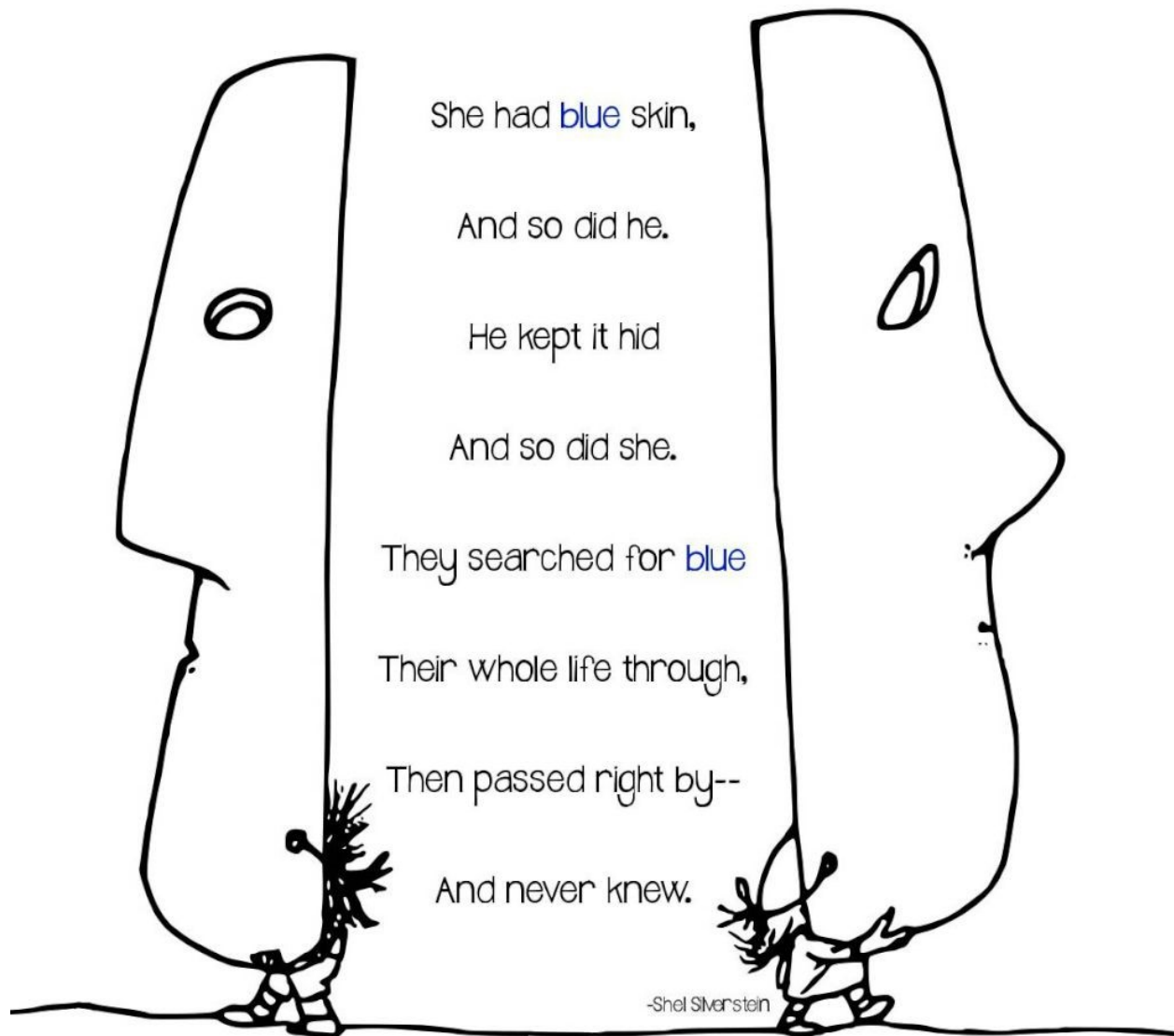


Name: _____ Class: _____

Masks

By Shel Silverstein
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 what you think the masks stand for.



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Text-Dependent Questions

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

1. PART A: Which statement best explains the metaphorical meaning of blue skin in the poem?
 - A. In the poem, only two people in the whole world have blue skin, which means that they must be soulmates.
 - B. In the poem, blue skin is such a common trait that people must wear masks in order to appear unique.
 - C. In the poem, blue skin represents a quality that people are afraid to share even though it is an important part of their identity.
 - D. In the poem, blue skin represents the sadness that people try to hide by always being polite and keeping smiles on their faces.

2. PART B: Which quote from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "She had blue skin"
 - B. "kept it hid"
 - C. "searched for blue"
 - D. "never knew"

3. How does the illustration contribute to the meaning of the poem?
 - A. The size of the masks in the illustration emphasizes how hard people try to hide their true selves.
 - B. The simplicity of the drawing shows that being your true self is easy to do.
 - C. The masks facing opposite directions in the illustration show that lying will get you nowhere.
 - D. The different hairstyles in the drawing show that just because two people have blue skin doesn't mean they are alike in every way.

4. How do the last four lines help develop the message of the poem?

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 two characters hide their blue skin from others. In your opinion, why do they hide this quality?
2. Based on your own experiences, do people in the real world feel pressured to be just like everyone else? Have you ever pretended to be a certain way in order to fit in? If so, how did you pretend?
3. How does this poem help you think about what it means to be a good friend?