

Name _____

Individual work first

Pre-reading of Dickinson's "Hope' is a thing with feathers" in *The Bedford Reader* p. 510

- Define hope in your own words:

- Is hope worth having? Why/why not?

Read and annotate. You should have at least two comments per stanza. Remember, annotating is about noticing how meaning is created! Share your thoughts!

"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 chillest land --
And on the strangest Sea --
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

What is this poem about?

This poem is an extended metaphor. What is being compared?

Group work

1. What makes Dickinson's metaphor particularly effective? Examine the comparison and discuss it with your group. What are the qualities of both a bird and hope? How does this metaphor make sense?
2. The second stanza (lines 4-8) seems at first glance to describe the absence of hope. What is the EFFECT of this note of pessimism? Why do suppose Dickinson included it?
3. To get a better grasp of the poem's overall meaning, PARAPHRASE (put in your own words) the third stanza. What does the conclusion reveal about the poet's attitude toward hope?
4. What do you notice about the structure (pattern of ideas) in this poem? How does this structure reinforce the writer's main idea?
5. How is this selection similar to and different from "Needs."

Similar	Different

6. Can you detect a pattern or reason for Dickinson's use of capital letters? Try to explain why for each example. Also, see if you can determine her decision to use dashes in each place. Remember these are structural choices.

