“Oranges”

You Try—Write Your Own ―First‖ Poem

Now that you’ve analyzed the poem, you can see that this is a poem about a boy and his first girlfriend. He wanted to take her out to get candy, but he didn’t have enough money. He came up with a solution to his problem, and in the end, he felt happy and filled with hope for the future.

For your poem, think about something you accomplished that you’re proud of and that, perhaps, made you realize you were gaining more responsibility or maturity. Like Gary Soto, you may want to write about a “first.”‖ It could be a first goal in soccer, a first “A” in a difficult subject, or a first competition in which you earned recognition. It could also be something that you remember from your childhood: the first time you tied your shoe, the first time you rode your bike, or the first time you went to school.

**Part One**

Write down some of your ideas in the box below. Try to write as many ideas as you can.

|  |
| --- |
| Firsts: |

**Part Two**

Choose one of your ideas. Begin thinking about how that event had a beginning, a middle, and an end. Did you feel differently when the event was over? How did the event change you?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The event: | |
| In the beginning: | Details that I remember: |
| In the middle: | Details that I remember: |
| In the end: | Details that I remember: |

**Part Three**

In “Oranges,” Gary Soto uses oranges as a repeating image. Is there an object or image you can use throughout your poem?

**Part Four**

Before you write a draft of your poem, look at “Oranges”‖ again. Notice that it is written in free verse and that the lines are fairly short. One image or detail is stacked on top of another. Try using that same technique as you write your poem.

As you write your draft, try repeating some of the lines from “Oranges.” You could start your poem with the line “The first time…”‖ and end with “someone might have thought…”‖

Write a draft of your poem – be sure to include the repeated image.

**Part Five**

Share the draft of your poem with a friend. Is there enough detail in your poem? Can your reader imagine what is happening in your poem? Were you successful in incorporating an object like the oranges?

**Part Six**

Revise your poem, add a title, and publish it: write it on a clean sheet of paper, in the format you prefer, in blue or black ink, or typed.

*Sample Student Poem*

**Black Dots**

The first time I looked at sheet

Music, all I saw was black dots.

Sprinkled across the page

Some secret code of dots, a treasure map

I couldn’t decode.

I walked to Mrs. Taylor’s house –

The piano teacher who smiled at everything

I played – all my wrong notes and jumbled tones.

But, I learned the notes, the sharps, and flats.

My favorite melodies by Rebikov, Sati, and Rollins.

When it was time for the recital, and I sat at the

Bench. A page of black dots on the piano. I placed

My hands on the keys and played.

Later, when the recital was over, I held the

music in my hands. The melodies were so clear that,

If someone had asked me, I could have taken

Them straight to the buried treasure.