

# Poems of Condition

8<sup>th</sup> grade samples

## Fireman

by Steven, 8<sup>th</sup> grade poet

If you can be ready every moment,  
For the sound of your pager,  
If you can make every second count  
For someone you don't know  
And push yourself beyond your limit,



If you can change your gear,  
Without taking your time,  
If you can drive a truck  
In any elements--rain, sleet, or shine--  
And still get to your destination in no time.

If you can run into a burning building,  
When everyone is running out,  
If you can stare Death in the eyes  
And still go inside,  
You will be a good fireman.

## Bully

by John, 8<sup>th</sup> grade poet

If you can hit and lie  
And not feel guilty until you die,  
If you can hurt for no reason  
Through the year and every season,  
If you can make people cower in fear  
Or beat them after you see a tear,



Start rumors about someone until they cry  
Then tell the teacher a practiced lie,  
If you can pound the young but not the old  
And later make sure they are told  
of the ones you hurt,  
So they do not pick you up by the shirt,

If you can pass on your right to rule  
To others, mean and cruel,  
If you can make the little ones run  
Then you are a bully, young one.

## Leader

by Dakota, 8<sup>th</sup> grade poet

If you can form a group  
And listen to other people's ideas  
Without becoming jealous,  
You can be a leader.



If you can march your group  
Into the unknown  
And come back alive  
With everyone you took in,  
You can call yourself  
A leader of the brave.

If you can walk your group  
Into enemy land  
And not let any member start a fight,  
You can call yourself  
A leader of control.

If you can walk  
Into the darkness  
And not let it destroy you,  
You can call yourself  
A leader of the light.

If you can lead  
A group of men  
Through a city  
That's set for an ambush  
And keep going without stopping,  
You can be a leader of power, stealth,  
strength, and will.

These three eighth graders worked on their **sentence fluency** and **idea development** skills as they composed and revised these poems.

With a highlighter, mark where you think each poet's best technique with these two traits shines through.

Compare your highlights with a partners.