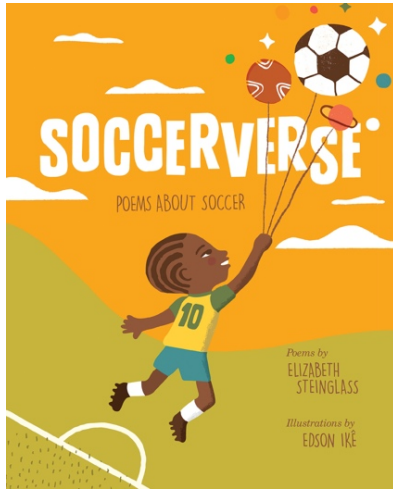


Discussion and Activity Guide

Socccerverse: Poems about Soccer

by Elizabeth Steinglass Illustrated by Edson Ikê
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About the Book

Twenty-two imaginative poems capture all aspects of the world's most popular sport. From the coach who inspires players to fly like the wind, to the shin guard that begs to be donned, to soccer dreams that fill the night, *Socccerverse* celebrates soccer. Featuring a diverse cast of young players, the poems in this collection cover winning, losing, teamwork, friendships, skills, good sportsmanship, and, most of all, love for the game. Elizabeth Steinglass cleverly incorporates thirteen different poetic forms throughout the book, defining each in a note at the end. Edson Ikê's bold artwork is as creative as the poems are surprising.

About the Author

Elizabeth Steinglass grew up in St. Louis, Missouri where she played soccer, basketball, and softball, read many, many books, and wrote her first poems. She now lives in Washington, DC with her husband, her three children, and her sleepy cat Scout. She loves walking in the woods, writing poetry, and watching her kids play soccer. For more information visit www.ElizabethSteinglass.com



About the Illustrator

Edson Ikê is an illustrator and graphic designer who creates illustrations for books, newspapers, magazines, and posters. Woodcutting is the aesthetic basis of his work. *Socccerverse* is his first book to be published in the United States. He lives in São Paulo, Brazil. Learn more at ensaiografico.com.br.

These discussion questions and writing activities are designed for children 5-12 years of age. The questions and activities are listed in order of complexity. Please feel free to use the parts of the guide that will work best for you. When discussing particular poems, or using particular poems as mentor texts for writing, it may be helpful to have a copy that you can see and refer to.

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

Look at the cover. What do you see? What do you think *Soccerverse* might mean? What do you think these poems will be about? What topics do you think they will cover?

Post-Reading Discussion Questions

Surprises and Favorites

Did any of the poems stand out to you or surprise you? (For example, did any of them make surprising comparisons, have unexpected speakers, or use unusual words?) Which ones? Why? Which poems were your favorites? Why? What do you notice about the illustrations? Which illustrations were your favorites? Why?

Feelings

Read the poem “A Few Words from Your Shin Guard.” How does the shin guard feel? How do you know that’s how the shin guard is feeling? Have you ever felt that way? Read “A Few Words from Your Other Shin Guard.” How does this shin guard feel? How do you know that’s how it’s feeling? Have you ever felt that way? Which other poems are about feelings you’ve had?



Poetic Language

Poems often use interesting language. Read “Instructions for the Field.” Do any of the words in this poem stand out to you? For example, do any of the words seem unusual or especially interesting? Are there any words you don’t often hear? Are there any words with particularly interesting sounds in them? Are there any words that sound interesting together?

Line Length

Unlike prose which runs from one side of the page to the other, poetry is written in short, medium, or long lines. Read the two poems “Dribbling” and “Passing.” Look at the lengths of the lines in both poems. What do you notice? How do the short lines relate to the content of the poem “Dribbling?” How do the long lines relate to the content of the poem “Passing?”

Repetition

Some poems repeat words, phrases, or stanzas. Read the poem “Teammates.” Which words are repeated? What effect does the repetition have on you as a reader?

Metaphor and Simile

A metaphor compares one thing to another to help us think about the first thing in a new way. A simile makes the same kind of comparison using the words “like” or “as.” Read the poems “Defender” and “Striker.” What comparisons are being made in these poems? How is a defender like a dog? How is a striker like a shark?

Forms

The poems in *Socccerverse* use thirteen different forms. Read “A Note About Poem Forms” at the end of the book. Choose a poem. Can you figure out what form or forms the poem uses? Consider how the form is related to the subject of a poem. For example, look at the first poem in the book, “The Ball.” What form does it use? How does the form relate to the



subject of the poem? Look at “Instructions to Field Players” and “Instructions to the Goalkeeper.” What form do these poems use? How does this form connect to the subjects of the poems?

Rhyme and Meter

Some poems rhyme and have a steady meter (or rhythm) and some do not. Read the poem “Good Dreams.” This poem has a consistent rhyme scheme and a steady meter. Which lines end with words that rhyme? Can you tap or clap to the steady rhythm while someone reads the poem aloud? What is the effect of the consistent rhyme and steady meter on you as a reader? How do the consistent rhyme and steady meter connect to going to bed? Now read “The Handshake.” This poem doesn’t rhyme and doesn’t have a steady meter. It is written in free verse. How does the changing rhythm of this poem affect you as a reader? How does the changing rhythm connect to the content of the poem?

Writing Activities

Write a List Poem about an Activity

Read the poem “Dribbling.” This is an example of a list poem about an activity. The poem lists many of the ways a player moves when dribbling a soccer ball. What do you notice about most of the lines of the poem? What is similar about them? What do you notice about the last two lines? How are they different from the other lines in the poem? Use pre-writing activity #1 to write your own list poem about an activity.

Write a List of Instructions Poem

Read the poem “Instructions for the Field.” In this poem the speaker gives the field instructions for how to be a good soccer field. What does the speaker hope the field will do? What does the speaker hope the field will not do? Use pre-writing activity #2 to write your own list of instructions poem.



Write a Metaphor or Simile Poem

Read the poems “Defender” and “Striker.” In these poems the positions of defender and striker are compared to animals. Use pre-writing activity #3 to write your own metaphor or simile poem.



Pre-Writing Activity #1: Write a List Poem about an Activity

Think of an activity you like to do (for example, you could choose building with blocks or painting a picture). Write it here:

What are you doing when you are participating in this activity (for example, I sort through the blocks, I dip my brush in paint)? List as many actions related to your activity as you can.

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Use these actions to write a list poem about your activity. You might want to start each line with “I.” Think about what order to put the actions in. Can you think of a surprising way to end your poem?



Pre-Writing Activity #2: Write a List of Instructions Poem

Think of something you could give instructions to (for example, you could choose a desk or a shoe). Write the object here:

What does this object look like? (It may help to look at the object, look at a picture of the object, or take a moment to picture it in your head.)

What do you hope this object will do?

What do you hope this object will not do?

Use these ideas to write a list of instructions poem. Speak directly to the object and tell it what to do and what not to do to perform its job well.



Pre-Writing Activity #3: Write a Metaphor or Simile Poem

Think of an activity (for example, you could choose playing tag or hide and seek or getting ready to go to sleep). Write the activity here:

Describe doing this activity. What do you do first, second, third, etc.?



Circle the verbs (action words) that you wrote above.

What animals can you think of that also do some of those actions? (For example, a defender is always ready to spring into action when there's an attack. A dog might also wait, ready to spring into action when necessary.)

Write a poem about the activity you listed above comparing it to the behavior of an animal.



Revision Activities

Exchange poems with another writer. Ask each other these questions:

- Did you have a favorite part? (For example, were there any words that stood out to you as interesting or unusual? Were there any words or combinations of words with interesting sounds? Were there any comparisons that made you think of something in a new way? Did the poem end in a surprising way?)
- Were there any parts you found confusing?

Look back at the poem you have written.

- Underline your favorite words or lines.
- Are there any words that could be more interesting?
- Are there any words that you might want to repeat?
- Does the poem have any unnecessary words that you might want to take out?
- Are there any parts that might be confusing to a reader?
- Does your poem have an interesting ending?
- Does your poem have a title?

After you have talked about it, re-read it, and thought about it, revise your poem.

