

# Getting Ready to Recite

## *Individual Exploration: Sonic Patterns*

Read the poem out loud several times, paying special attention to the ways the words sound coming out of your mouth; feel every distinct part of each word.

- What does your mouth do as you say each word?
- When is it open?
- When is it closed?
- When is the sound at the front of your mouth?
- When is at the back?
- Now consider the way the rhythm of these lines causes you to speed up or slow down.
- When do you labor?
- When does one word flow easily into the next?

Make notes about what your mouth is doing on the text of the poem. After you have explored the vocal demands of the text and noted them, make additional notes about the feelings each image evokes. Consider the connection between sounds and images. For example, you might note that it takes a little more work to say the colloquial “got up” and “put on” than it does to say “rise” and “dress.” Why might the poet have made that choice?

## *Group Exploration: Playing Your Sounds*

In this exercise, you will learn to “play” the sounds of the words in the text like instruments. Certain parts of certain words are playable in the sense that you can use the sound to convey one meaning or another. Think of the way a family member says your name in different ways when they have a different purpose for saying your name. What does it sound like when you are in trouble? What does it sound like when someone is trying to persuade you? What part of your name gets “played” differently? That is the playable sound.

In this exercise, you will practice playing sounds and explore the playable sounds of the words in the poem.

- Each member of the group must perform each of the tasks.
- Have one member of the group read the directions for the task.
- Have each member of the group take a turn performing.

### *Task 1*

Take the **t** sound in the word “what.” Use the sound to **reprimand** someone. Then use it to **comfort** someone. Listen to the physical differences in how you produce sounds, depending on how you intend those sounds to be used.

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### Task 2

Say the word “banked,” slowly several times. (Notice how your mouth produces five distinct sounds when you say the word /b/, /a/, /n/, /k/, and /t/.) Now use the **kt** sound combination to *warn*, to *tease*, or to *intimidate* someone. Let your group know which you intend.

### Task 3

Here are five words from the poem:

Early            Cracked            Made            Blaze            Thanked

Underline the “playable” parts of the words.

### Task 4

Using the headings for scripts 1 and 2, “play” a key part of each of these words with a partner. To put it another way, say each word to each other as if you have two scripts with the same words, one for character A and one for character B. Character A says “early.” Perhaps Character A said it as a question like, “You want me to come to school early?” Character B says “early” in a way that responds to Character A’s question like, “You want me to come to school early? Are you crazy?”

#### Script 1

“You’re Late”

Character A	Character B
Early	Early
Cracked	Cracked
Made	Made
Blaze	Blaze
Thanked	Thanked

#### Script 2

“I Love You With All of My Heart”

Character A	Character B
Early	Early
Cracked	Cracked
Made	Made
Blaze	Blaze
Thanked	Thanked

Have fun exploring all of the possible meanings you can convey by “playing the sounds” of these words.

### Final Thoughts

As you prepare your recitation of “Those Winter Sundays,” apply what you have learned about the playable sounds. For example, how would you say, “What did I know, what did I know...” It’s the same question, but how many different ways can you play it? Which way makes the most sense, given your character? How might it sound different the second time?