

Lesson 1: Two Roads Diverge: Exploring Choices

Subject: Language Arts **Grade:** 10-1

Time: 40 minutes

Learning Objectives/Rationale:

- To introduce the students to Robert Frost’s celebrated poem, “The Road Not Taken.”
- Explore the theme of the poem and the archetypal question(s) it poses.
- Engage students in a pre-reading activity that will have them make predictions about the poem.
- Students will write personal responses in a journaling format that will have them revisit a difficult and/or significant choice they had to make in their life.

Curriculum Objectives:

- **General Outcome 1: Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences.**
 - 1.1 Discover possibilities.
 - 1.1.1. Form tentative understandings, interpretations and positions.
 - a. generate and experiment with strategies that contribute to forming tentative understandings, interpretations and positions (e.g. posing questions, recognizing that initial interpretations and positions may be inaccurate and incomplete, etc.)

Read Write Listen Speak Represent View

Resources/Materials:

- Textbooks with poem - Overhead copy of poem (and different colored pens) - Journals

For the Whiteboard:

- Today: Two Roads Diverge: Exploring Choices
 - Let’s talk about choices
 - “The Road Not Taken” Page #
 - Introduction of assignment
 - Journal response. DUE tomorrow if not finished in class.

Getting Organized:

- Textbooks ready to go, pg. #;
- Journals ready to go;
- Pencils/pens ready to go;
- Record today’s date in journal.

Time

10min

Anticipatory Set

Probing questions:

- What are some choices that you have had to make today?
- What are some small choices or decisions that people have to make in their lives?
- What are some big choices or decisions that people have to make in their lives?
- Describe a decision you have made that has had an important impact on your life.

Author background: Robert Frost

- Born in San Francisco in 1874;
- Considered by some to be the unofficial poet laureate (important poet) of the United States;
- On his 75th birthday, the US Senate passed a resolution in his honour that said: “His poems have helped to guide American thought and humor and wisdom, setting forth to our minds a reliable representation of ourselves and of all men [and women].” This statement, of course, applies to Canadians as well as all global Frost readers.
- Died in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1963.

Title:

- By looking at the title, what do you think the poem might be about?

Modifications

If students are having a difficult time thinking of a decision in their life, or if they are uncomfortable sharing their story in their journals, they may choose to describe a choice a character in a novel, non-fiction story, movie, song, etc. had to make in their life.

Sponge Activities

If students finish early, they are encouraged to self-edit their work. If they finish this, they may work on the above modification.

25 min

Body

Reading the Poem

- Students will first read the poem independently and silently.
- Teacher will then read the poem aloud, working from the overhead/SMARTBoard. Students will follow along.
- With teacher as guide, class will work through the poem together on the overhead, underlining vocabulary that needs further explanation, and adding in question marks where students have questions about the poet's message.

Introducing the Assignment

- JOURNAL: Identify a specific incident in your own life that helps you understand the experience of the speaker in "The Road Not Taken." How does this help you interpret or better understand the poem? How does it help you appreciate the text?
- Examples: moving houses/schools, situations with friends, doing chores at home, etc.

Check for Clarification

- First, check with another person if you need clarification. If the question cannot be answered, then bring your query to the whole class.

Time for the Assignment

- Find a comfortable place to silent write.
- Respect that this is a personal assignment and everyone has the right to keep their words to themselves.
- Remainder of class will be used to write a response.
- Due tomorrow in-class.

Notes

Changes for GRADE 9

Referring back to the pre-reading activity questions, students will chart a decision they have made in their lives and trace the outcomes of that decision. They will also chart possible outcomes related to making a difference choice in the same situation. Students will write a journal response based on their reflective thoughts on the decision they made and also comment on the decision-making process they have explored in class through the exercises associated with the poem. (1.1. grade 9)

Changes for GRADE 11

Instead of journal writing, students will engage prior knowledge (2.1.3) of "Macbeth" and revisit Macbeth's "Is this a dagger..." soliloquy. In pairs, students will create a creative dialogue between Macbeth and Frost's narrator in which they discuss the decision-making process. The assignment should maintain genuine feelings/tones of both characters, although the goal is to assign new understanding to how the characters come to their final decision. Class time will be given to work on the assignment, and a presentation to the class will follow.

5 min

Closure

- Do choices always involve two options?
- Ask a student to summarize what we read today.
- What are some thoughts about the poem?

► For next class: Students are asked to think about what kind of an illustration/visual they would create if they were to visually represent this poem. We will be discussing what kind of images the words evoke in our imaginations when we read this poem.

Assessment

- Students will engage in personal journal responses regarding the questions posed in class.
- Students will be assessed on their ability to submit a response, as well as their ability to address each of the three questions.
- A general rubric for journal responses may or may not be used for this assignment.

Notes on the lesson...

The idea behind the poem's message is to challenge students to think about the choices they are making in their own life and reflect upon the consequences. As the grade levels rise, students will be expected to produce work that demonstrates an ability to draw from previous experiences (especially, by grade 11 students access prior content/curricular knowledge). At first, students make a visual representation (map) of *their* choices and consequences, and by grade 11 they are using their knowledge of the decision-making process to create a dialogue between two characters.

Things to try next time...

Alternate journal questions or class discussion prompts:

- Does making choices often mean making compromises?
- Can the freedom to choose be a drawback? Why?
- What choice are you going to make today regarding your education and the future? Why?