

Name: _____ Class: _____

Yesees and Noees

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, a speaker describes three different types of people: the "Yesees", the "Noees", and the "Thinkforyourseelfees". As you read, take notes on how the speaker describes each type of person.

- [1] The Yesees said yes to anything
That anyone suggested.
The Noees said no to everything
Unless it was proven and tested.
- [5] So the Yesees all died of much too much
And the Noees all died of fright,
But somehow I think the Thinkforyourseelfees
All came out all right.



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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. It is better to be brave than fearful of the unknown.
 - B. Thinking for yourself is the best way to live your life.
 - C. Those who think for themselves tend to live longer.
 - D. It can be dangerous for a person to be adventurous.

2. How do the “Yesees” compare to the “Noees”? [RL.3]
 - A. The “Yesees” are fun, while the “Noees” are boring.
 - B. The “Yesees” die young, while the “Noees” grow old.
 - C. The “Yesees” are polite, while the “Noees” are rude.
 - D. The “Yesees” are reckless, while the “Noees” are cautious.

3. How does the last line of the poem contribute to the speaker’s point of view? [RL.6]
 - A. It reveals that the speaker thinks that others should be independent thinkers.
 - B. It reveals that the speaker is a “Thinkforyourselfee”.
 - C. It reveals the speaker’s dislike for “Yesees” and “Noees”.
 - D. It reveals that the speaker is not an independent thinker.

4. How does the progression of details in the poem contribute to the overall meaning? [RL.5]

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. Are you a “Yesee”, a “Noee”, or a “Thinkforyourselfee”? Why?
2. In the context of the poem, can we control our fate? Do you think you get to choose whether you’re a “Yesee”, a “Noee”, or a “Thinkforyourselfee”? Why or why not?
3. In the context of the poem, what makes you who you are? Do you think your decision-making process is an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
4. In the context of the poem, how can we achieve happiness? Do you think the “Thinkforyourselfees” are happier than the “Yesees” and the “Noees”? Does the speaker think that too? Why or why not? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.