

"The Quiet World"— Write Your Own Poem

This activity gives you the option to think about the ideas we have discussed regarding government limits on individual freedoms, and to express your thoughts poetically. If you look at "The Quiet World" you should notice the following characteristics:

- It is written in everyday language
- It does not rhyme
- It is written in complete sentences
- Each stanza contains one or more sentences
- The stanzas are not all the same length
- It uses concrete details ("chicken noodle soup," "thirty-two and a third times")

The hard part about writing good poems is that they are short. Because a poem doesn't use many words, you have to work a little harder to say exactly what you mean.

Here are some suggestions for getting going:

- Brainstorm a list of ideas about government limits. Think about some things you and your friends or family like to do. What if the government made a law saying you could never do those things again?
- Choose the idea you like best. Spend a few minutes freewriting about your idea. Try to imagine a specific situation that you might find yourself in because of the government law.
- Make a list of details that you can use to tell your "story"—time of day, what you hear and see, what you say, what you think and feel, how you do things because of the imposed limits.

When you have a good list, fool around with your ideas and try to get them shaped into a poem. Share with two or three friends, asking them to tell you "what works?" If they make suggestions, think about if—or how—you want to incorporate them into your poem.