

UNIT 21

The Road Not Taken

(راستہ جو (میں نے) نہیں اپنایا)

Robert Frost

By the end of the unit, the students will be able to:

- use critical thinking to respond orally and in writing to the text (post-reading) to:
- give a personal opinion and justify stance related to viewpoints/ ideas and issues in the text read.
- relate what is read to his or her own feelings and experiences.
- scan to answer short questions.
- read a given poem and give orally and in writing:
- theme and its development.
- personal response with justification.
- recognize literary techniques such as personification and alliteration. analyze how a writer/ poet uses language to:
- appeal to the senses through use of figurative language including similes, metaphors and imagery
- set tone.
- recognize and use varying intonation patterns as aids in spoken and written to highlight focus in meaning.
- use various reference sources to refine vocabulary for interpersonal academic workplace situation including figurative, idiomatic and technical vocabulary.
- apply rules of capitalization wherever applicable.
- illustrate use of all punctuation marks wherever applicable.
- use the pronunciation key to pronounce words with developing accuracy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Lee Frost (March 26, 1874 – January 29, 1963) was an American poet known for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech. Frost frequently wrote about settings from rural life in New England in the early twentieth century, using them to examine complex social and philosophical themes. Robert Frost's most famous poems included 'The Gift Outright,' 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,' 'Birches,' 'Mending Wall,' 'The Road Not Taken,' and 'Nothing Gold Can Stay.'

رابرٹ لی فراسٹ (26 مارچ 1874 – 29 جنوری 1963) ایک امریکی شاعر تھے جو دیہی زندگی کی حقیقت پسندانہ عکاسی اور امریکی بول چال تقریر پر مبنی کے لئے جانے جاتے تھے۔ فراسٹ نے بیسویں صدی کے اداس میں میوانگینڈ میں زیادہ تر دیہی زندگی کے منظر نامے کے بارے میں لکھا، اور اس کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے پیچیدہ سماجی اور فلسفیانہ موضوعات کی جانچ کی۔ رابرٹ فراسٹ کی سب سے مشہور نظمیں درج ذیل ہیں:

'The Gift Outright,' 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,' 'Birches,' 'Mending Wall,' 'The Road Not Taken,' and 'Nothing Gold Can Stay.'

SUMMARY

The poet stands in the woods. There is a fork in the road. Both roads are worn and covered with un-trodden leaves. He cannot travel both the roads. He chooses one. He tells himself that he will travel on the other road another day. However, he knows that it is unlikely that he will have the opportunity to travel on the other road. He says that someday in future when he will think of this situation, he will claim that he took the less-travelled road. And this is what made all the difference in his life.

شاعر جنگل میں کھڑا ہے۔ اس کے سامنے سڑک میں ایک دو راہ ہے۔ دونوں سڑکیں ایک جیسی نوٹی پھوٹی ہیں اور بغیر پتوں سے ڈھکی ہوئی ہیں۔ وہ دونوں سڑکوں کا سفر نہیں کر سکتا۔ وہ ایک کا انتخاب کرتا ہے۔ وہ اپنے آپ سے کہتا ہے کہ وہ دوسری سڑک پر کسی اور دن سفر کرے گا۔ اگرچہ وہ جانتا ہے کہ اس کا امکان نہیں ہے کہ اسے دوسری سڑک پر سفر کرنے کا موقع ملے۔ اس کا کہنا ہے کہ آئندہ کسی دن جب وہ اس صورتحال کے بارے میں سوچے گا تو وہ غوی کرے گا کہ اس نے اس سڑک کا انتخاب کیا جس پر کم (لوگوں نے) سفر کیا ہوا تھا۔ اور یہی وہ سبب تھی جس نے اس کی زندگی کو (دوسروں سے) ممتاز کیا۔

Theme/Central Ideal

The two roads symbolize the choices that one has to make in life. It is very important to make the right choice because we can never go back. Instead of making a choice that everyone follows, the persons who make difference make a choice which is not followed by others.

دو راستے اس انتخاب کی علامت ہیں جو کسی کو زندگی میں کرنا پڑتا ہے۔ صحیح انتخاب کرنا بہت ضروری ہے کیونکہ ہم کبھی (وقت میں) واپس نہیں جاسکتے۔ ہر ایک کی پیروی کرنے کے بجائے، جن لوگوں کی زندگیوں میں وہ راستے سے ممتاز ہوتی ہیں وہ اس راستے کا انتخاب کرتے ہیں جس کی پیروی دوسرے نہیں کرتے ہیں۔

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

دو جگہوں میں دو سڑکیں (مختلف سڑکیں) جاتی تھیں
اور افسوس کہ میں دونوں کا سفر نہیں کر سکتا تھا
اور ایک تھا ساٹرا، میں طویل عرصے تک کھڑا رہا
اور جہاں تک میں دیکھ سکتا تھا ایک (راستے) کو دیکھا
اس جگہ تک جہاں یہ جھاڑ جھنکار میں مڑتا تھا

Then took the other, as 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,

پھر (میں نے) کو دوسرا راستہ لیا، مناسب اور اچھا
اور شاید بہتر انتخاب تھا،
کیونکہ یہ جگہ اس سے اچھا اور استعمال سے بچا ہوا تھا۔
اگرچہ اس کے لئے وہاں سے گزرتے ہوئے
ان کو اتنی ہی استعمال شدہ کر دیا تھا۔

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.

اور اس صبح دونوں برابر تھے
نہیں پر کسی بھی قدم نے انہیں سیاہ نہیں کیا تھا۔
وہ میں نے پہلے (راستے کو) کسی دوسرے دن (کے لیے) اٹھا کر رکھا!
یہ جانتے ہوئے کہ راستہ کس طرح جاتا ہے،
میں شک تھا کہ کیا میں کبھی واپس آؤں گا۔

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 traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

میں اس کو آہ بھرتے ہوئے بتا رہا ہوں گا
کئی صدیوں پہلے:
دو سڑکیں (مختلف سڑکیں) جاتی تھیں اور میں نے
میں نے اس کا انتخاب کیا جو سفر کے لیے کم استعمال ہوتی تھی،
وہاں سے ہی تمام فرق پڑا تھا۔

PARAPHRASE OF THE POEM

Stanza 1

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Paraphrase:

On the road of life, the poet arrives at a point where he must decide which of two equally appealing choices is the better one. He examines one choice as best as he can, but the future prevents him from seeing where it leads.

Stanza 2

- Then took the other, as 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,

Paraphrase:

The poet selects the road that appears at first glance to be less worn and, therefore, less travelled. This selection suggests that he has an independent spirit and does not wish to follow the crowd. After a moment, he concludes that both roads are about equally worn.

Stanza 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.

Paraphrase:

Leaves cover both the roads. No one on this morning has yet taken either of the roads, for the leaves on the roads are undisturbed. The poet remains committed to his decision to take the road he had previously selected, saying that he will choose the other road on another day. He observes, however, that he probably will never pass this way again and thus will never have an opportunity to take the other road.

Stanza 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.

Paraphrase:

The poet says that in years to come, he will be telling others about the choice he made. While doing so, he will sigh either with relief that he made the right choice or with regret that he made the wrong choice. Whether right or wrong, the choice will have had a significant impact on his life.

Explanation with Reference to Context

Stanza 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;

Reference:

This stanza has been taken from the poem 'The Road Not Taken', written by Robert Frost.

Context:

The poet says that once he was walking down a road and reached a fork. He took the time to choose one of the roads. He inspected them to decide which was a better option and then chose the one which seemed less travelled by. He

kept the other one for another day although he knew that he would never get the chance to travel by it. He would go further on the chosen path and not get a chance to go back on it. As he travelled on the selected road; he realized that both the roads were similar. He felt that his future depended on the choice that he made.

Explanation:

In these lines, the poet says that once he was walking down a road and he came across a fork, and the road split in two directions, and he had to choose one of them. The poet says that as he was one person, he could travel on one road only. He had to choose one of these two roads. Yellowwood means a forest in which leaves have turned yellow and are falling from the trees – it happens in autumn. It represents a world which is full of people where people have been living for many years. The poet kept standing there and looked at both the roads carefully as far as he could see. Before travelling one of the roads, he wanted to know where that road would lead him to. Was it suitable for him or no? He was able to see the road only up to a certain point. The road is covered with leaves and is hidden. It happens in our lives also when we have several alternatives, and we have to choose only one of them. We take time to think about the advantages and disadvantages of all the other options. We then make a decision and select one of the alternatives.

Stanza 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.

Reference:

This stanza has been taken from the poem 'The Road Not Taken', written by Robert Frost.

Context:

The poet says that once he was walking down a road and reached a fork. He took the time to choose one of the roads. He inspected them to decide which was a better option and then chose the one which seemed less travelled by. He kept the other one for another day although he knew that he would never get the chance to travel by it. He would go further on the chosen path and not get a chance to go back on it. As he travelled on the selected road, he realized that both the roads were similar. He felt that his future depended on the choice that he made.

Explanation:

In these lines, the poet kept on looking at one road for a long time to see if it is the right path for him and then he decides and started walking on the other road because he felt that both the roads are equally good. He adds that maybe he thought that the road he chose to travel was a better choice as it had grass on it, which means that it was less travelled by. Not many people had travelled on this road. After he walked on the road for some distance, he realized that both the roads had been worn out the same way. Both the roads were similar. Even in our lives, we chose an option from many options, but all of them may have the same benefits, disadvantages, problems, challenges, and we must face them. We think that we are choosing a better option, but it is not that way.

Stanza 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.

Reference:

This stanza has been taken from the poem 'The Road Not Taken', written by Robert Frost.

Context:

The poet says that once he was walking down a road and reached a fork. He took the time to choose one of the roads. He inspected them to decide which was a better option and then chose the one which seemed less travelled by. He

kept the other one for another day although he knew that he would never get the chance to travel by it. He would go further on the chosen path and not get a chance to go back on it. As he travelled on the selected road, he realized that both the roads were similar. He felt that his future depended on the choice that he made.

Explanation:

In these lines, the poet says that both the roads were similar that morning. Both had leaves on them, and no one had stepped on them as they were still uncrushed. He decided that he would take one road and keep the other road for another day. However, he knew that he could not go back on the choice that he had made. Similarly, in our lives, once we choose an option, we must keep on moving ahead with that option, and we never get a chance to come back and take the other option that we had left earlier.

Stanza 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.

Reference:

This stanza has been taken from the poem 'The Road Not Taken', written by Robert Frost.

Context:

The poet says that once he was walking down a road and reached a fork. He took the time to choose one of the roads. He inspected them to decide which was a better option and then chose the one which seemed less travelled by. He kept the other one for another day although he knew that he would never get the chance to travel by it. He would go further on the chosen path and not get a chance to go back on it. As he travelled on the selected road, he realized that both the roads were similar. He felt that his future depended on the choice that he made.

Explanation:

In these lines, the poet says that in the future he will take a deep breath and say that once upon a time he had reached such a point in life that there were two roads before him and he travelled on the road which had been less travelled by. That decision determined his future. Similarly, in our lives, we have many options before us, and we have to select only one option. And we choose one option. This option determines our future. This is a powerful message for us that we should be wise and careful while making choices out of the options that we have in our lives because our future depends on the choice that we make today.

GLOSSARY

Word	Meaning
diverge	(of a road, route, or line) separate from another route and going in a different direction.
trodden	Walked
undergrowth	a dense growth of shrubs and other plants, especially under trees in the woodland.
wear	damage, erode, or destroy by friction or use.

READING COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions.

1. Why is the poem titled as 'The Road Not Taken', why not 'The Road Taken' since it was the road taken that made all the difference?

Ans. The poem is not about the road which is usually taken by people. The poem is about the road which is mostly not taken by people. That is why its title is 'The Road Not Taken'. The poem is also entitled as 'The Road Not Taken' because it is the story of the road which is Not Taken by a majority of people. The poet makes the point that the difference between ordinary and extraordinary people is that ordinary people make choices which are made by most of the people. Whereas, extraordinary people make choices which are not made by many people. It is this choice that makes all the difference and makes them extraordinary.

2. What difference is the poet talking about? Can you make an informed guess?

Ans. The poet is talking about the difference between ordinary and extraordinary people. The poet makes the point that the difference between ordinary and extraordinary people is that ordinary people make decisions which are made by most people. Everyone knows the consequences of these decisions. Whereas, extraordinary people take decisions which are not taken by many people. Since many people do not take these decisions, no one knows their consequences. It is this choice that makes all the difference and makes these people extraordinary.

3. At some critical moment of life, each person has to make decisions. The poet faces making a decision at the turning point of life and he does, and this decision makes all the difference. Why does the poet succeed in making right decision?

Ans. The poem uses a metaphor in which the journey through life is compared to a journey on the road. The poet must choose one of the two paths. Although both the paths look equally attractive, the poet knows that his choice at this moment will have a significant influence on his future. He does make a decision, hoping that he may be able to revisit this place. But he knows that such an opportunity is unlikely. He imagines himself in the future telling the story of his life and claiming that his decision to take the road "less travelled by," the road few other people have taken, "has made all the difference."

4. The imagery 'ages and ages hence' puts value on some essential traits of character that brings a difference in people's life. What in your views are these traits? Explain.

Ans. Personality traits of a person reflect the character of the person. The "ages and ages hence" in the poem refers to the later years in poet's life. The poet is aware of the consequences of the decision he takes now on his future life. One must be brave to travel an unconventional path. One must be courageous enough to accept the challenges and consequences of his decision. These – awareness of consequences of decisions one takes, courage, bravery, and readiness to accept challenges – are some of the traits that bring the difference in people's lives.

5. What in your views is the dominant theme of the poem 'The Road Not Taken'.

Ans. The poem is about uncertainty and confusing situation people face when they have to make choices in their lives. It is because life is full of choices, and the choices we make define the whole course of our lives. The poet faces a situation during his travel. He finds two roads at a point where he has to choose one and must leave the other. He selects one road. He thinks he may come back one day to travel on the other road. However, he also has a feeling that his choice will confront him with unknown circumstances. Though there is some regret over his choice, yet he realizes that it is this choice that has made all the difference in his life.

6. Describe the imagery of the poem 'The Road Not Taken'. Is it abstract or concrete? Illustrate it with examples from the poem.

Ans. The imagery of in a poem is always a significant aspect of the poem. Imagery is used to make readers feel things through their five senses. In this poem, the poet has used images of the sense of sights such as leaves, yellowwoods, and these images are concrete and help readers to perceive things they are reading. The image of the road helps readers visualize the road which is taken by a traveller.

WRITING SUGGESTIONS

Writing Suggestions

A. How do you like the poem 'The Road Not Taken'. Write an appreciation of the poem in your own words.

Ans. "The Road Not Taken" is a lyrical poem of Robert Frost. It describes a problem that is faced by people many times in their lives. It talks about making a decision in life. The poet has expressed this dilemma through the image of two separate roads. The poet has to choose one between them. It is tough to decide which road he should choose. How can one say that one road is better than the other? There are questions a majority of people have to face in life. The end of the road is the consequences of the decision.

The poet has brought out this situation where he has to select between two roads. Both the roads are equally attractive. The fallen yellow leaves are uncrushed. Nobody had walked on them. It is difficult to make a decision. The poet thinks over it for a while to take a proper decision. He chooses one road. The consequences of his decision will only be known at the end of the journey. He chooses the road which is less travelled by. Though it may be lonely, challenging, full of hurdles, he would like to prefer something new. He would walk in the road which is not often used.

B. Write the explanation of the following lines with reference to the context:

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.

Oral Communication

Divide the class into groups and ask the students of each group to read aloud the poem 'The Road Not Taken'. Each student should read it on his turn. While reading aloud he himself and the group, should listen to his voice, to the sounds the words make. Now, through group discussion ask them to find the answers of the following questions with their group members.

- Do you notice any special effects?
- Do any of the words rhyme?
- Is there a cluster of sounds that seem the same or similar?
- Is there a section of the poem that seems to have a rhythm that's distinct from the rest of the poem?

VOCABULARY

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary

Find the meaning of the following internet related words in a dictionary, identify their part of speech and then fill in the blanks. Check their pronunciation in the dictionary with the help of the pronunciation key.

spam messages board username
virus fraudulent antispam filter

- I was about to give somebody my account number over the phone when I realized it was a **fraudulent** attempt to get my personal information.
- If you use an **antispam**, your mailbox won't get so full of trash mail.
- Every morning, I have to empty my mailbox of unwanted **messages**. I've decided to open a new e-mail account

- and give the address only to the few friends who usually write to me.
4. I signed up to that baseball website last weekend. I wanted to choose the username 'BabeRuth' but someone else had already chosen it. So I chose 'BaseballJoe' instead.
 5. I don't know the answer to that question but if you have a little time later, go onto that cookery board ask there. Every time I have a question, I receive an answer within twenty minutes: there are so many knowledgeable people on that site.
 6. Be careful when you open attachments that come with e-mails because you might put a virus onto your computer even if a friend sent you the e-mail.

GRAMMAR

A. Use appropriate punctuation marks in the following sentences.

1. We had a great time in Malaysia the kids really enjoyed it
We had a great time in Malaysia – the kids really enjoyed it.
2. Some people work best in the mornings others do better in the evenings
Some people work best in the mornings; others do better in the evenings.
3. What are you doing next weekend
What are you doing next weekend?
4. Mother had to go into hospital she had heart problems
Mother had to go into hospital: she had heart problems.
5. Did you understand why I was upset
Did you understand why I was upset?
6. It is a fine idea let us hope that it is going to work
It is a fine idea; let us hope that it is going to work.
7. We will be arriving on Monday morning at least I think so
We will be arriving on Monday morning – at least, I think so.
8. A textbook can be a wall between teacher and class
A textbook can be a 'wall' between teacher and class.
9. The girls father sat in a corner
The girl's father sat in a corner.
10. In the words of Murphys Law Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.
In the words of Murphy's Law: 'Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.'

B. Put in semicolons, colons, dashes, quotation marks, italics (use an underline), and parentheses where they are needed in the following sentences.

1. The men in question Abrar, Nizam, and Iftikhar deserve awards.
The men in question (Abrar, Nizam, and Iftikhar) deserve awards.
2. Several countries participated in the airlift Italy, Belgium, France, and Luxembourg.
Several countries participated in the airlift: Italy, Belgium, France, and Luxembourg.
3. There's no room for error, said the engineer so we have to double check every calculation.
"There's no room for error," said the engineer, "so we have to double check every calculation."

Judge Carswell later to be nominated for the Supreme Court had ruled against civil rights.

Judge Carswell – later to be nominated for the Supreme Court – had ruled against civil rights.

In last week's New Yorker, one of my favorite magazines, I enjoyed reading Leland's article How Not to Go Camping.

In last week's New Yorker, one of my favorite magazines, I enjoyed reading Leland's article "How Not to Go Camping."

Yes, Aayan said, I'll be home by ten.

"Yes," Aayan said, "I'll be home by ten."

There was only one thing to do study till dawn.

There was only one thing to do – study till dawn.

Montaigne wrote the following A wise man never loses anything, if he has himself

Montaigne wrote the following: "A wise man never loses anything, if he has himself"

The following are the primary colors red, blue, and yellow.

The following are the primary colors: red, blue, and yellow.

Arriving on the 8 10 plane were Humera, my old roommate her husband and Mustafa, their son.

Arriving on the 8:10 plane were Humera, my old roommate, her husband; and Mustafa, their son.

When the teacher commented that her spelling was poor, Rehan replied all the members of my family are poor spellers. Why not me?

When the teacher commented that her spelling was poor, Rehan replied, "All the members of my family are poor spellers. Why not me?"

He used the phrase you know so often that I finally said No, I don't know.

He used the phrase "you know" so often that I finally said, "No, I don't know."

The automobile dealer handled three makes of cars Toyota, Suzuki, and Honda.

The automobile dealer handled three makes of cars: Toyota, Suzuki, and Honda.

Though Abbas said he would arrive on the 9 19 flight, he came instead on the 10 36 flight.

Though Abbas said he would arrive on the 9:19 flight, he came instead on the 10:36 flight.

Whoever thought said Ayesha that Ilyas would be elected class president?

"Whoever thought," said Ayesha, "that Ilyas would be elected class president?"

In baseball, a show boat is a man who shows off.

In baseball, a "show boat" is a man who shows off.

17. The minister quoted Isaiah 5 21 in last Sunday's sermon.
The minister quoted Isaiah 5:21 in last Sunday's sermon.
18. There was a very interesting article entitled The New Rage for Folk Singing in last Sunday's New York Times newspaper.
There was a very interesting article entitled "The New Rage for Folk Singing" in last Sunday's New York Times newspaper.
19. Whoever is elected secretary of the club Maheen, or Nadia, or Aisha must be prepared to do a great deal of work, said Jumila, the previous secretary.
"Whoever is elected secretary of the club – Maheen, or Nadia, or Aisha – must be prepared to do a great deal of work," said Jumila, the previous secretary.
20. Darwin's On the Origin of Species 1859 caused a great controversy when it appeared.
Darwin's On the Origin of Species (1859) caused a great controversy when it appeared.

Teacher's Guideline:

Explain and revise with the students the use of punctuation marks and capitalization learnt earlier.