

Name _____

Date _____

Emily Dickinson - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Emily Dickinson's poems are notable for their frequent experimentation with style and grammar. One of the trademarks of her writing is the slant rhyme. A traditional full rhyme is formed by two words with identical ending sounds, like "root" and "boot." Slant rhymes form when two words have *nearly* the same, but not quite identical, end sounds—"young" and "song," for example. Her poems also often employed unconventional punctuation choices, unusual word spellings, and complex grammatical structures. Due to her deviation from literary norms of the time, Dickinson's legacy is that of a great experimenter within poetry.

Based on the passage, which of the following is NOT a trademark of Emily Dickinson's poetry?

A. Unusual word spellings

B. Slant rhymes



C. Iambic pentameter

D. Unconventional punctuation

According to the passage, Dickinson was known for using slant rhymes, as well as "unconventional punctuation choices, unusual word spellings, and complex grammatical structures."

2. Although Emily Dickinson was a prolific writer, penning around 1,800 poems during her life, she herself only published 10 of them. The poet lived largely in seclusion and rarely traveled as an adult. She maintained relationships with few others, preferring to live an introspective life. Among her confidantes was her sister, Lavinia, who discovered many unpublished manuscripts after Emily's death. Lavinia recognized great talent in the pages, and in honor of her late sister's memory, published them. The poems remained relatively obscure, or unknown, until around the 1950s, when critics began celebrating her work.

When were most of Emily Dickinson's poems published?

A. During Emily's life, as she wrote them



B.

After Emily's death, when her sister
discovered unpublished manuscripts

According to the passage, Dickinson wrote "around 1,800 poems during her life," but "she herself only published 10 of them." The rest of them were published by her sister Lavinia "in honor of her late sister's memory."

C. Near the end of Emily's life

D. In the 1950s, after the manuscripts were
discovered by scholars

3. ** “Hope” is the thing with feathers** by Emily Dickinson This Emily Dickinson poem includes several signature qualities of the author’s work. In the first stanza, Dickinson endows an abstract concept (“hope”) with the qualities of a bird. She describes its feathers, the way it perches, and how it sings without pause. In the second, she describes how the bird’s song sounds sweetest when heard amidst the storm of everyday life, and how only a truly terrible gale could assail a bird that provides such comforts. Dickinson concludes by celebrating the many contexts in which she herself has experienced hope—extending the metaphor of natural forces coinciding with emotions by evoking cold weather and the ocean. The last lines describe how the “hope” bird never asks for anything in return for what it provides, because “hope” occurs naturally.

Which of these is the best description of "'Hope' is the thing with feathers?"

“Hope” is the thing with feathers - That perches in the soul - And sings the tune without the words - And never stops - at all - And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard - And sore must be the storm - That could abash the little Bird That kept so many warm - I’ve heard it in the chilliest land - And on the strangest Sea - Yet - never - in Extremity, It asked a crumb - of me.

- A. A criticism of the unrealistic expectation of happiness in a hopeless life
- B. A struggle between a helpless bird and the forces of nature as winter approaches
- C. A longing for warm weather to escape the depths of midwinter depression
- ✓ D. A metaphor that likens hopefulness to the soothing song of a bird

According to the passage, “Dickinson endows an abstract concept (“hope”) with the qualities of a bird,” creating a “metaphor of natural forces coinciding with emotions.”