

# Literacy at Work

## how to write a poem



### SELF-PORTRAIT POEM ACTIVITY

*"My goal as a teaching artist is not to make every student a poet, but to make students discover the poetry within themselves." – Glenis Redmond*

Use this guide to interact with the "How to Write a Poem" video to see a poet show how to write a self-portrait poem, and then you will write one yourself.

### 1. WATCH

Watch the video "How to Write a Poem" on [hmhco.com/literacyatwork](https://hmhco.com/literacyatwork).



### 2. RESPOND

Respond to these questions. You may find it helpful to watch the video twice. Watch the video the first time to take notes on Glenis's writing advice. During the second viewing, listen and observe students using her advice to write their own poems.

- Do you have a favorite poem or poet?
- Glenis Redmond said the process of writing a poem connects the heart and the head. The heart represents emotions, and the head represents logic. How does writing a poem connect emotions with logic?
- What advice did you notice the students use from those who shared their poems?

# Literacy at Work

## how to write a poem

### 3. REVIEW VOCABULARY

Review the meanings of the vocabulary terms below. Each of the vocabulary words is a poetry device. The best way for the meaning of these words to stick is to practice using them. Use the examples below as a reference or return to the video and listen to Glenis's examples. Research each word online to find other examples of the poetry device.

#### Alliteration

Meaning	Try It Out
<p>Using the same consonant sound at the beginning of two or more closely connected words</p> <p><b>Example</b> The <b>bubbles blowing</b> through the kitchen <b>blossomed</b> as my <b>baby brother</b> giggled.</p>	<p>Write a line using <b>alliteration</b>. Try making the line about yourself.</p>

#### Assonance

Meaning	Try It Out
<p>The use of the same vowel sound in two or more closely connected words</p> <p><b>Example</b> I could pummel, <b>smash</b>, <b>catch</b>, and throw.</p>	<p>Write a line using <b>assonance</b>. Try making the line about yourself.</p>

#### Anaphora

Meaning	Try It Out
<p>The repetition of a word, phrase, line, or stanza.</p> <p><b>Example</b> I <b>loved</b> to wear boots one day and flip flops the next. I <b>loved</b> cake and still do now. I <b>loved</b> reading mysteries—go figure.</p>	<p>Write three lines using <b>anaphora</b>. Try making the line about yourself.</p>

# Literacy at Work

*how to  
write a poem*

## 4. WRITE PERSONAL LISTS

### Outside Self (How you look)

Example from Glenis	Your List
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pigtails, cornrows, or braids</li> <li>2. Big brown eyes</li> <li>3. Mahogany-colored skin</li> <li>4. Tomboy—baseball cap and t-shirts</li> <li>5. Unkempt—ashy elbows, skinned knees</li> <li>6. Graceful swagger</li> </ol>	

### Inside Self (Feelings and emotions)

Example from Glenis	Your List
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joy</li> <li>2. Shame</li> <li>3. Focused</li> <li>4. Popular</li> <li>5. Lonely</li> <li>6. Daydreamer</li> </ol>	

### Talents (What are your current strengths?)

Example from Glenis	Your List
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Athletic</li> <li>2. Graceful</li> <li>3. Reader</li> </ol>	

### Challenges (What's hard for you?)

Example from Glenis	Your List
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lonely</li> <li>2. Math</li> <li>3. Racism</li> </ol>	

# how to write a poem

Use your lists to tell your story. Remember to use the poetry devices of alliteration, assonance, and anaphora. If you want, you can use these sentences as a model.

- ### EXAMPLE

### ***Self-Portrait: Bard in the Making*** **By Glenis Redmond**

When I was in the fifth grade  
I was the biggest **tomboy**  
always in **t-shirt** and jeans  
**baseball cap** turned sideways  
complete with **ashy elbows, skinned knees**  
and a mouthful of bubble gum  
I made popping and blowing bubbles (alliteration)  
into an art form

I was the princess of the playground (alliteration)  
**ruled at Prison Ball, handball, and tetherball**  
 I could pummel, smash, catch, and throw  
 I was the **fastest sprinter in the school**  
 I could stop on a dime  
 and give you nine cents change.

**Your poem:**

[illegible]