

Birches (page 838)**Active Reading SkillBuilder****Analyzing Images**

Imagery refers to the words and phrases that a writer uses to re-create vivid sensory experiences for the reader. An image may appeal to one or more of the five senses: sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste. While reading "Birches," use the following chart to record your observations about the images that Frost uses in the poem.

Birches	Images of Sight	Images of Sound or Touch
Line 5		
1-20		
21-40		
41-59		

Birches (page 838)**Literary Analysis SkillBuilder****Figurative Language**

Figurative language communicates ideas beyond the literal meanings of the words. Figurative language includes specific figures of speech, such as similes and metaphors. Both **similes** and **metaphors** make comparisons between two unlike things that have at least one thing in common. Similes use the words *like* or *as*, while metaphors do not. On the chart below, record examples of figurative language in "Birches." Identify each as a simile or a metaphor. An example has been provided for you.

Figurative Language	Figure of Speech
<i>And life is too much like a pathless wood</i>	<i>simile</i>

Follow Up: Write your own metaphor and simile to add to Frost's description of the wintry scene. Compare your figures of speech with those of your classmates.

Birches (page 838)**Selection Open-Book Test**

A. Think about the poet's use of figurative language in "Birches." In the boxes below, identify each comparison as a simile or metaphor. Then explain what is being compared in each figure of speech and the meaning it suggests. (8 points each)

Comparison	Simile or Metaphor	What Is Being Compared
1. "As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel"		
2. "Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away"		
3. "You may see their trunks arching in the woods / Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground / Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair / Before them over their heads to dry in the sun"		
4. "And life is too much like a pathless wood"		

B. Write the letter of the best answer. This exercise is continued on the next page. (6 points each)

- _____ 1. When the speaker sees bent-over birch trees, what image first springs to his mind?
- someone sweeping away glass
 - rain falling on a winter night
 - a boy swinging on a tree
 - a girl drying her hair
- _____ 2. What kind of boy does the speaker imagine in this poem?
- a farm boy
 - a city boy
 - a baseball player
 - a foreign boy

- _____ 3. The speaker dreams of returning to the past when he feels
- a. excited.
 - b. in love.
 - c. weary.
 - d. ambitious.
- _____ 4. Swinging from birch limbs is a metaphor for
- a. childhood.
 - b. death and rebirth.
 - c. falling in love.
 - d. adulthood.
- _____ 5. What does the speaker fear at the end of the poem?
- a. All of the birch trees in the world will be bent down and destroyed.
 - b. He will never have a son of his own who will ride birch trees.
 - c. Fate will grant his wish to go to heaven but not his wish to come back to earth.
 - d. He will not go to heaven because he used to swing on birches.

C. Answer one of the following questions based on your understanding of the poem. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (20 points)

1. In this poem, Frost compares and contrasts childhood experience with adult life. Using images from the poem, describe Frost's views of childhood and adulthood and explain whether you agree or disagree with his vision.
2. Why does the speaker wish he could once again be a "swinger of birches"? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

D. Linking Literature to Life. Answer the following question based on your own experience. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (18 points)

In this poem, the speaker has fond memories of a childhood experience. If you could repeat one experience from when you were younger, what would it be, and why?