

Reading Comprehension-Poem
Grade 5

Read the poem carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost (1923)

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Comprehension Questions

1. Where has the speaker stopped? Describe the setting using details from the poem.
2. Who owns the woods? Where is this person during the poem?
3. Why do you think the speaker has stopped in this location?
4. What does the horse do to show it is confused? Why is it confused?
5. What do you think the speaker means by "promises to keep" in the last stanza?

Vocabulary Questions

6. What does the word "queer" mean in the line "My little horse must think it queer"? a) strange or odd b) happy or excited c) scary or frightening d) beautiful or lovely
7. In the line "The only other sound's the sweep," what does "sweep" suggest about the way the wind is moving?
8. What does "downy" mean in the phrase "downy flake"?
9. a) heavy b) frozen c) soft and light d) wet and cold
10. What does "harness bells" refer to in the poem?
11. The word "though" at the end of the second line tells us that: a) the speaker is uncertain b) there is a contrast or exception c) the speaker is happy d) the woods are beautiful

Grammar Questions

11. In the first line, "Whose woods these are I think I know," identify why this word order sounds unusual compared to everyday speech. How would you rearrange it to sound more like typical sentence structure?
12. Find and write down all the rhyming words in the first stanza. What rhyme pattern does this poem follow?
13. In the line "He gives his harness bells a shake," what is the subject and what is the verb?

14. The last two lines of the poem are exactly the same. What is this poetic technique called, and why might the poet have used it?
15. In the phrase "The darkest evening of the year," identify the adjective and explain what form it is in (comparative or superlative).

Creative Response

16. Imagine you are the horse in this poem. Write 3-5 sentences from the horse's perspective about what is happening and how you feel about stopping in this location.

Extension Activity

17. This poem mentions several sensory details (things you can see, hear, feel). Make a chart listing at least four different sensory details from the poem and explain how they help create a vivid winter scene.

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Answer Key:

Comprehension Questions

1. **Where has the speaker stopped? Describe the setting using details from the poem.**
 - The speaker has stopped by woods, near a frozen lake. It's a snowy evening, specifically "the darkest evening of the year." The setting is remote, as there is "no farmhouse near." It's quiet with only the sound of "easy wind and downy flake" and the horse's harness bells.
2. **Who owns the woods? Where is this person during the poem?**
 - The speaker thinks they know who owns the woods, but doesn't explicitly name the owner. The owner's "house is in the village," so the owner is not present in the woods and won't see the speaker stopping there.
3. **Why do you think the speaker has stopped in this location?**
 - The speaker has stopped to admire the beauty of the woods as they "fill up with snow." The line "The woods are lovely, dark and deep" suggests the speaker finds the scene beautiful and perhaps mesmerizing. (Accept any reasonable interpretation supported by the text.)
4. **What does the horse do to show it is confused? Why is it confused?**
 - The horse "gives his harness bells a shake" to show confusion or impatience. The horse is confused because they have stopped in an unusual place with "no farmhouse near," which would be an expected stopping point for rest or shelter.
5. **What do you think the speaker means by "promises to keep" in the last stanza?**
 - "Promises to keep" likely refers to responsibilities or commitments the speaker has made to others. These could be actual promises, duties, or tasks that need to be completed. (Accept reasonable interpretations that recognize the speaker has obligations that prevent staying in the woods longer.)

Vocabulary Questions

6. **What does the word "queer" mean in the line "My little horse must think it queer"?**
 - a) strange or odd
7. **In the line "The only other sound's the sweep," what does "sweep" suggest about the way the wind is moving?**

- "Sweep" suggests the wind is moving in a broad, flowing motion across the landscape. It implies a gentle, continuous movement rather than harsh gusts.

8. What does "downy" mean in the phrase "downy flake"?

- c) soft and light

9. What does "harness bells" refer to in the poem?

- "Harness bells" refers to small bells attached to the horse's harness or equipment. These bells were common on horse equipment, especially in winter, to signal the approach of a sleigh or carriage.

10. The word "though" at the end of the second line tells us that:

- b) there is a contrast or exception

Grammar Questions

11. In the first line, "Whose woods these are I think I know," identify why this word order sounds unusual compared to everyday speech. How would you rearrange it to sound more like typical sentence structure?

- The word order is inverted or rearranged from typical English sentence structure. In everyday speech, it would be: "I think I know whose woods these are."

12. Find and write down all the rhyming words in the first stanza. What rhyme pattern does this poem follow?

- Rhyming words: know, though, here, snow
- The rhyme pattern is AABA (where each letter represents a rhyme sound).
- Each stanza follows this pattern, with the third line of each stanza rhyming with the first, second, and fourth lines of the following stanza.

13. In the line "He gives his harness bells a shake," what is the subject and what is the verb?

- Subject: He (referring to the horse)
- Verb: gives

14. The last two lines of the poem are exactly the same. What is this poetic technique called, and why might the poet have used it?

- This technique is called repetition.

- The poet might have used it to emphasize the importance of the speaker's obligations/journey ahead, to create a rhythmic effect like footsteps or hoofbeats, to suggest weariness, or to convey the speaker's reluctance to leave the peaceful scene. (Accept any reasonable interpretation.)

15. In the phrase "The darkest evening of the year," identify the adjective and explain what form it is in (comparative or superlative).

- Adjective: darkest
- Form: superlative (indicates the highest degree of a quality)

Creative Response

16. Imagine you are the horse in this poem. Write 3-5 sentences from the horse's perspective about what is happening and how you feel about stopping in this location.

- (Answers will vary; look for responses that show understanding of the horse's perspective as presented in the poem. The response should acknowledge the unusual stopping place, perhaps mention the cold/snow, and reflect the horse's apparent desire to continue the journey.)

Extension Activity

17. This poem mentions several sensory details (things you can see, hear, feel). Make a chart listing at least four different sensory details from the poem and explain how they help create a vivid winter scene.

- Visual: "woods fill up with snow" - creates image of accumulating snowfall
- Visual: "frozen lake" - establishes the cold winter setting
- Visual: "The darkest evening of the year" - sets a specific time and mood
- Visual: "woods are lovely, dark and deep" - creates atmosphere and depth
- Auditory: "harness bells" - creates a distinct sound in the quiet scene
- Auditory: "sweep of easy wind" - suggests the soft sound of winter breeze
- Auditory: "downy flake" - implies the soft, subtle sound of falling snow
- Tactile: (implied) cold of the "frozen lake" and snow
- (Student should list at least four of these or other valid sensory details and explain how each helps create the winter scene.)