

SUPPLEMENTAL CONTENT

CHECK-IN EXERCISE

NOTE: This exercise might be a good fit for Week 2 as the students deepen their understanding of the awakened life, for Week 4 as you review the ways students practiced being present in their bodies, or for Week 6 or 7 as students reflect on their experiences in nature.

“The Summer Day”

Provide your students with the poem “The Summer Day” by Mary Oliver. The poem is available online at www.loc.gov/poetry/180/133.html. You can print copies for your students, project it from your computer onto a large screen, or ask students to use their phones to find it.

You might introduce the poem with the sentences that follow.

In this poem, Mary Oliver writes about paying attention and experiencing the blessing of life in the present moment. It speaks powerfully of being aware of the simple things.

Then, read the poem to your students or ask a volunteer to read it aloud. After reading the poem, you might use some or all of these prompts for discussion.

- What words or phrases in this poem stood out to you?
- What connections can you make between this poem and the idea of an awakened life that we’ve been talking about?
- Reread lines 11-14. Oliver writes that she doesn’t know what a prayer is, but she does know “how to pay attention, how to fall down / into the grass . . .” Describe a moment in the past week when you truly paid attention to the world around you.
- Point out the way Oliver repeats the words “how to” in lines 11-14. Then, ask students to adapt the poem, making it their own by adding new examples to this form: **“I do know how to pay attention, how to _____, how to _____, how to _____, how to _____, which is what I’ve been doing all day.”** Allow students to respond “popcorn style” with ideas about how they might fill in the blanks of a new poem.

This last prompt can prepare students for a short writing activity. Once they have had an opportunity to brainstorm together, pass out sticky notes and have each student write down two or three ways they might fill in the blanks. Next, invite students to work in pairs or small groups to create a new poem by arranging their sticky notes. After pairs have had a chance to read their new poems to the rest of the group, ask students to add the sticky notes to the word wall.