**Worksheet 2 Bridging Text and Context Write 80-100 words**

1. How couldFrost’s biography/life and the real story which triggered the writing of the poem “The Road Not Taken” provide insights into a better understanding of the poem?

2. How could the paraphrased quote below enhance your understanding of the message of “The Road Not Taken?”

**“**Somespeakers argue with Frost's message by defending those with the courage to walk the well-traveled road of tradition in the face of social pressure.”

**Robert Frost’s Biography http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/robert\_frost/biography**

Robert Frost (1874-1963) was born in San Francisco, California. His father William Frost, a journalist and an ardent Democrat, died when Frost was about eleven years old. His Scottish mother, the former Isabelle Moody, resumed her career as a schoolteacher to support her family. The family lived in Lawrence, Massachusetts, with Frost's paternal grandfather, William Prescott Frost, who gave his grandson a good schooling. In 1892 Frost graduated from a high school and attended Darthmouth College for a few months. Over the next ten years he held a number of jobs. Frost worked among others in a textile mill and taught Latin at his mother's school in Methuen, Massachusetts. In 1894 the New York Independent published Frost's poem 'My Butterfly' and he had five poems privately printed. Frost worked as a teacher and continued to write and publish his poems in magazines. In 1895 he married a former schoolmate, Elinor White; they had six children.   
 From 1897 to 1899 Frost studied at Harvard, but left without receiving a degree. He moved to Derry, New Hampshire, working there as a cobbler, farmer, and teacher at Pinkerton Academy and at the state normal school in Plymouth. When he sent his poems to The Atlantic Monthly they were returned with this note: "We regret that The Atlantic has no place for your vigorous verse."   
 In 1912 Frost sold his farm and took his wife and four young children to England. There he published his first collection of poems, A BOY'S WILL, at the age of 39. It was followed by NORTH BOSTON (1914), which gained international reputation. The collection contains some of Frost's best-known poems: 'Mending Wall,' 'The Death of the Hired Man,' 'Home Burial,' 'A Servant to Servants,' 'After Apple-Picking,' and 'The Wood-Pile.' The poems, written with blank verse or looser free verse of dialogue, were drawn from his own life, recurrent losses, everyday tasks, and his loneliness.   
 While in England Frost was deeply influenced by such English poets as Rupert Brooke. After returning to the US in 1915 with his family, Frost bought a farm near Franconia, New Hampshire. When the editor of The Atlantic Monthly asked for poems, he gave the very ones that had previously been rejected. Frost taught later at Amherst College (1916-38) and Michigan universities. In 1916 he was made a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. On the same year appeared his third collection of verse, MOUNTAIN INTERVAL, which contained such poems as 'The Road Not Taken,' 'The Oven Bird,' 'Birches,' and 'The Hill Wife.' Frost's poems show deep appreciation of natural world and sensibility about the human aspirations. His images - woods, stars, houses, brooks, - are usually taken from everyday life. With his down-to-earth approach to his subjects, readers found it is easy to follow the poet into deeper truths, without being burdened with pedantry. Often Frost used the rhythms and vocabulary of ordinary speech or even the looser free verse of dialogue.   
 In 1920 Frost purchased a farm in South Shaftsbury, Vermont, near Middlebury College where he cofounded the Bread Loaf School and Conference of English. His wife died in 1938 and he lost four of his children. Two of his daughters suffered mental breakdowns, and his son Carol, a frustrated poet and farmer, committed suicide. Frost also suffered from depression and the continual self-doubt led him to cling to the desire to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. After the death of his wife, Frost became strongly attracted to Kay Morrison, whom he employed as his secretary and adviser. Frost also composed for her one of his finest love poems, 'A Witness Tree.'   
 Frost travelled in 1957 with his future biographer Lawrance Thompson to England and to Israel and Greece in 1961. He participated in the inauguration of President John Kennedy in 1961 by reciting two of his poems. When the sun and the wind prevented him from reading his new poem, 'The Preface', Frost recited his old poem, 'The Gift Outright', from memory. Frost travelled in 1962 in the Soviet Union as a member of a goodwill group. He had a long talk with Premier Nikita Khrushchev, whom he described as "no fathead"; as smart, big and "not a coward." Frost also reported that Khrushchev had said the United States was "too liberal to fight," it caused a considerable stir in Washington. Among the honors and rewards Frost received were tributes from the U.S. Senate (1950), the American Academy of Poets (1953), New York University (1956), and the Huntington Hartford Foundation (1958), the Congressional Gold Medal (1962), the Edward MacDowell Medal (1962). In 1930 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Amherst College appointed him Saimpson Lecturer for Life (1949), and in 1958 he was made poetry consultant for the Library of Congress.   
 At the time of his death on January 29, 1963, Frost was considered a kind of unofficial poet laureate of the US. "I would have written of me on my stone: I had a lover's quarrel with the world," Frost once said. In his poems Frost depicted the fields and farms of his surroundings, observing the details of rural life, which hide universal meaning. His independent, elusive, half humorous view of the world produced such remarks as "I never take my side in a quarrel", or "I'm never serious except when I'm fooling." Although Frost's works were generally praised, the lack of seriousness concerning social and political problems of the 1930s annoyed some more socially orientated critics. Later biographers have created a complex and contradictory portrait of the poet. In Lawrance Thompson's humorless, three-volume official biography (1966-1976) Frost was presented as a misanthrope, anti-intellectual, cruel, and angry man, but in Jay Parini's work (1999) he was again viewed with sympathy: ''He was a loner who liked company; a poet of isolation who sought a mass audience; a rebel who sought to fit in. Although a family man to the core, he frequently felt alienated from his wife and children and withdrew into reveries. While preferring to stay at home, he traveled more than any poet of his generation to give lectures and readings, even though he remained terrified of public speaking to the end..."

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**Worksheet 3 Post –Reading Activities**

CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST OF ACTIVITIES:

**1.** Choose another poem written by Robert Frost and analyze the poem, as we did in class with “The Road Not Taken”. Pay attention to imagery and symbolism, literal and figurative meanings, theme, metaphors and similes, mood, style, rhyme schemes, etc. How does the poem relate to your life experience? \*Make sure the poem chosen is approved of by your teacher

**2. Choose one of the following:**

a) Create a painting, color drawing, or a collage or find a work of art that best exemplifies the theme(s) of the poem. Explain how it suits the words and message of the poem.(100 words)

b) Find a song connected to the theme of the poem. Compare (in writing) the song with “The Road Not Taken’ (100 words)

c) Create your own poem based on one of the themes of the poem.(the length of the original poem)

d) Create a rap, pop, classical, or other musical background for the poem (“soundscape”) Explain your choice (100 words)

e) Interview Robert Frost about the poem and about himself. Write at least 10 questions.

**3**. Remember the four key concepts of your fantasy trip?

Look in the dictionary for four idioms that contain the words “water”, ”wall”, ”key” and “woods”. Write your own story (true or made up) about the choice/s you had to make in your life. Use one expression from each category. **OR**

Interview a family member older than you. Ask that person to describe a time she or he faced a major choice, dilemma, or decision in her or his life. Ask about the details surrounding the decision – the circumstances, the nature of the “two roads that diverged”, the event(s), the difficulty of weighing the choices available, feelings at the time, the other people who had to be considered, thoughts about the consequences, the final decision, how that decision turned out, and regrets, if any, or good feelings and satisfaction, if any. How might your family member “be telling this with a sigh / Somewhere ages and ages hence….”? How will she or he look back at it? Which road did she or he choose? Did that make “all the difference”?

Write this part as a straight-forward interview or take all the information you gather from the interview and write it as a story.

**By Robert Frost**

**Bridging Text and Context**

**This worksheet will help you find out some information about Robert Frost.**

**I Go to**  [**Britannica**](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/220895/Robert-Frost) **(**[**http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/220895/Robert-Frost**](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/220895/Robert-Frost)**) and fill in the following information:**

**1. General Information:**

**Robert Frost was born in the year \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and died in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**He is much admired for his description of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ life in New \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , which is the north-eastern part of the USA. His realistic poetry portrays \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ situations.**

**2. Some personal biographical information is relevant to the deeper understanding of the poem we have read.**

**Robert and Eleanor (Elinore) White were the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ students in their high school and they were in love. They were both interested in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. However, after they got married in 1895, Frost \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ earn a living by writing poetry. He worked as a\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in order to support the family, but without much success. He tried to finish his university studies, but stopped after two years. He continued doing farm-work, raising\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ between the years 1900 and 1909. Although he had been writing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ since his high school days, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ showed little interest in it.**

**3. Read the fourth paragraph and find out the following:**

**a). What "momentous decision" was made by Frost?**

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**b). How old was he when he had to make this decision?**

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**c). Why was it so difficult to make this decision? Think and give more than one reason.**

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**d). Was the "road" Frost had taken easy "to travel"?**

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 e).Do you think he wrote "The Road Not Taken" before sailing from the USA to England or after?**

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**f). Can you quote a line or two from the poem that can support your answer?**

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**g) Which words in paragraph 6 show whether he had finally become popular in America as a poet?**

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**II Visit the website** [**“Illustrated Poetry of Robert Frost”**](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/220895/Robert-Frost) **(**[**http://www.retiredtractors.com/Frost/index.html**](http://www.retiredtractors.com/Frost/index.html)**)**

**Read what Gene has to say about himself and fill in the blanks:**

**Gene likes Frost so much because he is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  
Gene lives in a town in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which is one of the New England States. He has taken many \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which illustrate Frost's poetry. He felt that these photographs would bring Frost's poems to life.**

**III Robert Frost is often called a New England poet. How is this reflected in the poem ”The Road Not Taken”?**

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