

# The Road Not Taken

## Poem

<b>Get Going</b>	✧ Discuss the given issues – what are the kind of decisions we have to take in our lives : subject choices, how we behave with our family, friends, classmates, teachers, neighbours, in public, etc., helping with chores, courtesy, traditions, etc. The discussion should focus, not on regrets, but on making (a) educated choices (b) impulsive choices (c) choices based on our own dreams and interests (d) choices made under peer/parental/social pressure, etc.
<b>Read and Enjoy</b>	<p>✧ This is one of the best-known poems by Robert Lee Frost, an American poet of the 20th century. It talks about choices that we make in our lives: sometimes we follow the beaten path or a path through which we know the destination; at other times we chose a path which no one else has walked and the destination is unknown. It is not about regrets, but about a person taking a decision after thinking about it seriously, and then having the courage to follow one's dreams and take a road that is unknown and risky. The poem is written in four stanzas, of five lines each. The rhyme scheme is a b a a b.</p> <p>✧ The poet/traveller has reached a forest where he is standing at a point where two roads meet. In the first stanza, he says he is standing where two roads 'diverged in the yellow wood'. The wood is 'yellow', reflecting that autumn has set in. It could also reflect the fact that the poet is a mature man, not a child. He would have liked to 'travel both', but he knew he had to chose one. So he stood there and looked down one of the paths, as far as he could seem till there was a 'bend in the undergrowth' after which he could not see further.</p> <p>✧ He looks down the other road, which seems 'just as fair', but has 'perhaps the better claim'. Both roads, he says are worn approximately the same extent, but this one attracted him because it 'was grassy and wanted wear'. When a path is continuously walked over, the grass gets worn down; whereas on this path the grass shows that not many people have walked on it.</p> <p>✧ That morning, he saw that fallen leaves lay on both paths and no one seems to have passed down either of the paths. If someone had trod down the paths, the leaves would be darker</p>

<p>where their feet had trodden them down. Therefore, the poet decides to leave the first path to explore it another day. But in his heart he knew that once he began walking down the other path, his curiosity would make him follow it till it led him to another path, and then another, and so on. "I doubted if I should ever come back," says the poet, knowing that he would follow the second path.</p> <p>✧ Having chosen the path, the poet says that at some future date, long after he has walked down the road, 'Somewhere ages and ages hence', he may look back on this time. He will sigh when he thinks of it, he says. It is perhaps a sigh about the fact that he could not explore both the roads. He says that he found the two divergent roads in the wood, and he took the one that fewer people had used. And the last line is most significant: "And that has made all the difference." It is left to the reader to guess whether he is happy or not. I think he is happy that he took that road; his only regret is that he could not also explore the second road.</p>	
<p>✧ Exercises A, B and C: Read and explain the questions and answer them orally. Then ask the students to write the answers. Check and assess their work individually.</p>	<b>Read and Understand</b>
<p>✧ Exercise A : Read and explain the question and discuss it in class. Then ask the students to write the answer. Check and assess their work individually.</p>	<b>Think and Answer</b>
<p>✧ Brush up on what is meant by metaphor – the comparison of two dissimilar things by which the qualities of one are reflected in the other. It is used as a form of symbolism in creative writing. Use the given instructions and examples. You can add your own. [For example – the mind can be compared to a monkey; a crowd can be compared to a tsunami; someone's walk can be compared to a duck's waddle; etc.] Metaphors do not use words of comparison – 'like', 'such as', etc. For example, we say the 'monkey mind' instead of saying the mind is like a monkey.</p> <p>✧ Exercise A and B: Discuss the poem and its symbolism in detail with the class. Use the notes given above in Read and Enjoy. Each word and phrase is loaded with meaning. (a) Two roads diverged (b) a yellow wood (c) sorry I could not travel both and be one traveler (d) stood and looked down one as far as I could (e) the undergrowth [which is the thick covering of the destination or the road itself] (f) grassy and wanted wear (g) that morning [a new venture] (h) a sigh [longing; regret; nostalgia; age] (i) the one less traveled by (j) the difference [his life was transformed by the choice].</p>	<b>Appreciating the Poem</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Read about William Wordsworth's 'Daffodils' and explain it. That 'pensive mood' is reflected in the 'sigh' of the poet in this poem. Also the two poems talk about recollecting something from the past.</li> </ul>
<b>Write Well</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Brush up on Diary writing, using the blackboard, the given format, instructions and example.</li> <li>✧ Exercise A: Ask the students what kind of dilemmas they have faced. Zero down on a few good examples and highlight them. Then ask the students to write a diary entry as instructed. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.</li> </ul>
<b>AIL Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Exercise A: Encourage students to write the poem on their own. It can be in one or two stanzas, not necessarily long. Check and assess their work individually.</li> </ul>