

“Ode to a Nebraska Mural” Worksheet

Just like no two people share the same fingerprints (even identical twins!), no two people share the same brain anatomy. Because every one of us is so wonderfully distinctive, we each think differently and have our own opinions, perceptions, interests, talents, and abilities. It’s a great reminder for us to keep an open mind, be respectful, listen to each other, share our thoughts and ideas, and embrace new thinking because we are each unique; it is how we grow as individuals and a society. So, stretch your beautiful brains. There are no right or wrong answers when it comes to your interpretation, so don’t be afraid to think outside the box.

Directions:

- 1) Read the first question.
- 2) Discuss this question as a group then record your answer(s).
- 3) Repeat this process for each additional question.

Who is the speaker of the Poem? (A speaker is the voice of the poem, like a narrator.)

To whom is the poem speaking?

What is the central idea of the Poem? Is there a message Matt Mason is trying to convey?

An Ode is supposed to have a lyrical (song-like) quality. Do you think Matt Mason achieved that? Give examples.

What did the poem make you think about?

How did the Poem make you feel?

Did the poem encourage you to use your senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting)? Give examples.

From reading the poem, how do you think Matt Mason feels about the Pershing Mural? How do you think the Mural feels about us?

What is the overall mood (e.g. happy, anxious, excited, tired, etc.) or feeling of the poem? Give at least two examples?

Describe any personal connection you feel to the poem?

What do you think is the best "line" in the poem?

What stands out to you in this poem?

In what ways did Matt Mason's word choices make it seem like the Mural was alive—a living, breathing thing? Give examples.

How did the use of punctuation (commas, dashes, etc.) change the temp of the poem?

Describe any hidden meaning you found in the poem?

If you could, what questions would you ask Matt Mason about this poem?

List five insights, conclusions, opinions, or questions you will share with the entire class:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____