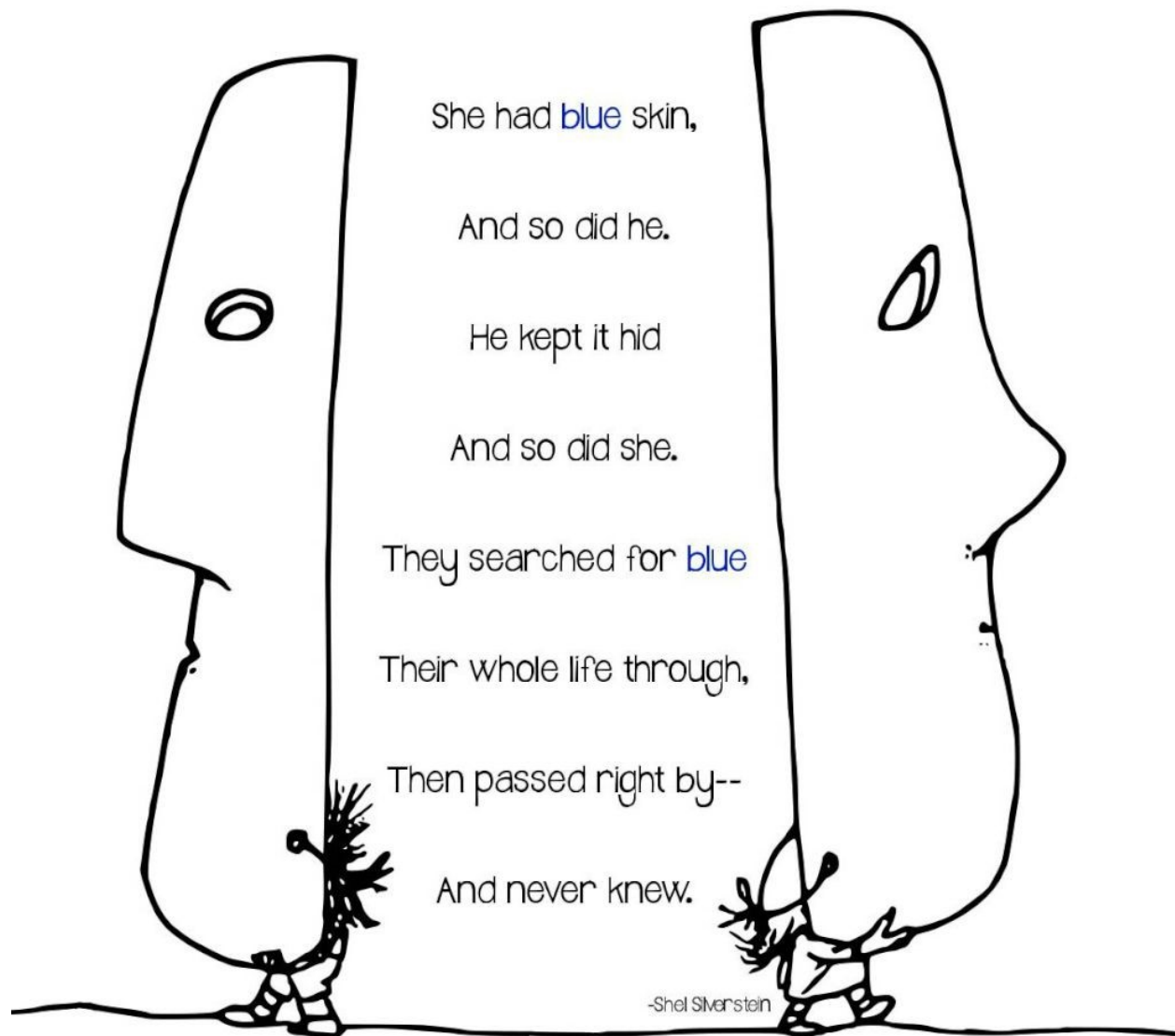


Name: _____ Class: _____

Masks

By Shel Silverstein
From "Everything On It" • 2011

Sheldon Allan "Shel" Silverstein (1930-1999) was an American poet, cartoonist, and author of children's books. "Masks" is a poem from Silverstein's book of poems called Everything On It. As you read, take notes on the theme of the poem and what you think the "masks" might symbolize.



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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: In the context of the poem, what does “blue skin” most closely mean? [RL.4]
- A. A feature of beauty
 - B. A common trait found among many
 - C. A quality perceived as strange or weird
 - D. A feeling of momentary sadness

2. PART B: Which quote from the poem best supports the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
- A. “so did he”
 - B. “kept it hid”
 - C. “searched for blue”
 - D. “never knew”

3. Why do you think the characters in this poem hid their blue skin from each other with masks? Explain your answer. [RL.3]

4. How does the illustration contribute to the meaning of the poem? [RL.5]
- A. The largeness of the masks shows the great weight of the lies that kept the two characters separate and alone all their lives.
 - B. The simplicity of the drawing shows that being your true self is easy to do.
 - C. The masks facing opposite direction shows that lying will get you nowhere.
 - D. The different hairstyles of the characters shows that just because they both have blue skin and wear masks doesn't mean they are alike in every way.

5. What is the theme of the poem? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. [RL.2]

Discussion Questions

Directions: *Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

1. In the poem, the characters wear literal masks. Can a person wear a figurative (not literal) “mask” in a similar way? How? Why might they do this?
2. In the context of this poem, can a person change who they are? Why or why not?
3. How does this poem help you think about what it means to be a friend?
4. Have you ever hid something about yourself from others? Why?