



Grade IX

Lesson 1. The Road Not Taken

Poetry

Soul of the Poem

'The Road Not Taken' is one of the finest poems by Robert Frost. This poem has a deep meaning. It deals with the problem of making a right choice. Many times in our life we face alternative choices. It is often difficult to decide which one to choose but the decisions we take influence our future. One morning, the poet was standing in a wood. It was autumn. He reached a point where his path split into two roads. Now he had to make a choice between the two. He stood undecided for a long time. Finally, he took the road on which a few people had travelled. He thought that he would travel upon the first path some other day thought he knew that it would not be possible for him to come back. He felt that his choice had made all the difference in his life. He knew that he had chosen a more challenging path. He thinks that if he had taken the other road, his life would have been different.

NCERT QUESTIONS

Thinking About the poem

I.

1. Where does the traveller find himself? What problem does he face?

The traveller finds himself in the yellow woods at a point where the road forks into two. He faces the problem of choice. He cannot decide which road to take to continue his journey since it is not possible for him to travel both roads at the same time.

2. Discuss what these phrases mean to you.

- i. a yellow wood
- ii. it was grassy and wanted wear
- iii. the passing there
- iv. leaves no step had trodden black
- v. how way leads on to way



- i. Yellow wood symbolises the autumn season. Symbolically it corresponds with old age.
- ii. It conveys that the road was full of grass and nobody had used that road. It was a smooth road which had not worn out. It was an unexplored opportunity.
- iii. The use of the path by a passer-by
- iv. It represents a path which was never/seldom taken in life for the fear of uncertainty.
- v. This phrase means how certain decisions one makes in life could pave the way for many other decisions.

3. Is there any difference between the two roads as the poet describes them (i) in stanzas two and three? (ii) in the last two lines of the poem?

(i) In stanza two the poet explains that the only difference between the two roads was that the road he took is a better claim because it was covered with grass and was never travelled before. Besides this difference, both roads had been equally worn down by the passersby travelling on them.

In stanza three the poet says that both the roads were equally covered with leaves and that no person had stepped on them.

(ii) In the last two lines of the poem the poet says that there is a difference between the two roads because he took the road that was less taken by other people. It made all the difference to his journey.

4. What do you think the last two lines of the poem mean? (Looking back, does the poet regret his choice or accept it?)

In the last two lines of the poem, the poet accepts the reality. The poet made a choice and accepted the challenging path. He took the unexplored path in his life. He wanted to do something different in his life so he chose the less travelled road. No, he does not regret his choice.

II

1. Have you ever had to make a difficult choice (or do you think you will have difficult choice to make? How will you make the choice (for what reasons)

Everyone has to make a choice in one's life. Life is full of opportunities and options. One can't take up all of them. We have to make a choice out of them. No, I have never had to make a difficult choice till now. I am too young to make an independent decision. But after some time, I will also have to make a choice. When I face such a situation, I will weigh all the pros



and cons of the choice and take a decision. I may even consult my parents and teachers for my decision.

2. After you have made a choice do you always think about what might have been, or do you accept the reality?

It's human nature to think what might have been if we had selected some other path. But it's also a fact that once we choose a path and cover some distance, there is no going back. One should think before making a choice. One should weigh all the pros and cons of the choice. But once we make a choice we should be determined to move on. Regretting the choice does not help. Acceptance of reality motivates. I will definitely accept the reality.

Solved Question Bank

Reference-to-Context Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow:

1. Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
 - a. 'Yellow wood' in the first line shows that the ongoing season is _____.
Autumn
 - b. The poet felt sorry as he could _____.
Not travel on both the roads.
 - c. The poet could see one of the roads behind in the small plants and greenery.
True
 - d. Another word for 'split' in the passage is _____.
'Diverged'
2. Then took the other, just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.



a. The speaker feels that the second path looks _____.

Better

b. _____ was grassy and wanted wear.

The second road

c. The speaker appears confused in the above lines as he couldn't make out whether both the roads were equally worn out or not.

True

d. 'Though as for that the passing there' means the _____.

'Passers-by'

3. And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

a. 'Both' in the first line has been used for the _____.

Two roads

b. The poet left the _____ road and planned to travel the _____.

First road; second road

c. The poet was very well knowing that he would certainly travel the first road some other time.

False

d. The phrase 'way leads on way' means _____.

One road leads to another.

4. I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence;

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -

I took the one less travelled by,

And that has made all the difference.

a. The above lines are transporting the readers into the _____.

Future

b. The poet would be telling the generations to come that he took the _____.

Less travelled road



c. The meaning of 'difference' in the last line can be either success or utter failure.

True

d. _____ is the word in the passage which means the same as 'from now'.

'Hence'

Short Answer Questions

1. Discuss "leaves no stop had trodden black".

Leaves no stop had trodden black: When leaves are crushed under feet, they turn black. The poet finds fresh leaves on the road. These were not turned black as nobody had crushed them. It implies that the road was not taken by many travellers.

2. Discuss "how way leads on the way".

How way leads on the way: It implies that once we choose a path, it leads us to our destination. As one moves, one road leads to another and life goes on. It is difficult to come back to the point of beginning.

3. Write the theme of the poem 'The Road Not Taken'.

The poem 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost is based on the theme that one has to make a choice of path to reach one's destination. There are so many options before us but we are faced with the problem of right choice.

4. 'And both that morning equally lay'. Explain.

The poet means to say that when he came there, two similar looking roads lay before him. Both led to his destination. He had to make a choice between the two.

5. Which of the two roads did the poet choose and why?

The poet had to choose one road out of the two similar-looking roads. He chose the second road which was not taken yet. He wanted to do something different, so he chose the less travelled road.

6. 'And looked down one as far as I could'. Where was the poet standing? Why did he feel sorry? Why did he look down?

The poet was in the forest. He had to choose one of the two roads that diverged in a small forest. He felt sorry because he could not take both the roads. He looked at one road as far as he could see up to the point where the road was bent.



7. 'Because it was grassy and wanted wear'. Why was the road 'grassy and wanted wear'?

Why did the poet choose it?

The road was grassy and wanted wear because it was not taken by many people. It was new for the poet. He chose this road because he wanted to do something that was not done before. He made a choice which was more challenging.

8. "I doubted if I should ever come back". Why did the poet doubt?

The poet had to make a choice between two roads, he could take only one road at a time. He chose the second one and decided to take the first one some other day. But he doubted whether he would be able to come back, and take the first one because one road leads to another.

9. "Oh! I kept the first for another day!" What did the poet decide the first road?

The poet decides to take the road which was less trodden. He thought that the first road would be taken up some other day. So he kept the first for another day.

10. "And that had made all the difference". What made all the difference in the poet's life?

The poet had to make a choice between two roads. He took the one that was less travelled by. In other words he chose a more difficult path to life. His choice of the less travelled path made all the difference in his life.

11. What do the two roads stand for?

The two roads in the poem stand for two opportunities. They also signify the crisis of choice. One has to make a choice of path to reach one's destination. Out of many options, we have to choose the right one.

12. Where did the two roads diverge? What was the difficulty?

The two roads diverged into a dark wood. There was a difficulty of right choice. There were two roads leading to one destination. The author was not able to decide which road he should take to reach his destination.

13. Do you think the poet was sure of coming back to that road some day? Why/Why not?

The poet was not sure of his coming back to that road some day. He himself says, "I doubted if I should ever come back". Once we make a choice and start our journey, it is not easy to change the choice and to begin afresh.

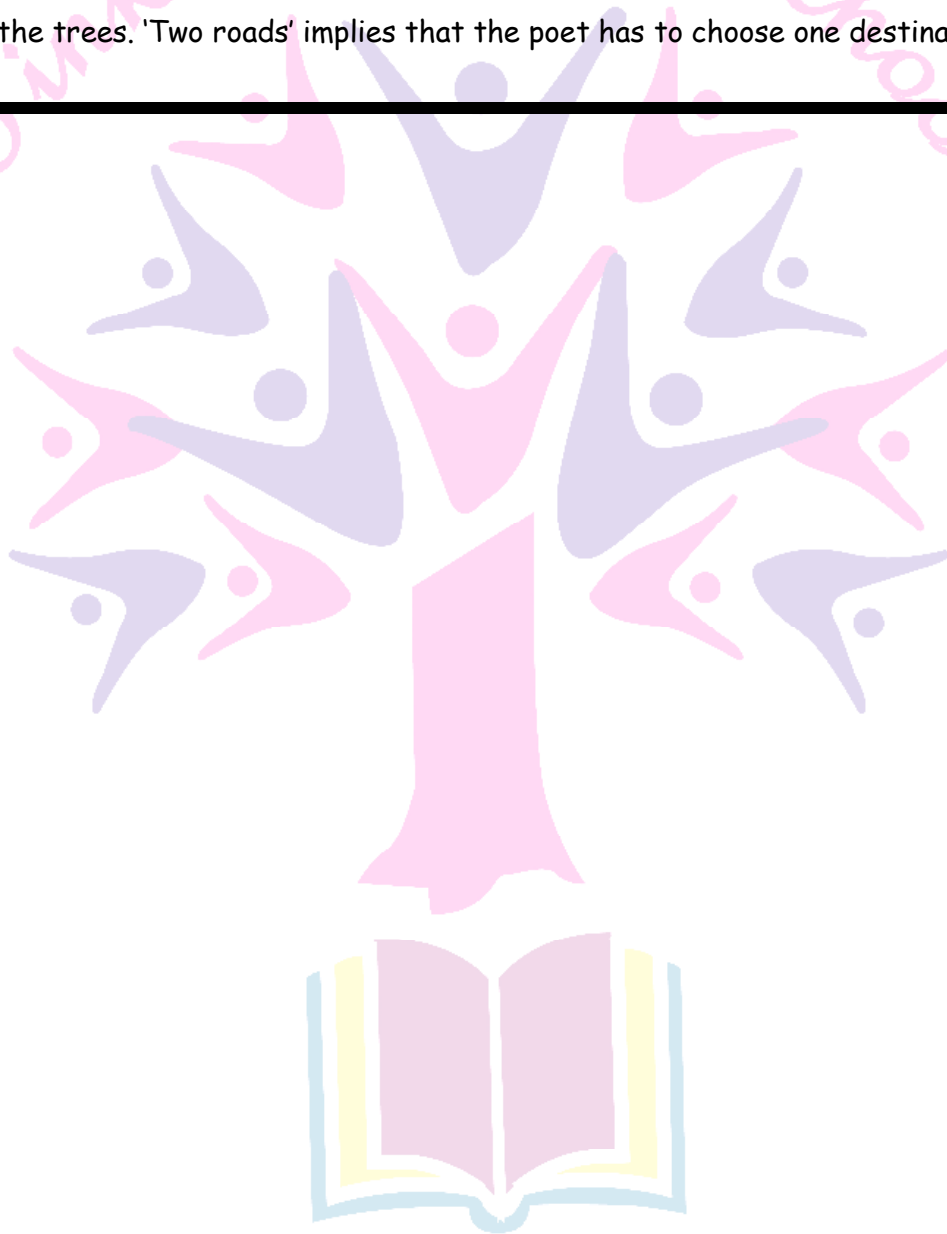


14. Do you think the poet is happy with his choice? Why/Why not?

No, the poet is not happy with his choice. He thought that his life could be different or perhaps better if he had taken the first road. However, just to be different, he decided to take risk.

15. 'Two roads, diverged in a yellow wood'. Explain the phrases 'yellow wood' and 'two roads'

'Yellow Wood' implies that it was autumn. The wood was looking yellowish because of yellow leaves of the trees. 'Two roads' implies that the poet has to choose one destination.



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