

Fire and Ice

MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

(i) Choose the CORRECT statement about the given poem.

- (A) Fire and ice are images—they help the readers visualise the power of nature over man.
- (B) Fire and ice are symbols—not of natural disasters, but of humanity's ability to create disasters of its own.
- (C) Fire and ice are elements—not of Nature but man-made and possess the ability to create havoc for mankind.
- (D) Fire and ice are agents—they change the thinking of mankind from negative to positive and bring harmony.

(ii) Select the option that correctly classifies the connotations for fire and ice, as suggested in the poem.

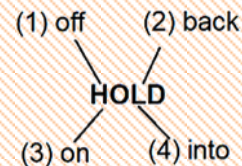
- (1) rage
- (2) violence
- (3) indifference
- (4) hate
- (5) greed
- (A) Fire- 3,4; Ice- 1,2,5
- (B) Fire- 2, 5; Ice-1,3,4
- (C) Fire-1,3,5; Ice- 2, 4
- (D) Fire- 1,2,4; Ice- 3,5

(iii) The poem is a _____, put across by the poet.

- (A) powerful warning

- (B) heart-felt apology
- (C) earnest appeal
- (D) vengeful threat

(iv) The poet uses the phrasal verb -hold with. Choose the option that does not indicate a valid phrasal verb.



- (A) option 1
- (B) option 2
- (C) option 3
- (D) option 4

(v) Pick the option that is NOT TRUE about the poet according to the extract. The poet

- (A) is inclined to believe that the world would most likely end with fire.
- (B) has heard divided opinions about the way the world would end in all likelihood.
- (C) preaches love and kindness to combat the spread of hate among all.
- (D) declares the power of ice to be as destructive as that of fire.

(vi) Extra Q: Identify the most likely tone of the poet in the lines- 'To say that for destruction ice/Is also great'.

- (A) sarcastic
- (B) serious
- (C) amused
- (D) celebratory

Answer:

- (i) (B)
- (ii) (D)
- (iii) (A)
- (iv) (D)
- (v) (C)

(vi) (B)

2. (a) "Fire and Ice" was first published in 1920. Briefly explain how the WW I might have influenced the theme of the poem.
- (b) Create a tag line / slogan / catchphrase for the poem.

Ans. (a) WW I's devastation could have influenced Frost's depiction of "fire" as destructive passion and "ice" as cold hatred, reflecting how human emotions drive conflict and destruction.

(b) "Passion and Apathy: Paths to Ruin."

3. (a) The tone of the speaker contrasts with the seriousness of the subject matter. Justify.
- (b) Fire and Ice projects a pessimistic outlook. Comment.
- (c) Evaluate the line- Some say the world will end in fire/Some say in ice- in the context of volcanic eruptions, forest fires, meteor collisions, melting ice caps etc.

Ans. (a) The speaker's conversational tone belies the grim themes of destruction, conveying the poem's message with a casual simplicity. This contrast underscores the inevitability of human-driven doom, making the message impactful by presenting it as a calm observation rather than a fearful warning.

(b) The poem's view is pessimistic as it emphasizes humanity's destructive tendencies, suggesting that intense emotions like desire ("fire") and hatred ("ice") can bring about the world's end. This fatalistic view reveals Frost's belief in humanity's potential for self-destruction.

(c) The line reflects real-world threats such as volcanic eruptions and forest fires (fire) and melting ice caps and meteor collisions (ice), highlighting how both fiery and icy forces—natural or human-induced—could lead to catastrophic

ends, showing Frost's message applies to both emotional and physical destruction.

4. (a) Imagine that Nelson Mandela read 'Fire and Ice'. As Mandela, write a diary entry associating the impact of the troubled history of South Africa with the idea expressed in the poem. You may begin like this:
- 10 May 1994, Tuesday 10 p.m.
Today, when I am the President of South Africa, I can't help recalling Robert Frost's 'Fire and Ice'.....(continue).....
.....
- (b) Most of your classmates, like Frost, feel that man's greed and rage or hate, would lead the world to its destruction. You feel that the 'fire and ice' in Mankind can be addressed to create a harmonious world. Write a speech, for your classmates, expressing your belief/s with respect to the poem.

Ans. (a) 10 May 1994, Tuesday 10 p.m.
Today, when I am the President of South Africa, I can't help recalling Robert Frost's "Fire and Ice." It speaks to the very turmoil we have faced in our land—fire symbolizing the unyielding passion and anger of our struggle for freedom, and ice representing the cold hatred and fear that apartheid sowed among our people. Both fire and ice brought suffering, yet they shaped our journey to liberation. Now, as we embark on a new era, we must be cautious not to let these forces consume us again. Let us nurture warmth and compassion instead, to build a future free from destruction.

(b) Good morning, everyone.

We've all read Robert Frost's "Fire and Ice," and while it's easy to agree that unchecked human emotions like greed and hatred could indeed destroy us, I believe there's a different path. The "fire" of passion can drive positive change if channeled constructively, just as the "ice" of rational thinking can prevent us from acting impulsively. Together, fire and ice represent a balance we must strike to foster harmony. If we address these forces with understanding and empathy, we can prevent the chaos Frost warns of. Let's take his caution not as an endpoint but as motivation to build a world where our passion fuels growth, not destruction.

Thank you.

