

Name: _____ Date: _____

Analyzing Poetry

Below is Georgia Douglas Johnson's poem "Your World." Read the poem a few times. (We underlined and defined some of the trickier words.) Then answer the questions on the next page. This activity is meant to be completed in partners, in groups, or as a class.

Your World by Georgie Douglas Johnson



- 1 Your world is as big as you make it.
I know, for I used to abide
- 3 In the narrowest nest in a corner,
My wings pressing close to my side.
- 5 But I sighted the distant horizon
Where the skyline encircled the sea
- 7 And I throbbed with a burning desire
To travel this immensity.
- 9 I battered the cordons around me
And cradled my wings on the breeze,
- 11 Then soared to the uttermost reaches
With rapture, with power, with ease!

abide: to stay or live
in a place or to put up
patiently with something

encircled: formed
a circle around;
surrounded

immensity: hugeness

battered: beat;
struck violently
again and again

uttermost:
of the greatest,
highest, or most
intense degree or
amount

cordons: lines of
persons or objects that
surround and guard a
person or place

rapture:
feeling carried
away by intense
happiness or joy

Directions: Work with your partner or group to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. P.S. Be prepared to get up and move around!

1 Throughout this poem, the poet uses an extended metaphor in which the speaker compares herself to a(n) _____.

- A. airplane B. bird C. ocean D. soldier

Explain how you know.

2 In lines 2-4, the speaker says "... I used to abide/In the narrowest nest in a corner,/My wings pressing close to my side." Try acting out these lines: Stand by yourself in a corner or a small space and press your wings (your arms) close to your sides.

How did doing this make you feel?

3 What do you think the speaker is saying in lines 2-4 about the way she used to live her life?

4 Consider the word *encircled* in line 6. What do you think the speaker means when she says that "the skyline encircled the sea"?

5 How does what the speaker describes in the second stanza compare with what she describes in the first stanza? Is it similar or very different?

6 What idea do you think the speaker is expressing in the second stanza about how she wants to live her life?

7 In your own words, describe what the speaker is describing in the third stanza.

a. First, explain what the poem literally describes: what the bird did.

b. Now explain what the metaphor means. In other words, what is the human being who is the speaker of the poem saying that she did?

8 In line 9, the speaker says that she "battered the cordons" around her. What do you think she means? What kinds of things might guard people or hold them back from going where they want to go and doing what they want to do in life?

9 Now take a moment to act out the third stanza the way you acted out the first stanza. Move your "wings" and imagine you are beating off the things that are guarding you or holding you back. Then spread your "wings" and imagine soaring high up into the sky toward the horizon.

How did doing this make you feel?

10 Now go back to the very first line of the poem: "Your world is as big as you make it." Explain what the speaker means and how this idea is developed throughout the poem.