

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Analyzing Poetry

Below is Jennifer Dignan's poem "What My Name Means." Read the poem a few times. Then answer the questions on the next page. This activity is meant to be completed in partners, in groups, or as a class.

## What My Name Means

by Jennifer Dignan

Go to  
Scope Online  
to hear this  
poem read  
aloud.

- 1 My sister thinks my name means  
"sharer of back seats and secrets."  
My mom thinks my name means  
"needs a lot of rides to gymnastics" and  
5 "loves comic books, like me."  
My dad thinks my name means  
"weirdly obsessed with that band Imagine Dragons" and  
"loves corny jokes, like me."  
My cat thinks my name means "always good for a snuggle."  
10 My best friend thinks my name means  
"tells me the truth no matter what; best giggle in the world."  
My art teacher thinks my name means "gifted."  
My music teacher thinks my name means  
"definitely tries hard."  
15 My neighbor thinks my name means  
"kid who cuts the grass."  
My dentist thinks my name means  
"kid who needs to floss."  
I think  
20 there's some stuff that they left out, like  
"dreams of life in a big city" and  
"lies awake at night sometimes,  
worrying about the whales" and  
"having doubts about gymnastics" and  
25 "loves nothing more than to close her eyes  
and listen to the rain."

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

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**1** Many first names have a meaning based on their origins. For example, Julia means "youthful," David means "beloved," and Margaret means "pearl." In this poem, the speaker says what different people in her life think her name "means." But the speaker doesn't mean that these people *literally* think her name means the things she says.

What does the speaker mean when she says that someone thinks her name means something?

**2** What do you notice about the people the speaker mentions in the poem? For example, are they all people who know her? How well do they know her? What do you notice about the order in which these people are listed?

**3** What do lines 1-2 reveal about the speaker and her sister? Explain.

**4** Reread lines 3-8. What do the lines about the speaker's mom have in common with the lines about the speaker's dad? Why do you think the speaker might have chosen to do this?

**5** Consider lines 6-7: "My dad thinks my name means/weirdly obsessed with that band Imagine Dragons." How do the lines tell you something about both the speaker and her dad?

**6** The speaker says that her mom thinks her name means "needs a lot of rides to gymnastics." Why do you think the speaker's mom thinks this? Would it make sense for the speaker's neighbor or dentist to think this? Explain.

**7** In your own words, explain what lines 12-14 reveal about the speaker.

**8** Now consider lines 19-26, in which the speaker reveals what she thinks her name means. How are these meanings of the speaker's name different from all the other meanings listed in the poem?

**9** Does the speaker seem to agree with the way other people see her? Explain

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# What YOUR Name Means

**Directions:** After reading "What My Name Means" by Jennifer Dignan, complete the activity "Analyzing Poetry." Then follow the directions below to write your own "What My Name Means" poem—about yourself!

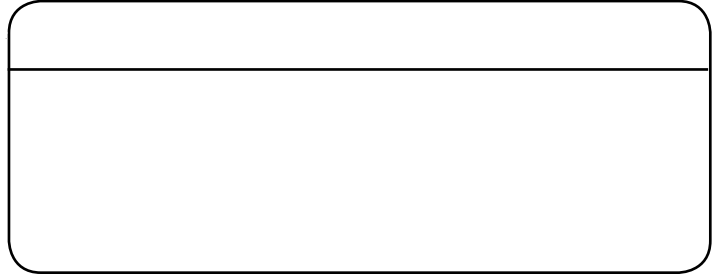
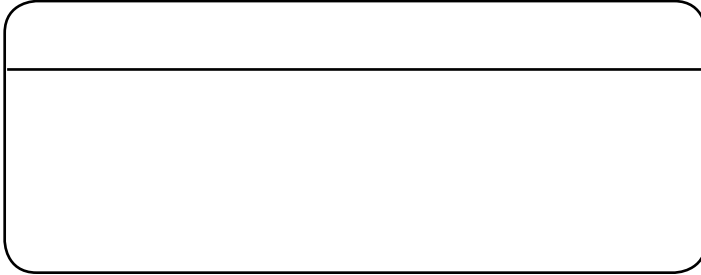
**1** At the top of each box, write a person you will mention in your poem. You can use people's actual names or identify them the way Dignan does: "my mom," "my neighbor," etc. Under each person's name, brainstorm ideas of how he or she might identify you—what that person might think your name "means."

family members


a close friend



teachers or coaches


people who know you, but not that well




**2** Now think about the things that other people don't know about you. Use the labels on the boxes to help you brainstorm ideas. There is also a box for you to write ideas that don't fit into any of the other boxes.


goals and dreams



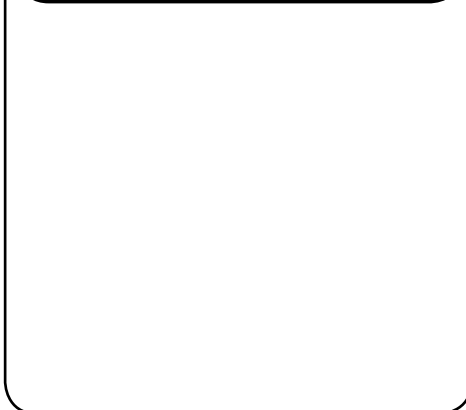
things that you deeply care a  
lot about



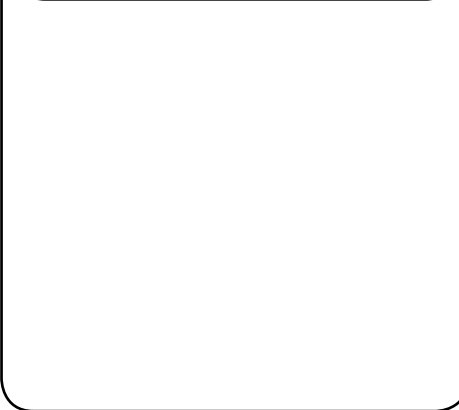
fears and worries about  
yourself or your life



things that make you happy



other ideas



**3** Look back at what you brainstormed on pages 1 and 2. In each box, highlight or circle the ideas that you like best. (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 Jennifer Dignan's poem "What My Name Means" as a model to write your own "What My Name Means" poem—about what YOUR name means.

Write your poem on your own piece of paper. Be sure to

- say what eight different people, plus yourself, think your name means.
- start your idea for each of the eight people with "\_\_\_\_\_ thinks my name means." (Fill in the blank with the person's name.)
- include the lines "I think / there's some stuff that they left out, like" before you tell what you think your name means.

**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 he or she get an idea of what is special about me?" If not, what can you change to make your poem more personal?

**6** Once your poem is finished, decorate it with doodles the way Dignan's poem is decorated on page 32 of the September issue of *Scope*. Your doodles, like the ones in *Scope*, should reflect ideas and images in the poem.

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

# Scope Poetry Contest

Write and illustrate your own poem titled "What My Name Means" using Jennifer Dignan's poem as a model.

Five winners will each get a \$25 Visa gift card.

## 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](mailto:scopemag@scholastic.com)  
Or mail to: *Scope* Poetry Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

**ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY October 15, 2018!**