

K-12

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Common Core Grade 8 English Language Arts

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Topic: 1

Paragraph (1)

Read the following passage from Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" to answer questions 1-5.

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;
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,
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 should ever come back.
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.

Question: 1

What can be said about the author's tone in "The Road Not Taken"?

- A. He feels some remorse about his decision.
- B. He feels that he has accomplished something great.
- C. He feels that his path has been different.
- D. He feels that he should not have gone into the woods.

Answer: A

Explanation:

Line 16 reveals that the author will be talking about this moment later with a sigh. There is nothing in the poem to indicate that the author has done something great or that he should have not gone into the woods. While he does seem to say that his path has been different than others, that does not describe the tone of the poem.

Question: 2

How does the point of view affect the tone of this poem?

- A. It creates a feeling of superiority in the reader.
- B. It causes the reader to feel slightly distanced from the scene.
- C. It makes the reader feel as if he/she is making the same decision.
- D. It causes the reader to feel as if he/she has no choice.

Answer: C

Explanation:

The first person point of view makes the reader feel as if he/she is involved in making the same decision. The other choices involve other points of view: an omniscient reader would feel superior or even a little distanced from the scene. The reader also has a clear choice, so letter D would not be a good selection.

Question: 3

What is the main theme in this poem?

- A. Deciding which road to take while on a hike
- B. Making choices that may be different from others
- C. How to make the best of a decision in the past
- D. Wondering about the choices that others have made

Answer: B

Explanation:

This is because the writer mentions there are two paths, and one seemed more worn than the other, showing it was more often used by travelers. The other choices involve reading too much into the poem.

Question: 4

What is the setting of this poem?

- A. The early morning near some wood in the early or late spring
- B. The edges of a well-worn path near thick undergrowth
- C. Two paths that are near a more traveled one in the late morning
- D. The morning in an autumnal forest with walking paths

Answer: D

Explanation:

The setting is laid out in lines I and II.

Question: 5

Which lines from this poem show a kind of irony?

- A. 16, 17, and 20
- B. 4, 5 and 6
- C. 6 and 8
- D. 18 and 19

Answer: A

Explanation:

Frost uses a type of irony called "verbal irony" here, and shows us his feelings by using expressions that go against what the literal words say.

Topic: 2

Paragraph (2)

Read the following passage from Heywood Broun's *The Fifty-First Dragon* to answer questions 6-10.

OF all the pupils at the knight school Gawaine le Coeur-Hardy was among the least promising. He was tall and sturdy, but his instructors soon discovered that he lacked spirit. He would hide in the woods when the jousting class was called, although his companions and members of the faculty sought to appeal to his better nature by shouting to him to come out and break his neck like a man. Even when they told him that the lances were padded, the horses no more than ponies and the field unusually soft for late autumn, Gawaine refused to grow enthusiastic. The Headmaster and the Assistant Professor of Pleasance were discussing the case one spring afternoon and the Assistant Professor could see no remedy but expulsion.

"No," said the Headmaster, as he looked out at the purple hills which ringed the school, "I think I'll train him to slay dragons."

"He might be killed," objected the Assistant Professor.

"So he might," replied the Headmaster brightly, but he added, more soberly, we must consider the greater good. We are responsible for the formation of this lad's character."

"Are the dragons particularly bad this year?" interrupted the Assistant Professor. This was characteristic. He always seemed restive when the head of the school began to talk ethics and the ideals of the institution.

"We never known them worse," replied the Headmaster. "Up in the hills to the south last week they killed a number of peasants, two cows and a prize pig. And if this dry spell holds there's no telling when they may start a forest fire simply by breathing around indiscriminately."

Would any refund on the tuition fee be necessary in case of an accident to young Coeur-Hardy?"

"No," the principal answered, judiciously, "that's all covered in the contract. But as a matter of fact he won't be killed. Before I send him up in the hills I'm going to give him a magic word."

"That's a good idea," said the Professor. "Sometimes they work wonders."

Question: 6

What is the best way to describe Gawaine's character?

- A. Fearless and excitable
- B. Careless and frigid
- C. Spiritual and careful
- D. Cowardly and apathetic

Answer: D

Explanation:

Gawaine is said to be tall and sturdy, but would run away and hide at the smallest sign of trouble.

Question: 7

What is the meaning of "his better nature"?

- A. An increased sense of honesty
- B. A man's ignoble ideas
- C. A desire for propriety
- D. A man's nobler instincts

Answer: D

Explanation:

"His better nature" is a common way of talking about a person's deeper character.

Question: 8

How does the Headmaster put the professor at ease about Gawaine?

- A. He tells him that Gawaine will only fight small dragons.
- B. He assures him that Gawaine's contract has not expired.
- C. He talks to him about the animals that have been killed by the dragons.
- D. He mentions that Gawaine will be given a magic word.

Answer: D

Explanation:

Letter A is not mentioned in the text, and the other choices do not directly answer the question.

Question: 9

What would be a good question for the Headmaster to consider?

- A. Will Gawaine try hard to fight the dragons?

- B. Will Gawaine wants to learn about fighting dragons?
- C. Will the professor let Gawaine learn about dragons?
- D. Will the professor teach Gawaine to fight the dragons?

Answer: B

Explanation:

Considering Gawaine's character, this is the only choice that makes sense because it is well known that Gawaine is cowardly and the professor doesn't seem to know much about dragons.

Question: 10

Suppose that Gawaine's parents have him removed from the school. Would the Headmaster still want Gawaine to learn to fight dragons?

- A. No, he would be happy with the tuition payment.
- B. No, he would think that Gawaine would eventually return.
- C. Yes, because Gawaine is naturally very tall and strong.
- D. Yes, because Gawaine will get a special word for protection.

Answer: A

Explanation:

This can be inferred from the text:

"Would any refund on the tuition fee be necessary in case of an accident to young Coeur-Hardy?"

"No," the principal answered, judiciously, "that's all covered in the contract."

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