

The Lost Generation - a poem by Jonathan Reed

I am part of a lost generation
and I refuse to believe that
I can change the world.
I realize this may be a shock, but
“Happiness comes from within”
is a lie, and
“Money will make me happy”
So in 30 years I will tell my children
they are not the most important thing in my life
My employer will know that
I have my priorities straight because
work
is more important than
family
I tell you this
Once upon a time
Families stayed together
but this will not be true in my era
This is a quick fix society
Experts tell me
30 years from now, I will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of my divorce
I do not concede that
I will live in a country of my own making
In the future
Environmental destruction will be the norm
No longer can it be said that
My peers and I care about this earth
It will be evident that
My generation is apathetic and lethargic
It is foolish to presume that
There is hope.
And all of this will come true unless we choose to reverse it.



 WORKSHEET – *Lost Generation* by Jonathan Reed**Level:** B1 **Time:** 90 minutes**Skills:** reading, speaking, writing, vocabulary, critical thinking**Topic:** values, generations, optimism vs pessimism 1. Warm-up (10 min)**Discuss in pairs:**What do you think the phrase “*Lost Generation*” means?

What do people usually say about young people today?

Do you think our generation is optimistic or pessimistic? Why?

 2. Pre-reading (5 min)

Look at the title and the first line:

I am part of a lost generation.

Predict:

What do you think this poem will be about? Circle the best options:

☐ family ☐ money ☐ the environment ☐ hope ☐ disappointment 3. Reading (15 min)Read the poem “**Lost Generation**” by Jonathan Reed.

Don’t worry if you don’t understand every word. Try to get the main idea.

After reading, answer:

What is the main message of the poem?

Is the poem positive or negative? Why?

 **Now read the poem again – from bottom to top (line by line).**

How does the meaning change? Discuss with your partner.

 4. Understanding & Vocabulary (15 min)**Match the words/phrases with their meanings:**

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. refuse | a) not caring or showing interest |
| 2. foolish | b) things that are more important than others |
| 3. within | c) to say “no” to something |
| 4. apathetic | d) inside yourself |
| 5. priorities | e) not smart, silly |

Answer the questions:

1. What values are criticized in the first (pessimistic) version?
2. What values are supported in the reversed (optimistic) version?
3. Which lines do you find the most powerful or true?

◆ 5. Discussion (15 min)**Group work:** Discuss these questions:

1. Do you agree with the idea that people today care more about money than happiness?
2. Is it true that families don't stay together anymore?
3. Do you think your generation can "reverse" the situation? How?

◆ 6. Creative writing (20 min)**Write your own short reverse poem!** Follow the model of *Lost Generation*.**Topic ideas:**

- *My Generation*
- *The Future*
- *School Life*
- *The Planet*

Tips:

- Write 8–10 lines.
- Start with a pessimistic tone, then make it positive when read backwards.
- Use simple structures like "I believe... / I don't think... / People say..."

Example start:

People don't care about others anymore

Love is not important

The world is getting worse

...and then reversed → positive message!

◆ 7. Wrap-up (10 min)**Share your poems in pairs or groups.**

Vote for:

- ★ The most creative
- ★ The most optimistic
- ★ The most realistic

Finally, discuss: "Do you think we can really change the world if we 'reverse' our attitude?"

 TEACHER'S KEY (suggested answers)**3. Reading:**

- First reading → pessimistic: people are selfish, materialistic, world is hopeless.
- Reverse reading → optimistic: people can change, love and family matter, there is hope.

4. Vocabulary:

1–a, 2–b, 3–c, 4–d, 5–e

5. Discussion (sample ideas):

- Many people focus on work and money, but balance is possible.
- Family structures are changing but love and connection still exist.
- Yes – changing attitudes can make a difference.

6. Writing:

Encourage short, clear lines and contrast between pessimism/optimism.

Walk around, help with grammar and structure.

*Extension idea:*

Students can record a video or do a dramatic reading — one version pessimistic, one optimistic.

Perfect for a creative project or English Day presentation.