

Mending Wall

By Robert Lee Frost

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.

The work of hunters is another thing:

5

I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.

10

I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.

We keep the wall between us as we go.

15

To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:

"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"

We wear our fingers rough with handling them.

20

Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:

There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across 25
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it 30
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall, 35
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed. 40
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors." 45

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does the speaker meet the neighbor to do?
 - A) to give offense
 - B) to spill boulders in the sun
 - C) to set a wall between them
 - D) to make gaps in a wall between them

2. The poem describes a wall. How does the structure of the poem contribute to that description?
 - A) The iambic pentameter establishes a quick, bouncing rhythm that emphasizes the poem's cheerful mood.
 - B) As one long block of text without any breaks between lines, the poem suggests the image of a wall.
 - C) The lack of rhyme in the poem hints that elves may be responsible for knocking down the wall between the speaker and the speaker's neighbor.
 - D) The repetition of the phrase "Good fences make good neighbors" suggests that the speaker believes the saying to be true.

3. Read this line from the poem: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall."

What lines in the poem support this statement?

- A) lines 2-4
 - B) lines 5-9
 - C) lines 17-19
 - D) lines 25-27

4. What does the speaker's neighbor probably believe about good neighbors?
 - A) Good neighbors hunt rabbits and plant apple trees together.
 - B) Good neighbors tell the truth, even when doing so is difficult.
 - C) Good neighbors keep a certain amount of distance from each other.
 - D) Good neighbors are always willing to help and share with each other.

5. What is a theme of the poem?

- A) the hardships of old age
- B) the nature of social relationships
- C) the pleasure that an unexpected discovery can bring
- D) the unrealistic thinking of people who live in the country

6. Read these lines from the poem:

There where it is we do not need the wall:

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across 25

And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.

What is the meaning of line 24?

- A) The neighbor is a pine tree in the woods, while the speaker is an apple tree in an orchard.
- B) The neighbor likes to eat pine nuts in the spring, while the speaker prefers to eat apples in the fall.
- C) The neighbor is worried that the speaker's apple trees may trespass on his property.
- D) The neighbor's property is full of pine trees, while the speaker's property is full of apple trees.

7. Read lines 1 and 2 from the poem:

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,

What does the word "it" refer to?

- A) "Something" (line 1)
- B) "there" (line 1)
- C) "a wall" (line 1)
- D) "the frozen-ground-swell" (line 2)

8. Who in this poem says, “Good fences make good neighbors”?

9. Summarize the “notion” (line 29) that the speaker thinks about putting into the neighbor’s head.

10. Does the speaker of the poem believe that “good fences make good neighbors”? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
