

Dialogue Poem

This activity uses the template “Honey Bees” from *Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice*, Volume 1.

As individuals, partners or groups, students write their own version of a dialogue poem related to the unit on Columbus. Students may be able to come up with their own ideas as characters or subjects for their poem, but some may need suggestions. There are a number of possibilities—here are a few examples:

- One of Columbus’ men and a Taíno person;
- Columbus and a Taíno leader;
- Columbus as a young boy and a young Taíno boy (maybe Star Boy from the book *Morning Girl* if you use that read aloud activity); or,
- Morning Girl and Star Boy from the book *Morning Girl*.

“Dialogue poems are effective to use where controversy or different opinions might arise: plantation owner and slave, Hiroshima bomb victim and an Enola Gay pilot” (“Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice,” Volume 1, p. 186)

On the following pages is the example template (taken from *Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice*, Volume 1).

Dialogue Poem

The example below is written by Paul Fleischman and is found in *Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice*, Volume 1, p. 43.

BEING A BEE

is a pain.

I'm a worker.

I'LL GLADLY EXPLAIN.

I'm up at dawn, guarding
the hive's narrow entrance

then I take out
the hive's morning trash

then I put in an hour
making wax,
without two minutes' time
to sit and relax.

Then I might collect nectar
from the field
three miles north

Or perhaps I'm on
larva detail

feeding the grubs
in their cells,

BEING A BEE

is a joy.

I'm a queen.

I'LL GLADLY EXPLAIN.

Upon rising, I'm fed
by my royal attendants,

I'm bathed

Then I'm groomed.

The rest of my day
is quite simply set forth:

I lay eggs,

by the hundred.

wishing that I were still
helpless and pale.

Then I pack combs with
pollen - not my idea of fun.

Then, weary, I strive

to patch up any cracks
in the hive.

Then I build some new cells,
slaving away at
enlarging this Hell,
dreading the sight
of another sunrise,
wondering why we don't
all unionize.

TRULY, A BEE'S IS THE
WORST
OF ALL LIVES.

I'm loved and I'm lauded,
I'm outranked by none.

When I've done
enough laying

I retire

for the rest of the day.

TRULY, A BEE'S IS THE
BEST
OF ALL LIVES.