



## **AP<sup>®</sup> English Lit (Operational) 2004 Sample Student Responses**

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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

Question 1

JJ,

Though these two poems by Dickinson and Frost share the element of dark or night, the poets speak from very different perspectives. Dickinson's "Darkness" connotes uncertainty and change, while the speaker of Frost's poem imbues <sup>night with</sup> a far more negative and desolate meaning.

The darkness Dickinson describes may be anything from change to depression to a creative block, a lack of inspiration. Her faith in the ability to adapt or adjust to the obstacle of "Dark" gives her poem a more hopeful tone than that which characterizes Frost's melancholy musings. There is the possibility that "Life" will "[step] almost straight," whereas for the speaker of the second poem, "the time was neither wrong nor right." The perspective of one becoming newly acquainted with the obstacle of "darkness" differs greatly from the seasoned, weary point of view of the speaker who "[has] been one acquainted." It is this difference in perspective that enhances the disparity in tone of both poems, clearly separating one of hope from that of despair.

Dickinson's poem is filled with images of uncertainty and doubt, ~~her speaker~~ along with the slight trepidation felt as one steps into strange, new situations. ~~Mention~~ of "Evenings of the Brain," unlit by any spark of inspiration or insight ~~being an element of~~ <sup>suggests</sup> more serious troubles ~~than merely walking on~~ "larger-Darknesses" than merely <sup>the</sup> absence of a guiding light. Unlike Frost's poem, however, Dickinson's ends on a note of promise. Though one may "sometimes hit a Tree," he learns from his mistakes. There is hope for a normal



Question 1

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JJ2

life. The imagery in Frost's poem hints at a darker, deeper trouble - one that borders on sorrow. The speaker walks past "the furthest city light," beyond the limits of civilization and human contact. ~~Just like this~~ He is isolated by the darkness, while the subject of Dickinson's poem is a collective "we." Dreary images of "[sad] city [lanes]" and an ~~int~~ "interrupted cry" create a sense of loneliness. Tormented by some demon or sadness, the speaker is driven to wander and prow, ashamed to reconnect with humanity and make eye contact with the watchman. Unlike the subjects of Dickinson's poem, he is already well "accustomed to the Dark."

~~Even the structure~~ The <sup>dissimilar</sup> ~~different~~ structures of the poems further reinforce their differences. The pauses created by the interrupting dashes in Dickinson's poem create a feeling of tentativeness and suggest the hesitancy experienced by those who are left in the "Dark" to find their own path. Frost organizes his poem in solid, uniform lines, similar to the fixed and certain gloom cast by the images throughout the piece. Thus, both poets use style to tie together their poems, creating a unified, impressive effect.

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9:05

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1

While <sup>Emily</sup> Dickinson's poem & Robert Frost's "Acquainted with the Night," both reveal in a tone of darkness, Dickinson's poem finds a suspicious acceptance of the darkness, while Frost place a negative connotation on night.

By use of imagery, ~~personification~~ night is depicted as a ~~"night"~~ Dickinson shows how one "grow(s) accustomed" to the dark. One conditions himself to "fit our vision to the dark - And meet the Road - erect." This preparation illustrates ~~ability to adapt~~ an ability to mold to different circumstances. The dark is not something to be afraid of, but one to get used to. On the other hand, Frost ~~present~~ uses diction, such as "saddest", "unwilling" & "interrupted cry." These words signify the hopelessness of night. In part, there is such a "sad" quality to his poem because the setting is desolate. The only one he passes is an "unknown" "watchman" whom he cannot find acquaintance with. Indeed, the only one Frost ~~finds~~ as becomes ~~the~~ "acquainted with" is the night. Writing in first person allows the solitary tone to be recognized. Point of view in Dickinson's poem is quite different as she uses "we" to make a connection with her audience. This creates a sense of hope throughout the poem battling the lost feeling experienced by one in darkness.



The structure of Dickinson's poem also allows a burgeoning of hope. Initiating w/ the "Neighbor holding the Lamp To witness her ~~Exit~~ Goodbye -," there is almost a sense of abandonment. However each stanza continues to inspire ~~an~~ ability to maneuver in the shady night. The last stanza completes ~~accustomed~~ ~~to~~ being "accustomed." "Either the Darkness alters - Or something in the sight Adjusts itself to Midnight - And Life steps almost straight." Such "straightness" implies hope & ability to conquer limitations of ~~our~~ one's surroundings. Frost's poem ~~also~~ starts his first line similar to Dickinson's poem. However, there is immediate change in tone with coming of the "rain." The poem follows Frost's movements rather becoming more & more negative. Rather, the end of the poem can be described by ambivalence of the "luminary clock against the sky," which "Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right."

Dickinson ~~is~~ embracing the darkness while Frost finds no peace in it. These two poems illustrate the difference ~~to~~ between the <sup>two</sup> words "accustomed" & "acquainted." "Accustomed," ~~is~~ allows for getting used to a circumstance. "Acquaintance" simply conveys being barely exposed to such a circumstance. The two seemingly synonymous words carry a heavy nuance.

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Question 1

Q1

Robert Frost and Emily Dickinson both display outstanding works of literary merit. Both Frost and Dickinson convey a powerful symbolic message in their literary pieces of writing. Symbolism is shown by using dark and night, as well as light.

In Emily Dickinson's poem, her first line can tell the reader about her "comfort" with the dark. The poem concentrates on visual imagery and its syntax. Dickinson uses many caesura to make a paused moment. The pausing tells us that the visual imagery is vague, constantly retracing her thoughts. Darkness for Dickinson is another form of light. "newness of the night" brings in the comparison of darkness and night. Night is when the darkness comes out of, and when other life form happens. "To witness her Goodbye" (4) may also symbolize the departure of day. When one thinks of dark, they tend to think visual imagery of blackness or evil. "Darkness alters ... adjust itself to Mid night" (17-19) conveys the eyes to match its vision into the dark, making us also see the dark, as we "accustom" to it.

In Robert Frost's poem "Acquainted with the Night", he too, also compares visual imagery of night, but as well as light. Frost is "acquainted" to the night, where in Dickinson's poem, darkness appears with the night. The rain symbolizes the light or serenity to night. "...walked out of rain, - and back in rain." (2) creates a pause to further speculate on rain in contrast to night. Both Dickinson and Frost share, compare, and contrasts of one another's poems, The darkness which is accustomed and acquainted



Question 1

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Q2

with, "Vision to the Dark" (ED.7) and "back in ruin" (RF.2) contrast each others meaning of dealing with night and dark. The similarities between the two poems includes using the same diction. "Goodbye" meant the departure of light. "Light" was also examined by the "visions of the dark" where the authors see a "disclose...sign".

Two excellent authors share their points of view on the behavior with dark and night. Whether it may be accustomed to or acquainted with, both visual imagery personify life and their visions of viewing things differently.

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