

* * *
* * **Shy** * *

Sometimes when I don't want to go
To visit someone I don't know,
They never stop to ask me why.

She's shy

They say

She's shy

Or if we're leaving someone's house,
they say I'm quiet as a mouse
When I forget to say good-bye.

She's shy

They say

She's shy

Cat's got her tongue, they always say,
She often does clam up this way,
She's silent as a stone today.

She's shy

They say

She's shy

I am not shy—or if I am
I'm not a mouse or stone or clam.
I like to look and listen to
What other people say and do.
If I can't think of things to say,
Why should I say things anyway?

I don't see why

That makes me shy



—Mary Ann Hoberman

* * Shy * *

Introducing the Poem

There is never enough time in the classroom to talk about and explore feelings. The “feelings poem” model below is useful for those times when situations cause overwhelming feelings that are difficult to express. You might ask the class to brainstorm words that describe their feelings in terms of temperature or color. They can choose one of these words for a title for their feelings poem. It’s a great way to defuse a highly charged emotion, such as anger or sadness, in a caring way.

It (the feeling) sounds like _____ . It tastes like _____ .
It looks like _____ . It smells like _____ .
It feels like _____ .

Prompts

1. We all experience many different feelings from day to day. But everyone has one feeling that seems to express his or her personality the most. If you could choose one emotion to describe the way you feel at school, which one would it be? (Quiet? Confused? Scared? Happy? Sad? Excited? Angry?) Do you think your friends would agree with you? Would your teachers agree with you?
2. If you could choose one emotion to describe the way you feel at home (you might need two!), which would it be? Do you think your family would agree with you?
3. After reading the poem “Shy,” think carefully: Has anyone ever incorrectly described the way you feel? Describe what happened. If you could correct this person now, what would you say?
4. Everyone has “-est moments” (happiest, saddest, loneliest, maddest). Choose one (or more) of these moments—or days—and write about it with plenty of details. Describe the event that made you so happy or mad or sad, how you acted when it happened, how other people acted, how it made you feel inside (“It made me want to. . .”), and any other facts or feelings you’d like to include.
5. Choose three different feelings. If you could assign a different color to each of them, which colors would you choose? For example, would anger be red or dark blue? Would happiness be yellow or red? (Or would it be two or three colors mixed together?) Now put one color in front of each feeling, for example, “Red Anger,” or “Purple Sadness.”
6. Choose the color-feeling combination you like the best. What temperature do you think this combination might be: Hot? Cold? Warm? Cool? Put your temperature choice in front of your color/feeling, for example: “Cool Blue Peace” or “Hot Orange Joy.” This is the title of your new poem. Your first line might be

“_____ is _____ like (a) _____ .”
(joy, anger, love) (blue, red, black)