***Short Order Cook***by Jim Daniels

1. Using the chart below, tell me everything you can about the speaker in this poem, based on his **ACTIONS** in the poem.

WHAT HE DOES WHAT THIS SHOWS US ABOUT HIM

1. Ex. He “slaps” the burgers down He takes his job very seriously (no messing around)

2.

3.

4.

5.

1. Now, look at how the speaker’s **REACTIONS** to his surroundings indicate and develop his character, by filling out the chart below.

THE ACTION HIS RESPONSE WHAT THIS TELLS

US ABOUT HIM

1. Ex. A man orders 30 He waits for him to pay He doesn’t like to

burgers and 30 fries waste his time on

“nobodys”

2. The customer pays

3. The counter girls laugh

4. The counter girls “look at

him funny”

1. Please answer the following short-answer questions, to better analyze the poet’s choices in this poem, which will better your understanding of how and why those choices “work”.

A. List the words in this poem that show the speaker is very serious about, and proud of, his job. (knowledge level) See how important word choice is?!

B. What is the effect of using so many “ / “ on lines 16 – 20? Hint: think of SPEED. (analysis level)

1. Note the two short lines “He pays” and “I concentrate”. Why do you think the poet wanted us to notice them? What was his intent? (analysis level)
2. Why do you think the poet didn’t use a capital “J” when he mentioned “average joe”? (analysis level) How could you apply the same idea to your own writing? (application level)
3. In the space below, indicate some of the **figurative language** that you noticed in this poem (knowledge level). THEN, explain how the use of that figurative language was effective in the poem (analysis level). What did its use “do” for you, the reader?
4. Do the same as you did above for the **punctuation** chosen and used by the poet. (analysis level) What does it “do” for the poem?
5. The speaker in this poem works at a fast-food restaurant, but sums up his opinion of his job in three words. What are these words? (knowledge level)

Jim Daniels

**Short-Order Cook**

An average joe comes in and orders

30 cheeseburgers and 30 fries.

I wait for him to pay before I start cooking.

He pays –

he ain’t no average joe.

The grill is just big enough for 10 rows of 3.

I slap the burgers down,

throw two buckets of fries in the deep frier

and they pop pop spit spit…

psss…

The counter girls laugh.

I concentrate.

It is the crucial point:

they are ready for the cheese.

My fingers shake as I tear off slices, toss

them on the burgers/fries done/dump/

refill buckets/burgers ready/flip

into buns, beat that melting cheese/wrap

burgers into plastic/into paper bags/fries done/

dump/fill 30 bags/bring them to the counter,

wipe sweat on sleeve, and smile at the counter girls.

I puff out my chest and bellow:

“30 cheeseburgers, 30 fries.”

They look at me funny.

I grab a handful of ice, toss it in my mouth,

do a little dance, and walk back to the grill.

Pressure, responsibility, success.

30 cheeseburgers, 30 fries.