pull their dwelling-houses down.  
At last, by their insane excess,  
Their ramparts guard a wilderness;  
And hate, arising out of shame,  
Flares up into a wondrous flame:  
They curse; they strike; they break the wall  
Which buries them beneath its fall.