

Turn a Poem into a Song!

Lesson and Activities by New York Philharmonic Teaching Artist Jacinta Clusellas

1. Read the poem “Hope” by Emily Dickinson

“Hope” is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tune without the word—
And never stops—at all—

And sweetest—in the Gale—is hear—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm—

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land—And
on the strangest Sea—
Yet—never—in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of me.

2. What is the overall **mood** in this poem? Describe it in three words.

3. **Circle** the words in the poem that are the most important to you. You should choose the words that you would like to emphasize.

The words that we choose to emphasize can change the intention and interpretation of a text completely. For example, we can say:

“Hope is the **THING** with feathers” or “Hope is the thing with **FEATHERS**”

4. Read the poem out loud, this time with different RHYTHMS to the words! Then choose the rhythm that you like the most and record it using any device you have at home.

Check out the rhythm that Jacinta tried in the video and then create your own!
Video linked [HERE](#).

5. Listen to the chord progression Jacinta played on the guitar and close your eyes. Imagine different ways in which you could sing the poem over this sound.

Listen to these chords as many times as you'd like, until your ideas start to flow!

6. Sing the poem over the guitar chords a couple times, and then try out different ideas until you find a melody that you like.

7. Develop your song! Accompany yourself with body percussion or musical instruments, or use Garage Band or any other tool you can think of!

Once you have your song, make a recording or write down your music and ask a parent or guardian to send it to VYC@nyphil.org