

The Road Not Taken

Bagrut Questions and Answers

(questions and answers from the Bagrut tests including summer 2015)

6. Read the quote and answer the question.

The poem begins: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,"

Give ONE reason why it was hard for the speaker to decide which road to take. (5 points)

Both roads looked appealing / the roads weren't all that different / the speaker knew that if he took one road he couldn't take the other as well.

7. Why did the speaker choose the road he did? (5 points)

One road was used more often by people, the other was used far less often. He comes to the conclusion that he will take the road that fewer people have walked on.

8. **"Yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back."**

Explain this quote in your own words. Do you agree with the speaker? Explain why or why not. (10 points)

One decision leads to another one and it is impossible in life to go back to the point when one made the decision.

I do agree with this quote because in life one cannot go back in time and undo what has been decided.

OR

I don't agree with this quote because it is always / generally possible to correct mistakes one has made.

9. a. The poem ends: **"And that has made all of the difference."** This quote describes how the speaker will relate to his decision later on in life.

How does he think he will feel about his decision? (10 points)

Possible thinking skills: Inferring / Distinguishing different perspectives / Explaining cause and effect

His decision has made all the difference to his life. He has chosen the unpopular / nonconformist way in life. He isn't sure how he feels about this. He says he will be telling this with a sigh because he will feel regret that he will never know what the other road might have offered him. / The sigh may also be one of pride / satisfaction.

10. The last stanza begins: **"I shall be telling this with a sigh / Somewhere ages and ages hence:"**

a. Why do you think the speaker will be "telling this with a sigh"? (8 points)

He thinks he will be talking about this decision in the future "with a sigh". He isn't sure whether it will be a sigh of regret or a sigh of relief about the choice he has made in life. He says that he has chosen the road fewer people have taken, but he knows that he will always wonder about the road he hasn't taken.

b. What connection can we make between this quote and the title of the poem? (7 points)

This is why the poem is called "The Road Not Taken". That is how it is in life: we always wonder about the road we did not take, the choice we did not make. That is because we already know where the road has led us. The speaker will also remember how hard/satisfying it was to take the road few people take.

The Road Not Taken / Robert Frost

"Take a chance! All life is a chance. The man who goes the furthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare. The 'sure thing' boat never gets far from shore." - Dale Carnegie, American writer

Make a connection between the above quote and the poem. Give information from the poem to support your answer.

The speaker in the poem is at a crossroads in his life and he has to make a decision about his future. He has to choose between the easier path and the one that has challenges. The speaker knows that his choice will influence his future and feels that, as Carnegie says in the quote, if he takes risks and chooses the road less traveled, maybe he will be more successful and have a more fulfilling life. The speaker decides to take this path and see where his choice leads him.

Supporting quotes: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I – I took the one less traveled by."

-"And having perhaps the better claim"

-"Because it was grassy and wanted wear."

-"To where it bent in the undergrowth"

-"And that has made all the difference."

AND / OR

The writer believes that, as Carnegie says in the quote, taking challenges will lead to a better life and more success than if someone just takes the easy path – easy choices. In the poem, the speaker does take the road less traveled by, but in the end, he says he'll tell the story with a sigh, which means he will probably regret his choice // will be sorry that he chose the more challenging path. We have to make choices in life and sometimes we regret those choices much later in life.

Supporting quote: "will be telling this with a sigh Somewhere ages and ages hence."

"In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves... And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility." – Eleanor Roosevelt

Make a connection between the above quote and the poem. Give information from the poem to support your answer.

In the quote Eleanor Roosevelt says that we are responsible for our choices. The speaker in the poem also talks about a choice he has made. He has chosen a road less traveled by and he says that it has made all the difference in his life. This probably means that he is happy with / regrets his choice. Although he is sorry he will never know what the other road might mean for him, he takes responsibility for his decision.

Accept answers that relate only to our choices shaping our lives or only to taking responsibility for our choices. Appropriate supporting details for our choices shaping our lives:

– *"that has made all the difference"*

– *"I shall be telling this with a sigh" (the decision had such an important impact that he will talk about it in the future)*

** Appropriate supporting details for taking responsibility for our choices:*

— *Two roads diverged in a wood and I-- / I took the road less traveled by" (or anything else that relates to him talking about how he made the decision on his own)*

– *anything about him taking time to think about his decision or describing the difficulty in choosing.*

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN / Robert Frost

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THE ROAD NOT TAKEN / Robert Frost (questions and answers from the Bagrut)

Bridging Text and Context - Suggested length: 60-80 words.

Robert Frost said that "The Road Not Taken" was written about a friend of his who, whatever road he went on, was sorry that he hadn't chosen another.

How does this quote help you understand the poem?

Possible answer:

At the beginning of the poem Frost writes that he is sorry he isn't able to go on both roads. He also writes how he stood for a long time looking at the roads before he made a decision. This fits in with the quote which says that Frost's friend wasn't ever happy with his decisions because he always wanted the road he didn't take. This is exactly what Frost says when he writes that he hoped to come back one day and take the other road but knew in his heart it would not happen. The last stanza tells us he is sorry he can't know what is on the other road when he says that he will talk about his choice with a "sigh." (The title also relates directly to the quote because it says "The Road NOT Taken" which shows us Frost (or his friend) is sorry he couldn't take the other road as well. Instead of feeling satisfied with his life, he feels unhappy, like he's missed something.)

Bridging Text and Context - Suggested length: 60-80 words.

"Frost uses nature as a background. He usually begins a poem with an observation of something in nature and then moves toward a connection to some human situation." – The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost by John F. Lynen

Explain how the above quote adds to your understanding of the poem.

NOTE that answer must include at least one "observation of something in nature" in the poem and its connection to the human situation / life.

Examples are:

Two roads in a wood Choices people make in life

A forest / wood Things aren't clear / it's not clear where you're going

Yellow wood / autumn The speaker is middle-aged

One of the roads bent in the undergrowth We can't see the future / We can't know when we make a choice what the results will be

One road was grassy / wanted wear Choosing something that other people don't choose

POSSIBLE ANSWER:

This quote helps me understand the poem better because it connects directly to the poem. The poem starts by describing something in nature: a wood in autumn. The wood has two roads. The speaker talks about which road to choose. The choice of roads connects to the human situation where people have to make decisions and can't come back to the same point in life. / know what the future will be.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN / Robert Frost

1. The traveler could not see where the road was going because (-).

- (i) it wasn't straight
- (ii) the woods were too dark
- (iii) it was covered by leaves
- (iv) it was very grassy

ANSWER: (i) it wasn't straight

2. "Yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back."

What does the speaker mean by these lines? He means that (-).

- (i) one road was less traveled than the other
- (ii) he could never take the other road
- (iii) both roads looked the same
- (iv) one road was more difficult than the other

ANSWER: (ii) he could never take the other road

3. "I shall be telling this with a sigh" - What does the word "this" refer to?

ANSWER:

How the speaker had to make a choice between two roads / the choice (he made) / making decision / his decision (about choosing the road) / not taking the other road

If: "the story of his life: he chose the better way" – 0 pts

If: "the story about the two roads" – deduct 60%

If: "the road / way (he take /chose)" – deduct 60%

If: "two roads" – deduct 60%

4. The speaker takes a long time to make his decision. What is he thinking about?

ANSWER:

He knows this is an important decision. He wants to choose the road that is best for him but he's not sure which one that is. Each time he looks at them they look different /

Which road is better / Which road to choose / take / About the two roads / That he cannot travel both roads / He compares the roads / How to choose the road.

If: "how to make the decision" – accept

5. "I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference."

a. What is the speaker saying here?

Thinking skill I chose:

ANSWER:

5. a.

Possible thinking skill: Explaining cause and effect / Inferring

Any other thinking skills are acceptable as long as they are supported by the text and can be explained in question 5b.

The speaker is saying that whatever choice you make in life influences what your life will be like, for better or for worse / Our choices influence our life.

6. a. Some people say the poem is about regret. Why do you think they say that? Support your answer with information from the poem.

ANSWER:

6. a.

They say that because the poem tells us that if you choose one thing you have to give up something else and this makes you feel sorry. We can see this in the poem by the title of the poem, which talks about the road **not** taken, meaning the speaker is sorry about something he **didn't** do. / It can be regret because the poet would never know

what he had missed by not taking the other road / Because the poet could not choose both ways and he is sorry about it / Because they think that the "sigh" at the end of the poem expresses regret.

b. Do you agree with the interpretation of the poem in 6a? Compare it with your own interpretation.

ANSWER:

b. Yes, I agree with the interpretation because we always think of what we missed / what we didn't do. OR: No, I don't agree because I think this is a poem about making an unusual choice, the choice that most people don't make.

If: "No, because the sigh does not necessarily represents regret, it can express happiness or being proud of yourself with the choice" – accept

If: "No, because the sigh can be one of a relief and satisfaction with his decision which made all the difference in his life" – accept.

If: "I don't have a well thought out opinion because that the sigh in the end can be a sigh of relief or a sigh of despair" – accept

If: "No, because the traveler took a long time to make his decision" – 0 pts.

If: "No, because people have to feel satisfied with their choices and not to think about what would had happened if they had chosen another way in life" – 0 pts

If: "I agree with this interpretation because it seems that the poem talks about the regret of the poet" – 0 pts

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN / Robert Frost

a. **What is the traveler's problem in the first stanza of the poem (lines 1-5)?**

ANSWER: He doesn't know which road to take. / He can't decide what to do. / He is sorry he can't take both roads.

b. **Give ONE example of how the roads are the same.**

ANSWER: Two roads diverged in a yellow wood just as fair / Both that morning equally lay / Both had been used almost the same.

c. Copy the words from the poem that describe the road that fewer people took.

ANSWER: grassy and wanted wear / less traveled by

Read the quote and answer question d.

"Yet knowing how way leads on to way, / I doubted if I should ever come back."

d. Explain the meaning of this quote in your own words.

When you make decisions one thing leads to another and you can't go back.

One decision takes you in one direction and you can't change what you have already decided.

e. Why does the speaker say he will **"be telling this with a sigh / Somewhere ages and ages hence"**?

Thinking skill I chose: _____.

ANSWER:

Inferring, uncovering motives, distinguishing different perspectives

Any other thinking skills are acceptable as long as they are supported by the text and can be explained in question e.

Possible information that would be adapted according to the thinking skill chosen:

When he looks back at his life and the decisions he made, he may be sorry / happy about his decision / about the road he took.

It might be a sigh of satisfaction. / He is thinking back and reflects on his decision.

Explain why you chose this skill to answer question d.

Inferring

I chose inferring because I had to infer what the meaning of the sigh is, of what he will be telling in the future.

Uncovering motives

In order to answer the question, I had to try and uncover the motive of why he will be telling this with a sigh.

Distinguishing different perspectives

I chose this skill because I had to try and understand the perspective of the person in the poem.