

11th Grade Summer Reading Text 3
Task 1&2 - Read the text below.
Answer the 4 comprehension questions
which follow. Do the written response.

We Are Many

Of the many men whom I am, whom we are, I
cannot settle on a single one.
They are lost to me under the cover of clothing.
They have departed for another city.

5 When everything seems to be set
to show me off as a man of intelligence, the
fool I keep concealed on my person takes
over my talk and occupies my mouth.

10 On other occasions, I am dozing in the midst
of people of some distinction,
and when I summon my courageous self, a
coward completely unknown to me
swaddles¹ my poor skeleton
in a thousand tiny reservations.

15 When a stately home bursts into flames,
instead of the fireman I summon,
an arsonist bursts on the scene,
and he is I. There is nothing I can do.
What must I do to distinguish myself?
20 How can I put myself together?

All the books I read
lionize² dazzling hero figures,
always brimming with self-assurance.
I die with envy of them;
25 and, in films where bullets fly on the wind, I
am left in envy of the cowboys,
left admiring even the horses.

But when I call upon my dashing being,
out comes the same old lazy self,
30 and so I never know just who I am,
nor how many I am, nor who we will be being. I
would like to be able to touch a bell
and call up my real self, the truly me,
because if I really need my proper self,
35 I must not allow myself to disappear.

While I am writing, I am far away;
and when I come back, I have already left.
I should like to see if the same thing happens to
other people as it does to me,
40 to see if as many people are as I am,
and if they seem the same way to themselves. When
this problem has been thoroughly explored, I am
going to school myself so well in things
that, when I try to explain my problems,
45 I shall speak, not of self, but of geography.

—Pablo Neruda
from *We Are Many*, 1970
translated by Alastair Reid
Grossman Publishers

¹swaddles — wraps

²lionize — glorify

Task 1 - Answer each of the following questions. Record your responses on a separate doc with your written response.

1. The overall purpose of the figurative language in lines 12 through 14 is to show the narrator's
 - (1) contempt for self-reliance
 - (2) desire for adventure
 - (3) lack of self-confidence
 - (4) jealousy of writers

2. A primary function of the questions in lines 19 and 20 is to
 - (1) introduce the narrator's biases
 - (2) challenge the narrator's beliefs
 - (3) clarify the narrator's dilemma
 - (4) explain the narrator's decision

3. The contradictions presented throughout the poem serve to illustrate the relationship between
- (1) society's conflicts and the narrator's reaction
 - (2) the narrator's sensibilities and his determination
 - (3) society's expectations and the narrator's possibilities
 - (4) the narrator's idealism and his reality
4. The solution proposed in lines 42 through 45 can best be described as
- (1) balanced
 - (2) universal
 - (3) inappropriate
 - (4) unrealistic

Task 2 - Answer the following in complete, detailed sentences using as much cited detail from the text as possible. Your response should be on a separate document and should be at least 2-3 paragraphs in length. Grammar/spelling will count.

What is the central idea the author is trying to convey in this poem? Which lines or phrases help to support your choice?

Identify and discuss at least one writing element the author uses to bring out this central idea.

Cite to support your choice.