

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Underface

By Shel Silverstein  
2011

*Sheldon Allan "Shel" Silverstein (1930-1999) was an American poet, cartoonist, screenwriter, and author of children's books. His books have sold over 20 million copies. In this poem, the speaker describes their outside face and 'underface.' As you read, take notes on how the speaker describes their different faces.*

- [1] Underneath my outside face  
There's a face that none can see.  
A little less smiley,  
A little less sure,  
[5] But a whole lot more like me.



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## Text-Dependent Questions

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

1. Which of the following best describes the theme of the poem? [RL.2]
- A. People often hide how they truly feel.
  - B. When people hide who they are, it makes them sad.
  - C. It's important to accept people for who they are.
  - D. Wearing a mask can give a person strength.

2. Which of the following best identifies what the speaker means by "outside face" (Line 1)? [RL.4]
- A. Their true self.
  - B. The mask that they wear.
  - C. The face that they cannot hide.
  - D. The face that the world sees.

3. How does the order of details in the poem contribute to its meaning?

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## 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. Do you have an outside face and an 'underface'? Why do you show some things to the world and hide others?
2. In the context of the poem, can you hide your emotions and how you truly feel? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.
3. In the context of the poem, how can we achieve happiness? What does the speaker's outside face provide them with? Do you think individuals are happier if they can show their happy face? Why or why not? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.
4. In the context of the poem, what does it mean to feel alone? Why might not showing others their 'underface' make the speaker feel alone? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.