



CLASS - VII ENGLISH NOTES

1. MENDING WALL

I. ERC:

1. “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.”

a) What does 'something' do to the wall?

‘Something’ causes the frozen ground in winter and the hot sun in summer to make gaps in the wall.

b) Why does the poet say 'Something there is' instead of being clear about who is destroying the wall?

It is probably just the wear and tear and elements of nature that destroy the wall. Hence, the poet does not pinpoint to what is causing the destruction of the wall.

c) What happens when the frozen ground swells and what happens as a result?

When the frozen ground swells, it causes the boulders that make up the wall wobbly and shaky. Some boulders are bound to fall or move out of place. Thus, creating gaps in the wall.

d) How big is the gap in the wall?

The gap is large enough to let two people walking alongside each other pass through.

2. “No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.”

a) What has no one seen or heard being made?

No one has seen or heard the gaps in the wall being made.

b) What is found at spring mending-time?

At spring mending time the gaps in the wall are found.

c) Where does the poet's neighbour live? What do they do during springtime?

The poet's neighbour lives beyond the hill. During springtime, they mend the wall between their properties.

d) Do you think the poet is happy to 'set the wall between us once again'? Give reasons for your answer.

The poet is not happy to 'set the wall between us once again' as he later goes on to say that there are no cows to trespass and his apple trees will not go across to eat his neighbour's pine cones. Therefore, this annual spring ritual of mending the wall is not necessary.

3. "He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across

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

a) Who has pine trees and who has an apple orchard?

The poet has an apple orchard and his neighbour has pine trees.

b) Why does the poet say that his apples would not eat his pine cones?

The poet says that his apples would not eat his neighbour's pine cones to stress on the fact that there is no need for a wall between the two.

c) What does the poet want his neighbour to do? Is the neighbour happy to oblige?

The poet wants his neighbour to accept that there is no need for a wall between their properties. His neighbour is not convinced and does not oblige.

d) What does the poet's neighbour say to him?

The poet's neighbour says 'Good fences make good neighbours'.

4. "In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.

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 neighbours'."

a) Who is like a savage of the Stone Age?

The poet's neighbour is like a savage of the Stone Age.

b) Why does the poet use negative images like 'savage' and 'darkness' in these lines?

The poet uses negative images like 'savage' and 'darkness' to show that his neighbour's insistence on having the wall shows that he has not come out of the darkness of mistrust and the blind continuation of age old practices, regardless of whether they are required in the present situation or not.

c) Why do you think the poet's neighbour hides behind the tradition of his father's saying, 'Good fences make good neighbours'?

The neighbour does not want to break away from the practices that were carried on by his father. While he does not want to appear as stagnating, despite fleeting time, he just reasons out that the wall should be there as 'Good fences make good neighbours'.

d) What does it tell about the poet's neighbour?

The poet's neighbour is unfriendly and likes to keep to himself. He marks his territory by mending the wall between him and the poet. He has not changed with time but keeps his father's practices alive.

II. Short Answers:

1. Where was the wall? Why did it want mending every spring?

The wall was between the properties of the poet and his neighbour. It needed mending every spring because the hot sun in summer and the frozen ground in winter caused gaps to form in the wall—some even large enough to allow two people to pass alongside each other.

2. Who initiated the fixing of the wall?

The poet initiated the fixing of the wall.

3. What is the neighbour's attitude towards mending the wall? Cite examples from the poem to support your answer.

The neighbour thinks it necessary to have the wall between them. Hence, he is in favour of mending the wall. This is evident from the following lines in the poem: He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbours.'

I see him there/Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top/In each hand
He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbours.'

4. What is the poet's attitude towards mending the wall? Cite examples from the poem to support your answer.

The poet does not think it necessary to have a wall. Hence, he is against the mending of the wall. This is evident from the following lines in the poem:

He is all pine and I am apple orchard/My apple trees will never get across/And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.

'Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it/

Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.

III. Long Answers:

1. Why do you think does the poet begin the poem with 'Something there is that doesn't love a wall' instead of 'There is something that doesn't love a wall'?

The poet begins the poem with 'Something there is that doesn't love a wall' instead of 'There is something that doesn't love a wall' because the former is more poetic while the latter is better suited for prose.

2. Compare and contrast the poet with his neighbour.

While the poet does not want a wall between his neighbour's property and his, his neighbour wants one. The poet feels that the apples from his orchard will not eat his neighbour's pine cones and further, there are no cows that could stray from one property to the other. This justifies the poet not wanting a wall. The neighbour's justification is simple—good fences make good neighbours. He does not want to break age old practices of building fences. However, both the poet and the neighbour are not inclined to create any sort of discord between themselves. Therefore, they meet only once a year at springtime when they get together and build the wall.

3. What does the wall in 'Mending Wall' symbolise?

The wall in 'Mending Wall' signifies a boundary—the poet on the one hand does not see the need for a boundary between their properties, whereas his neighbour feels that there should be a 'boundary', both literally and figuratively. In a sense, the boundary also helps the two of them maintain a cordial relationship, as they come together once a year to mend the wall.

4. Towards the end of the poem, the poet seems irritated with his neighbour.

Why do you think he feels so?

The poet has in his own way tried convincing his neighbour that there is no need of a wall as there are no cows on either side, and the apples from his orchard will not eat the pine cones from his neighbour's. However, his neighbour simply says, 'Good fences make good neighbours'. This irritates the poet, who resorts to calling his neighbour an old-stone age savage when he sees him carrying stones to build the wall.

5. Does the wall in the poem divide the poet and his neighbour or bring them together? Cite examples from the poem to support your answer.

While the wall in the poem may create a physical barrier between the poet and his neighbour, rebuilding the wall every spring brings the two neighbours together. It is probably the only time of the year that they meet. This is evident from the lines 'I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;/And on a day we meet to walk the line'.