



# emile field and the

words by Kevin Young art by Chioma Ebinama

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

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MAKE ME  
A WORLD



# emile and the field



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Grades: Preschool-3

## About the Book

In this lyrical picture book from an award-winning poet, a young boy cherishes a neighborhood field throughout the changing seasons.

*There was a boy named Emile  
who fell in love with a field.*

*It was wide and blue—  
and if you could have seen it  
so would've you.*

Emile loves the field close to his home—in spring, summer, and fall, when it gives him bees and flowers, blossoms and leaves. But not as much in winter, when he has to share his beautiful, changeable field with other children . . . and their sleds. This relatable and lyrical ode to one boy's love for his neighborhood field celebrates how spending time in nature allows children to dream, to imagine . . . and even to share.

## About the Author and Illustrator



Photo credit: Melanie Dunne

**Kevin Young** is the Andrew W. Mellon Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. He is also the poetry editor of the *New Yorker* and an award-winning poet who has been a National Book

Award finalist, a *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize finalist, and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. *Emile and the Field* is his first book for children. Follow him on Twitter at @deardarkness.



Photo credit: Taliana Godoy Batacur

**Chioma Ebinama** is a Nigerian American fine artist whose work has been exhibited internationally. Her journey as an artist began with children's books; as a kid she learned to draw by copying popular picture book and cartoon characters from books in her local library. *Emile and the Field* is the first picture book that she has illustrated. It's particularly meaningful to her since she's always been enchanted by stories of outdoor adventures but never saw characters that looked like her truly enjoying the outdoors. Chioma currently lives in Athens, Greece, where she enjoys soaking up the sunlight with her little dog, Luna. Follow her on Instagram at @chiomaaaaaa.

## Discussion Questions

### Before reading the book

- What is your favorite part of nature?
- Should people be able to control nature?
- How do you connect with nature?
- How does nature connect with you?
- Do you have a pet?
- How does experiencing nature impact people? Explain your answer.

### After reading the book

- What are some new things you learned?
- What do you think this book is trying to teach us?
- How did nature impact the main character?
- How are some people restricted from nature? Explain. What are some ways we can ensure everyone has access to nature?

## Writing Prompt

In his letter to the reader, Christopher Myers mentions three important nature lovers from history. Using your school's library databases and books, research one of those people. Use the chart to make notes, and be sure to indicate where you get your information.

Next, partner with a student who researched someone else from the list. Share your notes and information about the person you researched.

Jot down notes about the person your partner researched to complete this chart. Find someone who learned about the third person, and share information with them, too.



Person	Fact	Source
Matsuo Bashō		
Henry David Thoreau		
Mary Hunter Austin		



## Activity: Nature Walk

With your teacher or a trusted adult, take a nature walk, where you can observe nature and find some of the things the character discovered in nature.



Things you found on your walk	Draw a picture or take a picture and paste it in the box.

Describe the weather during your nature walk.

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Which season is it? How do you know?

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# Figurative Language Activity

The author uses figurative language to convey the power and demonstrate the beauty of language.

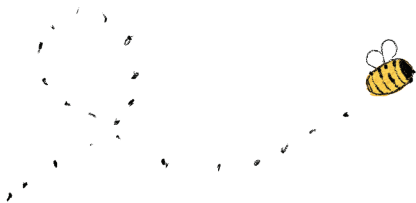
- **Simile:** comparison using *like* or *as*
- **Metaphor:** comparison without using *like* or *as*
- **Personification:** giving human characteristics to nonhuman things



Identify the types of figurative language in the book.

From the book	What type of figurative language is being used?	What message is the author trying to convey?
“The bumblebees would sing.”		
“Their words were honey.”		
“His favorite maple was as tall as his mother.”		

Emile asked the field if it knew about the sea and skyscrapers and airplanes, but the field has not experienced these things. Help Emile describe these things to the field using figurative language. Create your own examples of figurative language using items from the book.



From the book	Type of figurative language to use	Write your example here.
Snow	Simile	
Sea	Personification	
Skyscrapers	Metaphor	
Airplanes	Simile	

## Speak Out!

Environmental justice is making sure that all people are treated equally with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Learn more at [epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice](https://epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice).



**Class Discussion:** Is there a field near your house? How about a park? Where do you go to be in nature? Who keeps this place clean? Why is it important to keep green spaces clean? What can you do to help?

## For older students!

Using the template below, draft a letter to a community leader expressing how you feel about environmental justice. Read your letters in an assembly or during school announcements.



### Helpful resources

[youtube.com/watch?v=JsPB8FV8j3w](https://youtube.com/watch?v=JsPB8FV8j3w)

[study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-environmental-justice-definition-principles-examples-issues.html](https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-environmental-justice-definition-principles-examples-issues.html)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,  
(community leader)

I think environmental justice is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where I live, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(explain an issue you see in your community)

I believe that we can make a difference by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(sign your name here)

## Protect: Be a Friend to the Environment

Here are some ways you can help your environment. Select three options, and do them. Take pictures and create a poster about your experience.



Using things from the trash, <b>create art</b> and display it in your home.	Challenge yourself and family members to <b>turn off lights</b> in rooms that are not occupied.	Organize a group of family members to complete a <b>trash cleanup</b> in your neighborhood, local park, or around your school.	Start an <b>indoor garden</b> .
Use <b>reusable bags</b> instead of plastic at the grocery store.	Practice <b>turning off the water</b> when you brush your teeth.	Use a <b>refillable water bottle</b> instead of disposable water bottles.	With your trusted adult's permission, <b>donate money</b> to organizations that support the environment.

## Bulletin Board Idea and Writing Activity

### Postcards from Our Favorite Places in Nature

Emile's favorite place is the field. What is your favorite place in nature? Write about your favorite place and why it is important to you. Be sure to use similes and metaphors to describe it.

Draw or take a picture of your favorite place.

Create a class bulletin board displaying all the postcards.



### POSTCARDS FROM OUR FAVORITE PLACES IN NATURE

<p><i>Post your picture of your favorite place here.</i></p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <hr/><hr/><hr/><hr/> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Write a few sentences describing your favorite place.</i></p>
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# Praise for emile and the field

★ “With gentle rhythms, Young’s verse captures the boy’s observations with an emotional honesty (Emile wonders why the sledders didn’t secure his “say-so” to visit); with an authenticity true to the impassioned feelings of children (Emile is described as being “in love” with the field); and with a tenderness that is touching but never saccharine . . . What Emile learns from his father (“The field would not, could not be bought! or belong to anyone”) is a satisfying conclusion to this exquisite story of one boy’s unfettered delight in nature.”

—*The Horn Book*, starred review

“Young’s gentle, sparsely worded narrative endearingly captures the animistic, magical thinking of children and the joy of tranquil childhood hours spent in nature. The impressionistic, atmospheric artwork—rendered in watercolor and ink—underscores the dreamy, spontaneous nature of Emile’s outdoor adventures and features open compositions that create a sense of expansiveness. A charming exploration of children’s special relationship with nature.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*



*This guide was created by Cicely Lewis. Cicely Lewis is the 2020 National School Librarian of the Year, the founder of Read Woke Inc., and a national voice for greater diversity in school libraries. Follow her on social media at @cicelythegreat and visit [readwoke.com](https://readwoke.com) for more information.*



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