

Name: _____ Date: _____

Analyzing Poetry

Below is Jennifer Dignan's poem "Would I Still Be Me?" Read the poem a few times. Then answer the questions on the next page. This activity is meant to be completed with partners, in groups, or as a class.

Would I Still Be Me?

by Jennifer Dignan

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| <p>1 I like green salads with
shredded carrots,
3 dried cranberries,
and crumbled blue cheese.
5 I like pizza with olives
and hot sauce on eggs.</p> | <p>21 If I changed my Instagram handle
or quit TikTok tomorrow,
23 wouldn't I still be me?</p> |
| <p>7 But say I preferred
my vegetables cooked,
9 my pizza with mushrooms,
my eggs on their own—
11 wouldn't I still be me?</p> | <p>And if I lived
25 in some other town,
wouldn't I still be me?</p> |
| <p>I also like cardigan sweaters
13 and checkerboard Vans.</p> | <p>27 But what if I giggled less,
or broke rules more often?
29 What if I never danced?</p> |
| <p>But if I traded them in
15 for pullover sweatshirts
and bright white Adidas—
17 wouldn't I still be me?</p> | <p>What if I were afraid of dogs,
31 but not afraid of heights?</p> |
| <p>If I wore my hair
19 in some other style,
wouldn't I still be me?</p> | <p>What if I felt a little bit bigger
33 when I gazed up at the stars?</p> |
| | <p>Would I still be me?</p> |

Go to
Scope Online
to hear the author
read her poem
aloud.

Directions: Work with your partner or group to answer the following questions. You'll need four different colored pencils.
Note: To keep things simple, we use the pronouns "her" and "she" to refer to the speaker of the poem. But the speaker is not necessarily female.

1 What does the speaker describe in the first stanza?

2 How does the second stanza relate to the first stanza? Explain what the speaker means when she asks "wouldn't I still be me?" at the end of the second stanza.

3 Describe the relationship between the third stanza and the fourth stanza.

4 The next few prompts will help you see word repetitions and patterns in the poem. You'll need your colored pencils.

a. Choose a colored pencil. Use it to circle the first two words of stanza 1.

b. Use the same pencil to circle the first four words of stanza 2.

c. Choose a different colored pencil. Use it to circle the first word of stanza 2.

d. Use the same pencil to circle the first word of stanza 4.

e. Choose a third color. Circle the phrase "if I" each time it appears in the poem.

f. Choose a fourth color. Circle the phrase "what if" each time it appears in the poem.

5 In stanzas 1-4, the speaker names things she likes and then asks what it would mean if she liked some other things instead. How is what the speaker does in stanzas 5-7 different?

6 Consider stanzas 8-10. Does the speaker think that the things she names in these stanzas are more important, less important, or equally important to making her who she is than the things she names earlier in the poem? Explain your answer.

7 What is different or special about what the speaker reveals about herself in lines 32-33 compared with the rest of the poem?

8 For most of the poem, the speaker asks the question "Wouldn't I still be me?" Then, at the end of the poem, the speaker asks, "Would I still be me?" What is the difference in meaning between "Wouldn't I still be me?" and "Would I still be me?"

9 The poet chose to put the last line of the poem on its own, in a new stanza. Why might the poet have made this choice? What is the effect of this choice?

10 *Discuss the question below with your partner or group. Jot down key ideas from your discussion.*

In this poem, the speaker explores the question of what makes a person who they are. What do you think makes a person who they are? Are some things more important to making someone who they are than other things? How much could change about a person before they were someone else?

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Would You Still Be You?

Directions: After reading "Would I Still Be Me?" by Jennifer Dignan, complete the activity "Analyzing Poetry." Then follow the directions below to write your own "Would I Still Be Me?" poem—about yourself! (Note: To keep things simple, we refer to the speaker of Dignan's poem as "her," but the speaker is not necessarily female.)

1 In Dignan's poem, the speaker thinks about what makes her who she is, from the toppings she likes on her pizza to the way she feels when she looks up at the stars. Fill in the graphic organizer below to help you brainstorm ideas about what makes you who you are. You don't need to write in complete sentences.

WHAT YOU EAT

Be specific! For example, don't just write "pizza"; write what you like *on* your pizza.

WHAT YOU WEAR

What styles, brands, or colors do you usually wear? How would you describe your style?

WHAT YOU LISTEN TO

What genre of music do you like best? Who are some of your favorite artists?

WHAT YOU DO ONLINE

What apps do you use? What do you like to post or view on social media?

WHAT YOU DO OFFLINE

What are your hobbies or passions? What do you like to do in your free time?

WHAT YOU'RE GOOD AT

This could be anything from playing basketball to listening to others.

WHAT YOU'RE SCARED OF

This could be anything from spiders to public speaking to climate change.

WHAT YOU'RE LIKE

List words and phrases to describe your personality.

WHAT ELSE?

Use this space to list any other facts about yourself that come to mind.

WHAT'S SUPER IMPORTANT

Is there something that if it changed, you would no longer be you?
Write at least one idea.

2

Look back at what you brainstormed.

- Put a check mark next to the things that are most important to making you who you are.
- Put an x next to the things you think are least important to making you who you are.
- If you think of anything to add to the boxes while you're doing this, go ahead and add it!

3

Now it's time to write the first draft of your poem. Use Jennifer Dignan's poem "Would I Still Be Me?" as a model to write your own "Would I Still Be Me?" poem, in which you ask yourself the same types of questions—but about yourself.

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

- include things you think are not that important to making you who you are as well as things you think are very important to making you who you are. Be sure the reader can tell which are which.
- end with the line "Would I still be me?"

4 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 what makes me *me*?" If not, what can you change to make your poem reveal more about you?

5 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.