

Name: _____ Date: _____

Analyzing Poetry

Below is Rebecca Kai Dotlich's poem "What I'm Made Of." Read the poem a few times. Then answer the questions on the next page. This activity is meant to be completed in groups or as a class.

What I'm Made Of

by Rebecca Kai Dotlich



Go to
Scope Online
to hear this
poem read
aloud.

- 1 Of open doors and closed ones
of rainstorms and race cars and dreams of
walking on the moon.
Of barn doors and basketball hoops
5 of maple donuts on autumn days
and bikes and guitars and dirt roads
by campsites, of visits to cities with
neon signs, I'm made of grit and brave,
hush and wind, of rockets and robots
10 and snowforts, of fishing poles
and beach lights and pines near
bridges and old Cedar Road.
I'm made of broken and craggy,
of riddle and map and Highway 10,
15 of fist bumps and scoreboards.
Of struggles with spelling
and genius with numbers,
of iron and snowfall and wonder.

Directions: Work with your group to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers!

Note: To keep things simple, we refer to the speaker as "she" in this activity—but the speaker is not necessarily female.

People usually don't use phrases that start with the word *of* without giving a bit more information to let you know what they are talking about. For example, someone might say, "The hallway was full of open doors and closed ones," but they wouldn't walk up to you and just say, "Of open doors and closed ones." You wouldn't understand what they were talking about.

In this poem, the speaker does use phrases starting with *of*. You can figure out what the speaker means by looking at other parts of the poem.

1 What two words could the speaker add to the beginning of line 1 and to other places where an *of* phrase is used if she wanted to turn those phrases into complete sentences?

2 Explain how you figured out the answer to question 1.

Now let's look at the kinds of things that the speaker says she is made of.

3 Find at least two words or phrases in the poem that refer to **weather**. List them here:

4 Find at least three words or phrases in the poem that make you think of **places**. List them here:

5 Find at least one word or phrase in the poem that describes a **sound**. Write it here:

6 Find at least six words or phrases that give you a clue about **activities or hobbies** that the speaker enjoys. List them here:

7 Find the lines in the poem that tell you one of the speaker's **strengths** and one of her **weaknesses**. Write them here:

8 Find the place where the speaker reveals one of her **goals**. Write what she says here:

Now let's consider the meaning of certain lines in the poem.

9 In line 1, the speaker says that she is made "of open doors and closed ones." What might she mean? Are the doors a metaphor for something?

10 In line 14, the speaker says she is made "of riddle and map." What might she mean?

11 In line 18, the speaker says she is made "of iron." What might she mean?

12 Also in line 18, the speaker says she is made "of snowfall." What images, qualities, or emotions does *snowfall* make you think of? Are they similar to or different from the qualities or emotions you associate with iron?

13 Now think about the very last word in the poem: *wonder*. What kind of word is *wonder*? What do you think the speaker means when she says she is made of wonder?

One last question:

14 Why or how do you think the speaker chose the particular things that she names in this poem? For example, why might the speaker have listed guitars rather than some other objects in her life—socks or pencils or books? Why might the speaker have named Highway 10 rather than some other road?

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What YOU Are Made Of

Directions: After reading "What I'm Made Of" by Rebecca Kai Dotlich, complete the activity "Analyzing Poetry." Then follow the directions below to write your own "What I'm Made Of" poem—about yourself!

1 Brainstorm things about you and your life for each category below. For example, for "weather," you might write "six feet of snow" if something important or meaningful happened to you during a blizzard. This is brainstorming, so just write whatever pops into your head.

<div>weather</div>	<div>sounds</div>	<div>places</div>
<div>goals and dreams</div>	<div>strengths</div> <div>weaknesses</div>	<div>activities and hobbies</div>

2 Now list five words or phrases that describe your personality:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3 Look back at what you brainstormed on page 1. In each box, highlight or circle the things that are the MOST meaningful, special, or important to you—the things that really make you *you*. (If you think of anything to add to the boxes while you're doing this, go ahead and add it!)

4 Now it's time to write the first draft of your poem. Use Rebecca Kai Dotlich's poem "What I'm Made Of" as a model to write your own "What I'm Made Of" poem—about YOU. Replace all the things the speaker lists in Kai Dotlich's poem with the ideas you highlighted or circled from your brainstorming.

Write your poem on your own piece of paper. Be sure to include the following:

- at least two words or phrases that relate to weather
- at least three words or phrases that relate to places
- at least two words or phrases that relate to sound
- at least eight words or phrases that relate to activities or hobbies
- the line "Of struggles with _____ / and genius with _____."
(Fill in the blanks with your own weakness and strength.)

5 After you finish your first draft, read it through, paying attention to the way it sounds. Does it flow like a good song? If not, can you make the rhythm more pleasing? Sometimes a little change, like switching the places of a few words, can make a big difference.

Most important of all, ask yourself, "Would someone reading this poem get an idea of who I am? Would they get an idea of what is special to me and what is special about me?" If not, what can you change to make your poem more personal?

Note: *Scope* does not accept Google Docs. If you are e-mailing your entry, please send a .pdf or .doc file.

You Write It Contest

Write your own poem titled "What I'm Made Of," using Rebecca Kai Dotlich's poem as a model. Five winners will get \$25.

Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ creativity
- ⇒ clarity
- ⇒ strength of descriptive language

My name: _____

My home phone number: _____ My grade: _____

My teacher's name : _____ My teacher's e-mail: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

School phone number: _____

My parent or legal guardian consents
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Include this sheet with your typed short story and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com
Or mail to: You Write It Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY February 15, 2018!