

Name: _____ Date: _____

Plan Your Poem of Answers

Directions: Read "Questions for the Clouds" by Jennifer Dignan. Then follow the directions below to write your own poem that answers the questions in Dignan's poem.

Note: We refer to the speaker of Dignan's poem as "her," but the speaker is not necessarily female.

- 1** What do you want to call your poem? (If you want, you can save this step for later. Sometimes it's easier to think of the title last instead of first.)



TITLE

- 2** To answer the questions in the poem, you'll need to do a few things:
 - Identify the questions that you can look up answers to—and then look them up.
 - Think of your own answers for questions the speaker asks about the world that you *don't* think have simple, straightforward answers that you can look up.
 - Imagine the speaker as a character and answer her questions about herself. (If the questions apply to you, you also have the option to answer them about yourself.)

You'll find all the questions on the following pages, with space to write answers.
Don't worry about being "poetic" right now—just get your ideas down.

1. Why do my dog's feet smell like corn chips?

2. Why are dandelions pulled up as weeds instead of cherished as flowers that are easy to grow?

3. Why do I always change my mind at the very last minute and ask for cookies and cream yet again when there are so many other good flavors?

4. Why do humans get haircuts?

5. How do you make cottage cheese?

6. What gives little kids the idea that monsters are hiding under their beds?

7. Why do so many people feel certain of things they can't possibly know?

8. Why do I feel certain of nothing?

9. What exactly is a poem?

3 Now it's time to write the first draft of your poem. Use Jennifer Dignan's "Questions for the Clouds" as a model. Here are the guidelines:



- Write your poem on your own sheet of paper or document.
- Use the title you wrote in Step 1. (You can change it if you think of something you like better.)
- Write your poem using the second-person point of view, responding directly to the speaker of Dignan's poem.
- If your answers to the questions are long, see how concise you can make them. What's really important to include in the poem?
- Vary the length of your answers, the same way that Dignan varies the lengths of the questions in her poem.
- If you think of something else you want to include or a different way of doing something, go for it. This is your poem, and it should be just the way you want it to be!

4 After you finish your first draft, read it through. Pay 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.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Plan Your Poem of Questions

Directions: Read "Questions for the Clouds" by Jennifer Dignan. Then follow the directions below to write your own poem that answers the questions in Dignan's poem.

Note: We refer to the speaker of Dignan's poem as "her," but the speaker is not necessarily female.

- 1 What do you want to call your poem? You can borrow Dignan's title and call your poem "Questions for the Clouds," or you can come up with a different title. Maybe you want your questions to be for something or someone other than the clouds. (You can also save this step for later. Sometimes it is easier to think of the title last instead of first.)

**TITLE**

- 2 In Dignan's poem, the speaker asks a mix of questions—some of them small, some of them big, some of them about the people and the world around her, some of them about herself. For each category on the next page, brainstorm questions that YOU have. Try not to judge your ideas—you can go through what you wrote and choose your best ideas later.

Questions about animals or nature

Questions about places

**Questions about why you in particular do
something that you do**

**Questions about why people in general do
something that they do**

**Questions about why people
believe something**

**Questions about something you find
difficult, confusing, or challenging**

Any other questions about anything

3 Now it's time to write the first draft of your poem. Use Jennifer Dignan's "Questions for the Clouds" as a model. Here are the guidelines:



- Write your poem on your own sheet of paper or document.
- Use the title you wrote in Step 1. (You can change it if you think of something you like better.)
- Write your poem using the first-person point of view.
- Try having some questions be short, taking up just one line, and other be longer, taking two or more lines.
- Think about the order of your questions. Do you want to follow Dignan's structure and leave the biggest questions for the end? It's totally up to you—but think about what will have the most impact on your reader.
- For your last line, you can borrow Dignan's last line ("What exactly is a poem?") or you can come up with your own.
- If you think of something else you want to include or a different way of doing something, go for it! This is your poem, and it should be just the way you want it to be.

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.

Poetry Contest

Choose one of the following options: **1.** Write your own poem of questions, using “Questions for the Clouds” as a model. **2.** Write a poem that answers the questions in “Questions for the Clouds.”

Send your poem to Poetry Contest. Three winners will each get a \$25 gift card.

Entries will be judged on:

- ✓ creativity
- ✓ strength of descriptive language
- ✓ clarity

Student name: _____

Home phone number: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher's name: _____ Teacher's email: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

School phone number: _____

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

Parent's or legal guardian's signature:

X _____

Include this form with the entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY October 20, 2020.

**Entries must be submitted by a legal resident of the U.S. age 18 and older, who is the teacher, parent, or guardian of the student.
Please submit .docs and PDFs. Google docs cannot be accepted.*