

## Before You Read

### Almost Ready

#### Connect to the Poem

What is the real *you* like? Do you have your father's chin or your grandmother's sense of humor? Think about your physical characteristics and your personality traits. Are you satisfied with who you are today, or do you have plans to make changes in the future?

**Quickwrite** Freewrite for a few minutes about who you are today. Describe personality traits or accomplishments that make you proud.



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#### Set Purposes for Reading

##### **BQ** BIG Question

As you read, ask yourself, what do I like about myself? How can I build self-confidence?

##### **Literary Element** Irony

When something awful happens and you say "Oh, great!" you are being ironic. In literature, **verbal irony** exists when the author, or a character the author creates, says the opposite of what he or she really means. Similarly, **situational irony** exists when what actually happens in a situation is the opposite of what we expect. Irony can be humorous, as when someone says, "Nice weather" during a blizzard. It can also be used in a serious, or even a bitter, way. For example, you might mutter "Nice guy" after someone has done something rude. As you read "Almost Ready," look for examples of irony.

#### Learning Objectives

For pages 656–658

In studying this text, you will focus on the following objectives:

**Literary Study:** Analyzing irony.

#### Meet Arnold Adoff



##### **Award-Winning Writer**

An award-winning poet, teacher, and lecturer, Arnold Adoff believes that "writing a poem is making music with words and space." His books include *Hard to Be Six* and *Slow Dance Heartbreak Blues*. Adoff was born in 1935.

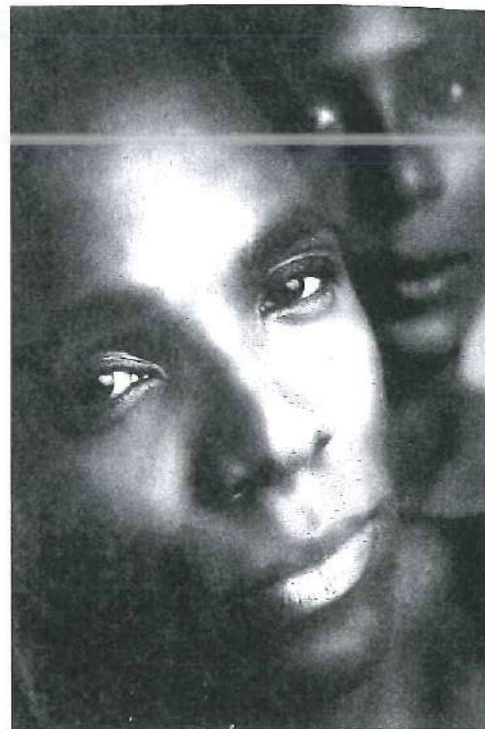


##### Literature Online

**Author Search** For more about Arnold Adoff, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com) and enter QuickPass code GL29763u5.

# Almost Ready

Arnold Adoff



I  
am  
going  
to  
her  
birth-  
day  
party

as  
this  
cool  
and  
in-  
control  
young  
dude:

as	as	as	as
soon	soon	soon	soon
as	as	as	as
I	I	I	I
find	find	find	find
my	my	my	my
new	hip	deep	right
shirt,	shoes,	voice,	mask.

**Irony** What details in the poem suggest that the speaker is not "in control"?

## **BQ** BIG Question

How do you think the speaker can become who he wants to be?

## After You Read

### Respond and Think Critically

1. What images does the poem focus on? [Recall]
2. In what way does the arrangement of lines in the poem add to the poem's meaning? Explain. [Interpret]
3. What do the new shirt, hip shoes, and deep voice mean to the speaker? [Inter]
4. What does the title "Almost Ready" suggest about the inner conflict the speaker is feeling? [Analyze]
5. **Literary Element** Irony Why does the speaker feel he has to wear a mask to be cool? [Conclude]
6. **BQ** **BIG Question** "Almost Ready" suggests that young people often show an outside that looks "cool and in-control" even when they feel differently inside. Do you agree? Explain your answer. [Evaluate]

### Spelling Link

**Formation of Plurals** The usual way to form plurals of a noun in English is to add *-s* or *-es* to the end of the word. Below are some other general rules for forming plurals:

- If the noun ends in *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *x*, or *z*, then add *-es*. (bus/buses, tax/taxes, buzz/buzzes)
- If the noun ends in a consonant + *y*, then change *y* to *i* and add *-es*. (candy/candies)
- If the noun ends in *lf*, then change the *f* to *v* and add *-es*. (calf/calves)
- If the noun ends in *fe*, then change the *f* to *v* and add *-s*. (wife/wives)

**Practice** On a sheet of paper, list these words: *kiss*, *life*, *self*, *sky*, *bully*, and *bunch*. Write the plural form of each word. Use the spelling rules as a guide.

### Writing

**Write a Blurb** Have you ever read a blurb on the back cover of a book that made you want to read the book? Write an informative paragraph that could appear on the back of a book of Arnold Adoff's poetry. In the blurb, tell readers what the poem "Almost Ready" says about growing up and fitting in.

### TIP

#### Interpreting

To answer question 2, think about how the arrangement of words on the page can be part of a poet's message.

- Look at the way the words of the poem are arranged. What might this tell you about the speaker?
- Does the arrangement of words remind you of anything? How does the arrangement connect to what the speaker is doing in the poem?
- Think about the main qualities of the speaker. How does the poem's form echo those qualities?

#### FOLDABLES Study Organizer

Keep track of your ideas about the **BIG Question** in your unit Foldable.



Literature Online

#### Selection Resources

For Selection Quizzes, eFlashcards, and Reading-Writing Connection activities, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com) and enter QuickPass code GL29763u5.

