

Name: _____ Date: _____

“Song of Myself” Poetry Writing

Using “Song of Myself” as a model, write a free verse poem that is a song of yourself.

- In life, we are constantly being made aware of the limitations of our powers. In this poem, you can forget the limitations and write as if you were as Whitman imagined.
- Write as if you were all of life, as if you were everywhere and in all time—past, present and future—seeing, hearing, feeling and understanding everything.
 - Example: Write each of the first lines as if you, the speaker, are a baby. Then write line two imagining you are a young child; line three as a teenager; line four as an adult; and line 5 as if you are elderly.
 - Example: Write the first line as if you were born a hundred years ago; the second as if you were born 50 years ago; the third as if you were born 25 years ago; the fourth in your own voice; and the fifth line as if you were born 10 years from now.
- Imagine yourself in many different places, including places where you have never been. Let your poem keep changing subjects as it goes along.
 - Example: Write the first line as if you were born in America...the second, as if you were born in Europe; the third as if you were born in Africa; the fourth, as if you were born in Asia; and the last line, as if you were born in the Middle East.

Use the directions below to help you generate as many details as you can:

1. Add at least five specific images and details to the following statements as a way of gathering your thoughts.

I hear...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I understand...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I see...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I want...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

2. Include a stanza of the poems about yourself. Who are you? Make a list of attributes that are uniquely you. Don't be shy; be proud, bold, and even boastful.

I am...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

3. Now, arrange the lines of the poem you've brainstormed into a poem. It's up to you how you want to arrange the lines and make the stanzas. Will you have a stanza of all "I Hear"...or will the stanzas include one line of each prompt—"I hear...I understand...I see...I want...I am... You must incorporate free verse, catalog, anaphora/parallel structure, imagery, and ONE OTHER LITERARY DEVICE INTO THE POEM. Underline and label these on the poem. You might not use all the lines you brainstormed, but the final poem must be a minimum of 15 lines long.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____
21. _____
22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____