

# Fire and Ice

'Fire and Ice' is a short poem by Robert Frost. In this poem, the poet refers to two predictions of how the world will end. Some say it will end in fire whereas others say it will end in ice. According to the poet 'fire' stands for desire, greed, avarice or lust. The more you try to satisfy them, the more they grow. There is no end to it.

They spread rapidly like fire and engulf your whole life. One becomes selfish and sometimes cruel also. On the other hand, 'ice' according to the poet, stands for hatred, coldness and rigidity. One becomes insensitive and indifferent towards the feelings of others. The poet says that both fire and ice are growing with such a rapid speed that the world would soon perish either way, in fire or in ice.

## NCERT Solutions

### Thinking about the Poem (Page 15)

#### Question 1.

There are many ideas about how the world will 'end'. Do you think the world will end some day? Have you ever thought what would happen if the Sun gets so hot that it 'bursts' or grows colder and colder?

Answer:

There are definitely many ideas about how the world will 'end'. I do believe that the world will end some day as anything that has a beginning will have an end. This stands true for the world also, if the Sun got so hot that it burst, the whole of the Earth would perish immediately as no part of the Earth can bear the heat of that intensity. But if the Sun grew colder and colder, everything will come to an end as without sunlight, life will end.

#### Question 2.

For Frost, what do 'fire' and 'ice' stand for?

Answer:

'Fire' stands for greed, avarice, lust, conflict and fury. 'Ice' stands for cruelty, intolerance, rigidity, insensitivity, coldness, indifference and hatred.

#### Question 3.

What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? How does it help in bringing out the contrasting ideas in the poem?

Answer:

The rhyme scheme of the poem is- a b a a b c b c b

This rhyme scheme helps in bringing out the contrasting ideas of 'fire' and 'ice' presented in the poem. The poet mentions that both fire and ice are probable ends of this world. He talks about how fire represents desire and can therefore be a cause of the end of the world. Frost also mentions ice in between to symbolise that the coldness and indifference towards one another will be enough to end the world. In the second stanza, he says that he knows of enough hate in the world to be sure that even destruction through ice . would be sufficient to bring about the end of the world.

# Extra Questions

## Short Answer Type

Question 1.

What are two different views about the end of the world in the poem 'Fire and Ice'?

Answer:

The two different views of people regarding the end of the world are—Fire and Ice i.e., by desire and hatred.

Question 2.

What does the poet think about the end of the world?

Answer:

The poet thinks about the end of the world that people think fire is the main cause of destruction. But by the end of the poem he says that both Fire and Ice are equally destructive. Both have the same power of causing destruction.

Question 3.

What do 'Fire' and 'Ice' symbolize in the poem 'Fire' and 'Ice'?

Answer:

'Fire' and 'Ice' are symbolized here. 'Fire' stands for conflict, fury, intolerance, insensitivity while 'Ice' stands for greed, avarice, lust, rigidity, coldness, indifference, hatred, etc.

Question 4.

How can fire destroy the world?

Answer:

'Fire' symbolizes passion or hatred. It will lead to conflicts and ultimately result in the destruction of the world. Fire represents desire that is fervent, consuming, always wanting more. Ice represents hatred that is hard and cold.

Question 5.

What message does the poet wish to convey through the poem 'Fire and Ice'?

OR

What is the central idea of the poem 'Fire and Ice'?

Answer:

The poet presents two possibilities about the end of the world. It will be either due to 'Fire and Ice' he prefers the first as he believes the world will end in fire but the ice will not go away.

Question 6.

Today's world is conflict ridden. People fight over various issues and there is no peace in the world. Explain/Describe based on your reading of the poem 'Fire' and 'Ice'.

Answer:

Hatred is a predominant issue in today's world. Neighbour hates his neighbour, brother hates his brother. None is willing to forgive each other or tolerate each other. As a result of the hatred we live in a very fragmented world. If hatred continues to rule our lives and world, nothing will remain intact. All our achievements will perish and the world will come to an end. If we have to save the world we need

to learn how to forget and forgive. For this we need to have enormous amount of love and compassion and be willing to tolerate the differences and learn to get along with each other.

Question 7.

What does 'Fire' and 'Ice' stand for and what is the general opinion regarding the world?

Answer:

'Fire' stands for fury, desire, lust, anger, avarice, cruelty, greed. Ice is symbolic of hatred, coldness, rigidity, insensitivity and intolerance. The general opinion regarding the world is that the world will end in fire and some say in ice. Both the reasons contrast each other and one is equally opposite to each other. People who favour fire believe that it will be the heat and passion which will end the world. On the other side some people think that it will be the ice which will freeze the world.

Question 8.

There are many ideas about how the world will 'end'. Do you think the world will end some day? Have you ever thought what would happen if the sun got so hot that it 'burst', or grew colder and colder?

Answer:

There are many ideas about how the world will end. Robert Frost points out two destructive forces— Fire and Ice, they may cause an end to the world. Yes, everything is subjected to an end. The world would come to an end someday. The cause may be a war or natural calamity. The sun is the main source of energy. It is life on the earth. If the sun got so hot that it "burst" or grew colder and colder the life on the earth would come to an end.

Question 9.

For Frost, what do 'fire' and 'ice' stand for? Here are some ideas:

<b>greed</b>	<b>avarice</b>	<b>cruelty</b>	<b>lust</b>
<b>conflict</b>	<b>fury</b>	<b>intolerance</b>	<b>rigidity</b>
<b>insensitivity</b>	<b>coldness</b>	<b>indifference</b>	<b>hatred</b>

Answer:

Robert Frost compares and contrasts two destructive forces Fire and Ice. For him 'Fire' stands for desire, greed, lust, intolerance conflict etc. These vices consume and destroy the fabric of society. 'Ice stands for hatred, rigidity, insensitivity, coldness and indifference. Hate is something that causes people to be rigid, unmoving and cold.

Question 10.

What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? How does it help in bringing out the contrasting ideas in the poem?

Answer:

The rhyme scheme of the poem is—ab ab—be—be.

The rhyme scheme brings out the contrasting ideas and separates them beautifully.

fire – desire

hate – great

twice – ice

ice – suffice

## Reference to Context

Read the stanza and answer the questions that follow:

Question 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 favour fire.*

- (i) Name the poem and the poet.
- (ii) What are the two destructive forces?
- (iii) What do they stand for?
- (iv) What does he favour?

Answer:

- (i) These lines have been taken from the poem 'Fire and Ice' composed by Robert Frost.
- (ii) 'Fire' and 'Ice' are two destructive forces according to the poet.
- (iii) 'Fire' stands for 'desire' and 'Ice' stands for 'hatred'.
- (iv) Robert Frost supports the view that fire would cause the destruction of the world.

Question 2.

*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) What does 'Ice' stand for?
- (ii) What does the poet believe?
- (iii) What is the another destructive force?
- (iv) Find a word in these lines that means opposite to 'creation'.

Answer:

- (i) Ice stands for hatred in this poem.
- (ii) Robert Frost believes that Ice is equally destructive and can destroy the world.
- (iii) Fire is another destructive force.
- (iv) 'Destruction'.