

What to do today

IMPORTANT Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and any weblinks or use of internet.

1. Read and watch a poem

- Read *What do you want to be?* Can you find its rhythm as you read? Try reading in your head and then out loud.
- Now watch the poet perform his poem:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGXCSuIVamo>
- Did the poem sound like you expected to? What did you notice about Wilf Merttens' performance?

2. Think about the poem

- Read the *Poetry Questions* and think about your answers.
- Write your answers in clear sentences.

3. Now for some writing

- Write a *Letter to Wilf Merttens*. Tell him about the poem – what you liked about it (and what you disliked), ask him any questions that you have and tell him about what you want to be.

Try the Fun-Time Extra

- Read this article about unusual jobs.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/the-unusual-jobs-you-didnt-know-existed-a6743331.html>
- Which of these jobs would best suit you? Which would best suit someone in your family? Why?

What do you want to be?

What do you want to *be*?
What do *you* want to be?
What do you want to be?

Hey listen kid, you don't have to tell me—
I'm just here to read some poetry.
You can leave now if you want.
You're completely free, you see.
But, before you go, let me tell you
I'm not here to tell you about birds and bees
and trees
and bananas and farmers and poetry things.
This poem is a question,
and I'm asking what you dream and feel and things.



You see, maybe you want to be famous.
Maybe you want to be an astronaut and explore Uranus.
Maybe you want to be the craziest stunt lady Hollywood's ever seen.
Maybe you want to buy some flashy mansion
and spend all your time keeping it clean.
Maybe you're a dancer and Bollywood's more your scene.
Maybe you're a natural,
Maybe you're going to have work hard at it.
Maybe you're a punk singer and you want to smash...it...up.
Maybe you like nice stuff.
Maybe to get it you're going to act all tough.
Maybe you're going to be sweet.
Maybe you're going to meet and greet.
Maybe you just want to help people.
Or maybe you want to be a success, like prove that you're the best.

Maybe you want to be a celebrity, or an important politician,
shake the hands of the mayor.
Then again, maybe you just don't care.
Maybe you're in it for the money.
Now *that's* a sweet honey.
People don't find anything funny when they're racing to be rich.
Maybe you want to be surrounded by iPhones and quick fixes,
Maybe your heart tremors and twitches round diamond rings and bling.
Maybe you want to see all the precious things that eBay can bring,
Or wear so many jewels you look like a King.
Maybe you just want to sing in the shower
and that's what makes you feel free.
Maybe all you need is the moon and a tree to feel happy.
Maybe you're a natural.
Maybe you're a doctor, a tinker, a tailor, an architect of bad behaviour.
You could be a soldier or a spy.
You could be the kind of guy who wonders why
the world is just as it is
Or how the plane can stay in the sky.
Maybe you're an expert at stopping a baby crying.
Maybe you'll be found frying a rich man's breakfast
in a gourmet restaurant.
Maybe you're a killer chef or an amazing painter.
You don't have to know now;
you can find out later what it is you really want to be.
Because maybe you just want to see the world.
Maybe you want to travel around and live out of a backpack.
Maybe you want to be a goth, wearing nothing but black
'cos maybe being blue just ain't you.
Maybe you just have to find out what's true and what's a lie in the
newspaper.
Maybe you'd make a kiss-ass journalist.
Then again maybe all that writing would turn you mentalist.

Maybe you want to make your own zombie movies,
spray ketchup all over your mate's face for fake blood,
Maybe you want to be a dirt biker all covered in mud,
or a rescue woman saving people in a flood.
Maybe you want to be a boxer, landing punches with a thud.
Maybe you want to do very little,
live life quietly up a mountain someplace,
stay up all night staring into space.
Maybe you want to raise a family.
Maybe you want to devote your life to a god.
Maybe you want to live in a caravan on the sea, serving cod and chips.
Maybe you'll be eternally swell if you can just kiss a sweet pair of lips

Whatever your dream, I'm just here to remind you that you can be whatever
you want to be and you can have *anything*, you see.

Now if you're like me you're going to want it all for free.

But like me and like lots of other people like me,
in the end you're going to see
that if you want to be what you want to be
then you are going to have believe
and work real hard.

Unless you just want to be a nobody, which is real easy.

But don't worry, 'cos this crazy game is not a race,
and it's not up to me or school or TV to tell you your place.

We don't know your dream, or even what you really mean
when you say what you want to be.

It's up to you.

You've got to decide for yourself you see.

Now, tell me - what do you want to be?

Wilf Merttens

Poetry Questions

What do you like about this poem? Is there anything that you dislike why?

What are some of the messages of this poem?

What patterns can you find in this poem? Are there rhymes or alliteration? Is there assonance? What can you say about the rhythm of the poem?

What puzzles or questions does this poem give you?

Letter to Wilf Merttens

Write a letter to Wilf Merttens. Tell him what you thought of his poem, ask any questions and tell him what you would like to be.



A large rectangular writing area with a decorative orange and black zigzag border. The interior of the rectangle is filled with horizontal lines, providing a guide for writing. The border consists of a series of small black dots connected by orange lines, forming a continuous zigzag pattern around the perimeter of the writing area.

