

Teaching & Activity Guide

“The strength of this collection comes from the authors admitting their mistakes and going on to explain the value of the resulting learning opportunities. A gentle reminder of the stepping stones making up the path to growth, discovery, and creativity.”

—starred, *Booklist* ★

“Dynamic mixed-media artwork from López (*Sylvie and the Wolf*) offers energetic visual support for each poem in an anthology packed with a broad spectrum of human emotion and experience.”—starred, *Publishers Weekly* ★

Check In

Feelings can be overwhelming for us, and that is completely okay! Check in with your own feelings and see if you can figure them out. Then, fill this container with feeling colors to show how much of each you have right now.



Angry = Red Happy = Yellow Sad = Blue
Nervous = Purple Excited = Green Calm = Orange



Terms of Poetry

Match the literary device to its definition.

Terms	Definition	
	Matching sounds at the end of lines.	
	Giving human qualities to non-human things.	
	A comparison between two things using “like” or “as.”	
	The flow of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line.	
	A comparison of two dissimilar things that share a common characteristic.	
	Words/phrases that evoke the senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing.	
Simile	Metaphor	Personification
Imagery	Rhyme	Rhythm

Analyze a Poem



Title: _____

Author: _____

Directions: Analyze the poem by studying each element below. Write your thoughts in the boxes.

STRUCTURE

SPEAKER

MOOD

LANGUAGE

THEMES

MY REFLECTION

Write a List Poem

List poems, as the name suggests, are made up of lists of things, places, people, colors, emotions, sounds, events, and more. Some rhyme and some don't, and they can make you think, smile, squirm, giggle, nod your head, or sigh.

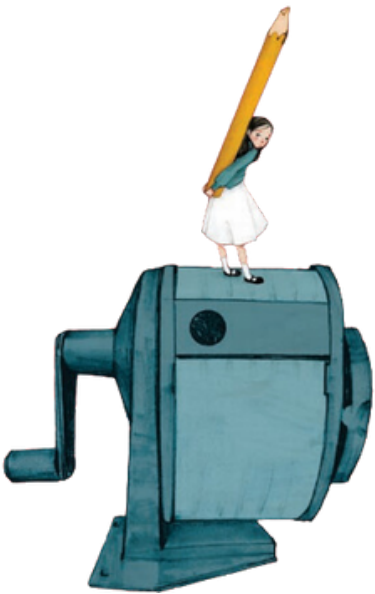
Step 1: On a separate sheet of paper, make a list of things you've learned. These things could include riding a bike, doing addition and subtraction, or even writing a poem!

Step 2 (Optional): See if you can rhyme anything on your list with something else.

Step 3: Since this is a poem about things that you've learned, you could end with your biggest lesson.

I LEARNED...

YOUR TURN



Write a Free Verse Poem

In free verse, poems don't have to rhyme or follow a set rhythm—they can flow in any way the poet wants!

Write a free verse poem about any day you remember—a super fun day, a bad day, or even a boring day. Let your words show what made that day special or not-so-special! Include colors, sounds, smells, and even tastes.

Write a rough draft of your poem below:





I Made a Mistake

What can you do when you make a mistake?

- Be honest that I've made a mistake.
- Sincerely apologize to anyone affected.
- Forgive myself for making a mistake.
- Think of ways to do it better next time.
- Remind myself that everyone makes mistakes.
- Breathe, relax, and try again.
- Reflect on the mistake.
- Learn from my mistake.
- Address the root cause of my mistake.
- Share what I've learned.
- Allow myself to feel my emotions.
- Be patient with myself.
- Ask for help.
- Avoid the urge to dwell on the mistake.
- Remember that I am not a mistake.



Self-Forgiveness

What was your mistake?

What emotions does this mistake make you feel?

What needs to be done for you to forgive yourself?

What have you learned?

What can you do differently next time if this situation happens again?

How to Write an Apology Letter

Mistakes are the portals of discovery.

–James Joyce

Writing an apology letter can be a great way to show you're sorry and make things right! Here are five easy steps to help you write an apology letter that feels real and caring:

- **Say What Happened:** Start by explaining what you're sorry for. Be clear and honest. For example, you could say, "Yesterday when we played at my house, I didn't want you to use any of my art supplies. I would have been upset if someone wouldn't share their things with me."
- **Take Responsibility:** Show that you understand that your action caused harm. Instead of saying, "I'm sorry if you felt bad," try saying, "I made a mistake, and I'm sorry for it."
- **Show You're Really Sorry:** Think about how the other person might feel and let them know you understand. Use words like, "I'm truly sorry," to show you mean it.
- **Make It Better:** Offer a way to fix things, if possible, or share how you'll handle things better next time. For example, "Next time we play, I will share my art supplies."
- **Promise to Improve:** Wrap up by saying what you've learned from this and will try not to repeat the mistake.

Keeping your letter short and honest is important—no need to say sorry over and over. And try to give the letter soon after the mistake happens!



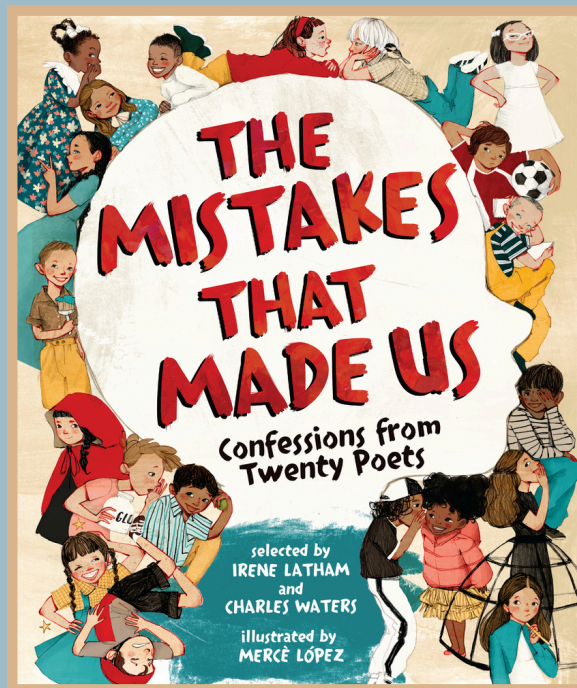
I'm Sorry

Sharpen a pencil and write a draft of an apology letter below. Remember to keep your letter short and honest.

Dear _____,

,

Sincerely,



The Mistakes That Made Us: Confessions from Twenty Poets

Interest Level: Grade 2 - 5

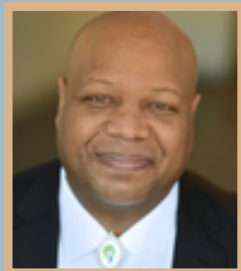
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Irene Latham is the author of more than a dozen current and forthcoming works of poetry, fiction, and picture books. Her work includes Charlotte Huck Honor Book and ALA Notable Children's Book *Can I Touch Your Hair? Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship* (co-written with Charles Waters) and the Caldecott Honor Book *The Cat Man of Aleppo* (co-written by Karim Shamsi-Basha). In 2016 she won the ILA Lee Bennett Hopkins Promising Poet Award. Visit her at www.irenelatham.com.

Photo Credit: Capturing Corvin Photography



Charles Waters is a children's poet, author, anthologist and actor based in Georgia. His book *Mascot* (co-written with Traci Sorell) has received an American Indian Youth Literature Award Honor and a Jane Addams Children's Book Award Honor. His other books (co-written with Irene Latham) include: *African Town* (winner of the 2023 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction), *Dictionary For A Better World: Poems, Quotes and Anecdotes from A - Z*, *Be A Bridge*, and the Charlotte Huck Honor book *Can I Touch Your Hair? Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship*. You can visit him at: www.charleswaterspoetry.com

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Mercè López is an artist and illustrator who lives in Barcelona, Spain. Her illustrated work includes *I Am Smoke* and *Big Problems, Little Problems*.

lernerbooks.com

