

Wordsworth the poet

by Frances H. Kakugawa | illustrations by Scott Goto
(additional reader's guide illustrations by Melissa DeSica)



Reader's Activity Guide

Dear Teachers, Parents and Students,

Frances, the author of my adventures, asked me to write a reader's guide for you. "But I'm only a character in a book," I told her. She said, "Wordsworth, that's why readers will love this. It's not often a character writes out a guide." So here I am! I've asked Frances to explain the format to you; you'll find her instructions on the next page.

By the way, when I say "write a poem or write a report," I really mean that you can choose any medium you like to use to express yourself. For example, instead of writing a report, you could write a song if composing is your thing. This is pretty open-ended. The main thing is to enjoy and have fun while learning something more about how you feel and think about things.

I'd really like it if you would share your work with me; then I'll feel like a teacher, like Frances! I promise to answer every mail. Poets keep promises, you know.

I have my own email address: wordsworth@bookshawaii.net and I also have a Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/WordsworthThePoet>.

You can also write to me at:

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Frances and I also accept invitations to classrooms. We work with writing, both poetry and narrative. Have your teacher get in touch with Frances at:

Email: fhk@francesk.org
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Let's get started!

Aloha,

Wordsworth



Wordsworth's open-ended activity guides are mere suggestions for readers or parents/teachers. Each activity is intended for readers of all ages. How can this be, you ask, when there is such a range among readers? These were written under the premise that each reader's responses will be at his or her own level of comprehension, capability and experiences so it won't matter how simple or difficult the suggestions are. Here are some basic guidelines:

1. Activities are categorized in two groups: "Explorations" and "Extended Activities." "Explorations" engage readers and invite them to interact and respond to the text. "Extended Activities" are learning exercises that extend beyond the text. Readers should complete one or more of the "Exploration" activities before selecting an "Extended Activity".
2. Select a few activities that best fit your readers' interest. Using all the exploratory activities will diminish the joy of literature and Wordsworth, too.
3. Alternatively, instead of selecting for them, present all the activities to your class of readers. Give them a choice to either work alone, in pairs or in groups of 3-5 and pick one or more activities they would like to pursue. They can later share their work with the entire class.
4. For younger readers, a group approach may be more effective. If they're unable to write, group responses may be dictated to an adult and charted. Art and creative drama are other possibilities.

— Frances H. Kakugawa

Frances Kakugawa's books are available at bookstores, online retailers or from the publisher's website at www.bookshawaii.net. Contact Watermark Publishing to inquire about bulk or educational discounts:

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Wordsworth the Poet Reader's Guide Activities

I. EXPLORE THE THEME OF THE STORY THROUGH DISCUSSION, WRITING AND ART. The themes of being different and the power and magical wonder of poetry come into play throughout the story. Explore these through the medium of your choice.

EXPLORATION #1:

I'm called weird and strange because I write poetry. If I were in your class or lived next door to you, would you be my friend and hang out with me? Why or why not? Write me a letter about how you truly feel. Do you have any advice for me?

EXPLORATION #2

Do you think I should have kept my love for poetry a secret so people wouldn't have made fun of me? How about you—Is there a special part of you that "makes you different" from others? Do you have stories to tell about how you are like me? Talk about this in small groups and jot down your thoughts. After you've had some time to think, find a way to express these thoughts: write a poem or compose a song or draw a picture.

EXPLORATION #3

Why do you think it's so hard to be true to who you really are? Can you think of people who had the courage to pursue their dreams even if they were different? They can be people you know or have heard of in your community, or famous people in history. Write a short essay or report on one of these people that you admire and share with others. No, you can't write about me! Think of sports, music, or anyone in your community or school. Your family may have stories to tell you, too.

EXTENDED ACTIVITY #1

Put on your Investigative Journalist hat for this activity. Listen to daily news, read the newspapers, check online news websites, observe people around you, keep your eyes and ears open and jot down events and situations where unique qualities in individuals are celebrated. In other words, look for cases where being "different" is a good thing!

EXTENDED ACTIVITY #2

Keep your Investigative Journalist hat on and do research on our country's own history. Were there groups of people who were mistreated because they were different? I'm thinking of slavery, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the elderly, the homeless and others. How about today? Talk with your parents, other family members, and people in your community. Do research on-line or at the library. Give your own thoughts and feelings on what you discover.

II. EXPLORE FRIENDSHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION OR WRITING. Read page 12 from *Wordsworth the Poet*.

EXPLORATION #4

Imagine having a good friend like Emily. Is there a part of you that only a good friend like Emily would truly understand? Think about this, get into groups of five and talk about it. Or if this is too personal, write a journal of what a good friend will understand about you. I hope you're as lucky as I am in having Emily for a friend. It makes life so much easier.

III. EXPLORE IMAGINATION BY BECOMING A POET AND ILLUSTRATOR. Read the poem “Rainbow” on page 11 of *Wordsworth the Poet*.

EXPLORATION #5

I saw the rainbow as spilt paint and butterflies. It's your turn now. Use your imagination and create a rainbow that's all your own. Don't limit yourself to rainbows; explore anything else in nature or man-made things, like cars on a freeway. What new way can you see these things? Paint or draw what your mind sees and add a poem to your illustration.

IV. EXPLORE FEARS AND PHOBIAS THROUGH IMAGINATION. Read the poem “Circus Time in the Sky” on page 27 of *Wordsworth the Poet*.

EXPLORATION #6

Emily had a fear of thunderstorms but overcame her fears after she read my poem about turning thunderstorms into a circus. Get into groups of three or five and discuss any fears that you have. Then talk about how you would turn that fear into something funny and pleasant the way I did with the thunderstorm. See if you can make these fears or phobias less scary.

EXTENDED ACTIVITY #3

Have a Wordsworth Day. I'm sure you can think of a better name for this special day. Think outside of the box. Many see me as a nerd because I love to write poems, but that is something about me that makes me special! A Wordsworth Day is about celebrating a part of you that is very special. Are you special in any of these areas?

- Playing musical instruments
- Writing stories or poems
- Composing music
- Volunteering services
- Helping others
- Knitting or sewing
- Reading
- Cooking

These are just some ideas; anything you love to do makes you special!

Get together and show off these special parts of you and have a wonderful time. Celebrate who you are.

A Final Note from Wordsworth:

Well, readers, this has been fun for me. Thank you for spending so much time on my story. I hope you'll read the second Wordsworth book, *Wordsworth Dances the Waltz*. You'll meet Emily again and two more of my friends!

I'm curious: did this story make a difference in your life? Write to me and tell if you have new insights or feelings about being different from others or if my story has changed how you think about people who are different from you.

Tell me your honest reactions to the story. Send me your poems, stories or artwork. Ask me questions if you wish.

Aloha!

