POETRY ANALYSIS: The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost

Before Reading
- Consider choices and decisions
List four major decisions you'll make in the next five years.
Now put the four choices in order from most to least important.
Compare with a partner.

During Reading
Annotate while you read:
- When meaning is unclear, write in your own words OR illustrate what is happening
- Identify figurative language and make note about intended effect.

“The Road Not Taken”
by Robert Frost

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 I 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 traveled by,
And that has made all the difference

After Reading

COMPREHENSION
Read the poem and answer the questions.
   a)  What are the differences between the two roads?
   b)  Is the author happy with his choice?
   c)  Do you think it was a difficult decision?
   d)  What does the poem mean?

LANGUAGE WORK
   a)  What words does the author use to avoid repeating “the road” (for example “it”)?

   b)  The author has made several sentences much shorter and has also changed the word order in some cases. Can you rewrite the following in Standard English?  
       e.g. The Road Not Taken = The Road Which Wasn’t Taken

       And sorry I could not take both

       And be one traveler, long I stood

       Then took the other, as just as fair and having perhaps the better claim

       Yet knowing how way leads on to way I doubted if I should ever come back

   c)  Look at this line from the poem. Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – I took the one less traveled by… Why does the author repeat the word “I” twice? What effect does it have on the poem?
**After Reading**

Choose one activity from each category. Complete on a separate sheet of paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Imagery/Metaphor</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Quote It**  
Find a quote that represents the theme of the poem. Using evidence from the poem, justify your choice using at least three pieces of evidence from the poem. | **Fictionalize it.**  
Using the imagery Frost creates in his poem, illustrate (a slide per stanza) or deeply describe in words (a paragraph per stanza) a short story based on one of the following characters  
P.O.V.:  
Alice (of Wonderland), Dorothy (of Oz), Aladdin, Batman, Katniss Everdeen, or Rick Grimes | **Argue It.**  
Is the speaker happy with the choice he made? Argue both sides, providing three pieces of evidence for each. |
| **Sing It.**  
Choose a song that has the same or similar theme. Explain why this song shares a theme. To support your answer, choose three lyric lines and explain their connection to Frost’s poem. | **Switch It.**  
After you’ve determined what the road is a metaphor for, consider what Frost might have used instead of a road. Explain how these comparisons might have been more or less effective. | **Compare It.**  
Read *Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night*, another classic poem by Dylan Thomas. This too talks about the choices one makes. Which poet does a better job of getting their point across? What literary devices and/or wording makes your choice more successful? |
| **Ink It.**  
Thinking about the theme of the poem, create a tattoo design (other than a path in the woods) that captures the essence of what Frost is saying. Explain the visual choices made by answering these questions:  
Why does this design symbolize the theme?  
What colors are used? Why?  
Would the size be important? How does the location of the tattoo provide extra meaning? | **Spoof It.**  
Frost wrote this famous poem in 1916—almost 100 years ago! Let’s say that Seth MacFarlane got a hold of this classic. What ridiculous episode plot would American Dad, Peter Griffin, or Cleveland Brown find themselves spoofing without actually losing the important metaphor Frost has set up? | **Retitle it.**  
What is the significance of the title—“The Road Not Taken”? Suggest two alternative titles and explain how your choices might alter the interpretation of the poem. Use evidence from the poem to explain which title may the better choice. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Imagery/Metaphor</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ You included a Quote, Song, or Tattoo.</td>
<td>___ You completed one of the activities.</td>
<td>___ You identify two choices of the activity.</td>
<td>12 ✔ =8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Your piece includes an explanation.</td>
<td>___ Your work makes sense.</td>
<td>___ You explain the choices you made.</td>
<td>11-10 ✔=7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Your piece actually shares important connections to the theme of the poem.</td>
<td>___ Your work is thoughtful and shows decisions were made during creation.</td>
<td>___ You included evidence to support your decisions.</td>
<td>9 ✔ =6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Your piece and explanation show you have a strong understanding of the poem’s theme.</td>
<td>___ Your description shows that you can transfers Frost’s ideas into new situations.</td>
<td>___ Your argument(s) included thoughtful and persuasive ideas.</td>
<td>8-7 ✔ =5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 ✔ =4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-4 ✔ =3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 ✔ =2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-1 ✔ =1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>