

Common Themes in Literature

- Believe in yourself
- Accept others' differences
- Good vs. Evil
- Self-discovery
- Acceptance
- Cooperation
- Compassion
- Courage
- Friendship
- Honesty



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

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.

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?

I also like cardigan sweaters
13 and checkerboard Vans.

But if I traded them in
15 for pullover sweatshirts
and bright white Adidas—
17 wouldn't I still be me?

If I wore my hair
19 in some other style,
wouldn't I still be me?

21 If I changed my Instagram handle
or quit TikTok tomorrow,
23 wouldn't I still be me?

And if I lived
25 in some other town,
wouldn't I still be me?

27 But what if I giggled less,
or broke rules more often?
29 What if I never danced?

What if I were afraid of dogs,
31 but not afraid of heights?

What if I felt a little bit bigger
33 when I gazed up at the stars?

Would I still be me?

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?

The speaker describes what the girl likes.

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.

It describes the opposite of what the girl likes.

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

2 different things one is the opposite of what the girl likes and the 4th stanza is what the girl likes.

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?

The speaker named the opposite of what the girl liked without saying what she likes before she names the opposite of what she likes.

- 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.

I think they are more important because these are key things in her personality that she is changing which could affect her personality.

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

It's different than to others because she isn't changing her personality, she is just wanting to feel different or change the way she thinks about herself.

- 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?"

The difference in the 2 meanings are the opposite of each other, saying, wouldn't, and would.

- 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?

The speaker put it like this so now we think would she still be the same or different.

- 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?

A few things that make you, you, that if you change you won't be "you", based on if you change the following, your kindness/personality, or the way you act, or the way you do things or the way you help people.