

Sympathy

ABOUT THE POEM

This is a beautiful poem written by Paul Laurence Dunbar sympathising with the anguish of the caged bird who wants to be free. The first stanza describes the world of freedom outside the cage. The second stanza describes the struggle, pain and agony of the caged bird. The third stanza shows us that what we imagine as the song of joy is in fact the prayer to God for its freedom from the caged bird.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Understanding the value and need for freedom of all living creatures
- ▶ Understanding the need of each species for its habitat
- ▶ Enjoying and appreciating poetry; reciting it correctly
- ▶ Understanding and answering questions on it
- ▶ Similes, metaphor, alliteration, antonyms and rhyme

READ AND DISCOVER

- ▶ Read out the poem aloud correctly keeping in mind the mood of the poem.
- ▶ Explain it carefully; the rhyme scheme (abaabcc); the focus of each stanza “what the caged bird feels”, “why he beats his wings” and “why the caged bird sings”.
- ▶ Explain what a simile (the river flows like a stream of glass) is, a metaphor (the ‘chalice’ of the first bud), alliteration (the wind stirs soft through the springing grass); words like ‘fair’.
- ▶ Ask the students to learn the poem, either the whole or one stanza each in three groups, and recite.

Outcome: Reading the poem aloud with correct pronunciation.

READ AND UNDERSTAND

- ▶ Exercises A and B: These exercises can be done by students on their own.
- ▶ Exercise C: Discuss in the class. Then, ask the students to do the exercises on their own.
- ▶ Exercise D: This can be done by students on their own.
- ▶ Exercises E and F: Discuss in the class. Then, ask the students to do the exercises on their own.
- ▶ The teacher must assess all the answers of students individually.

Outcome: Understanding and answering the questions.