

## FIRE AND ICE

### Central Idea

Robert Frost's poem "Fire and Ice" expresses the profound idea that the world would end in either of two ways, either by ice or fire. Both the components are compared with self-destructing human emotions: hatred and desire. The poem, very artistically, underpins the philosophy that we let our emotions rule us and if don't control them they will surely destroy everything around us. Similarly, he thinks fire and ice, both are just as competent in bringing the world to a catastrophic end.

### Literary devices

1. Rhyming scheme- Aba

abc

bcb

2. Assonance- it is repetition of vowel sounds in same line. The repetition is at different places in different words.

Example- The long sound of "o" in "I hold with those who favor fire"

3. Alliteration- alliteration is the repetition of a consonant sound at the start of two or more closely placed words.

Example- The sound of "f" in "favor fire", "w" in "world will"

4. Imagery- Imagery is used to make readers perceive things involving their five senses.

Example- "Some say the world will end in fire"

"To say that for destruction ice Is also great"

5. Personification- Personification is to give human qualities to inanimate objects. In this poem, "fire" and "ice" are capable of destruction. Thus, the poet personifies fire and ice by giving them mind and power to destroy anything.

6. Enjambment- it is defined as the thought or clause that does not come to an end at a line break, rather it moves over to the next line.

Example- "From what I've tasted of desire

### Questions/Answers

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

A. According to Frost, 'fire' stands for greed, conflict, fury, cruelty, lust and avarice whereas 'Ice' stands for insensitivity, coldness, intolerance, indifference, rigidity and hatred.

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

A. The rhyme scheme of the poem is "aba abcbcb". The poet has used the rhyming beautifully to bring about contrasting ideas in the poem. He has used the ideas of two groups who believe that the world would come to a catastrophic end either as a result of fire or ice. Simultaneously, he portrays these two essential components as features of destructive human emotions: desire and hatred. Just like fiery desires and icy hatred can cause damage to an individual in an irreparable manner, fire and ice can lead the world at the verge of chaos and thus, apocalypse.

Q. Write down the two different views about the end of the world?

A. There is a debate that is going on about the end of the world. People say that the world will end in fire or in ice. World is transitory, nothing is perennial in this universe.

Q. Why does the poet hold with those who favor fire?

A. The poet takes side with those who believe that the world will be destroyed by fire. Frost connects fire with desire. According to the poet, desire is powerful and would be a quick end. Moreover, the fact that he has had personal experience with desire leads him to first conclude that the world will end in fire.

Q. Discuss how extreme behavior can hasten the end of the world with respect to 'Fire and Ice'.

A. 'Fire' symbolizes desire and 'Ice' symbolizes hatred. Desire is a kind of intense love or want that focuses people on getting and possessing and acquiring. Our society is full of people who spend their lives working to get a bigger and better TV, a more stylish car or a more extravagant house. This kind of desire can lead people to destruction in the form of bankruptcy or even broken relationships. Frost's poem speaks on the issue of greed corrupting people and even society. The power of hate, which is symbolized by ice is just as great as desire. While desire consumes quickly hate produces shy yet restrained devastation. For instance, Kate is the root cause of racism and war. It can linger in people's mind for lifetimes. Moreover, it consumes the hater even more than the person hated. It thus, ruins lives.