

Vocation

On your way to school or market you see many people at work. In pairs, discuss what you have noticed. Then read this poem. You may read it aloud with a partner, if you like.

*When the gong sounds ten in the morning and
I walk to school by our lane,*

*Every day I meet the hawker crying, "Bangles,
crystal bangles!"*

*There is nothing to hurry him on, there is no
road he must take, no place he must go to, no
time when he must come home.*

*I wish I were a hawker, spending my day in
the road, crying, "Bangles, crystal bangles!"*

*When at four in the afternoon I come back from
the school,*

*I can see through the gate of that house the
gardener digging the ground.*

*He does what he likes with his spade, he soils
his clothes with dust, nobody takes him to
task, if he gets baked in the sun or gets wet.*

*I wish I were a gardener digging away at the
garden with nobody to stop me from digging.*

*Just as it gets dark in the evening and my
mother sends me to bed,*

*I can see through my open window the
watchman walking up and down.*

The lane is dark and lonely, and the street-lamp stands like a giant with one red eye in its head.

The watchman swings his lantern and walks with his shadow at his side, and never once goes to bed in his life.

I wish I were a watchman walking the street all night, chasing the shadows with my lantern.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

WORKING WITH THE POEM

1. Your partner and you may now be able to answer these questions.

- (i) Who is the speaker in the poem? Who are the people the speaker meets? What are they doing?
- (ii) What wishes does the child in the poem make? Why does the child want to be a hawker, a gardener, or a watchman? Pick out the lines in each stanza, which tell us this.
- (iii) From the way the child envies the hawker, the gardener and the watchman, we can guess that there are many things the child has to do, or must not do.

Make a list of the do's and don'ts that the child doesn't like. The first line is done for you.

The child must

come home at a fixed time.

The child must not

get his clothes dirty in the dust.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now add to the list your own complaints about the things you have to do, or must not do.

- (iv) Like the child in the poem, you perhaps have your own wishes for yourself. Talk to your friend, using “I wish I were...”
2. Find out the different kinds of work done by the people in your neighbourhood. Make different cards for different kinds of work. You can make the card colourful with pictures of the persons doing the work.