The Language of Nature: An exploration of the individual and society from Transcendentalism to Today

Submitted for 3 graduate credits from Fitchburg State University in culmination of the National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshop for Teachers, Living and Writing Deliberately: The Concord Landscapes and Legacy of Henry Thoreau

Introduction:
This unit is intended for seniors studying IB English Language and Literature. It should be noted that some of Thoreau’s more clearly social activist writing (“On The Duty of Civil Disobedience” and “Slavery in Massachusetts”) are included in a previous Language unit called The Language of Resistance and Revolution, not outlined in this curriculum.

This unit would come at the end of senior year, lasting approximately 5 weeks. The objectives, essential questions, and materials are all outlined below, and color has been used to differentiate the four threads of study. I have included links to other articles, poetry, artwork and photography rather than cutting and pasting into this document. Please note that each lesson assumes an 80 minute block of time for learning.

THREADS:
Living in Society
Practicing Simplicity
Being Awake, Aware, and Alive
Living in Nature

UNIT ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is the relationship between the freedom of the individual and the communal purpose and collective morality of society, in Thoreau’s time and in ours?

OBJECTIVES
In the course of this unit, students will be able to:
- Analyze texts by developing close reading skills
- Create written and oral arguments using evidence from the text and evidence from their own observations of the world in which they live
- Use journal writing as a way of knowing and thinking
- Participate meaningfully in seminars through inquiry
- Evaluate the impact of individual “great experiments” living simply and deliberately
- Compare and contrast the ideas of Thoreau and Emerson with the ideas articulated by more contemporary essayists
- Create their own poetry and photography in response to nature
### LESSON ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

**Part 1: LIVING IN SOCIETY**

1. What is “society,” and what responsibilities do we have to its collective morality?
2. What was society like in Concord during Emerson and Thoreau’s time, and in what ways did the separate communities, or circles, function to build that society?
3. How can we claim autonomy and self-agency amidst the pressures of community? How can one “improve society”?
4. Can one improve society by improving the self? What does it mean to be self-reliant? Compare self reliance to self-indulgence. How are these different?

**Part 2: PRACTICING SIMPLICITY**

5. What is the impetus behind the “great experiments” of simplifying?
6. How can “simplifying” help us live deliberately?

**Part 3: BEING AWAKE, ALIVE, and AWARE**

7. From what “slumber” is Thoreau hoping to wake up his readers, and in what ways does that relate to simplifying?
8. What does it mean to be “present,” according to Annie Dillard, and how does that compare to Thoreau’s sense of being “awake”?

**Part 4: LIVING IN NATURE**

9. How important is the natural world to the experience of “awe”?
10. What does Thoreau’s version of “walking” look like, and how can it help free the individual and contribute to society?
11. What role can poetry or art play in a movement of protest or a plea for change? Is poetry and art talking or acting?
12. Putting Thoreau into practice: Can we “get enough nature” in our backyard here at school?

### MATERIALS

- “Self-Reliance” by Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “What Good is Community When Someone Else Makes All The Rules” by NY Times writer, Carina Chocano
- “What It Takes to Put Your Phone Away” by New Yorker writer Jia Tolentino
- Lord Byron’s *My Soul is Dark*
- Joseph Mallord William Turner’s *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (exhibited 1842)
- “Simple House” from Robert M. Thorson’s *Guide to Walden Pond*
- “Seeing” from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard
PART 1: LIVING IN SOCIETY (4 lessons/ 5 class periods)

**LESSON 1 (80 min.)**

**Lesson Essential Question:** What is “society,” and what responsibilities do we have to its collective morality?

**Materials:** “What Good is Community When Someone Else Makes All the Rules?” by Carina Chocano

**Objective:** 1) To evaluate the definitions in the Oxford English Dictionary as a means to discuss both denotations and connotations of *Society* and *Community* 2) To read an article critically 3) To create oral arguments and discussions regarding the benefits and detriments of society

**Day 1: What’s in a word?**

1) On your own, brainstorm definitions for the words: *Society* and *Community*. Consider what these words have in common and the ways in which they might be different. Consider connotations and denotations. (5 minutes)

2) Turn and Talk: With the partner sitting next to you, discuss your ideas and see if you can come up with a working definition for each. Also, consider the benefits and detriments to being part of a community and a society in your life. (7 minutes)

3) Large group discussion and report out on partner work (10 minutes)

4) With your partner, using the Oxford English Dictionary (photocopied pages) highlight any interesting or pertinent definitions that either enhance or alter your definition (10 minutes)

5) Large group: Anything to add or change? (7 minutes)

6) Read the NY Times Magazine article: “What Good is Community When Someone Else Makes All the Rules?” by Carina Chocano. Guiding Question: How has the meaning of the word “community” changed recently, according to the author? Do you agree or disagree? Why? Preview your thinking by discussing with a partner (20 minutes)

7) Large Group discussion: Guiding questions: (20 minutes)

   - Choano says, “Community can do powerful things to us, as anyone who has ever felt trapped in a small town or dissented from a religious group knows pretty well. A community can liberate or
encourage conformity; it can include or keep people out.” Agree with, disagree with, or qualify this assertion based on experiences in your own life

- Do you feel that community is more rooted in geography or ideas?
- Discuss ways in which your community has both “liberated you” and “encouraged conformity.” Consider specifically your high school community and teen society in the digital age. What is freeing and what is constraining in your world?

LESSON 2 (160 min—2 days)
Lesson Essential Question: What was society like in Concord during Emerson and Thoreau’s time, and in what ways did the separate communities, or circles, function to build that society?

Materials/Resources for Research:
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- Biography of Thoreau
- Biography of Emerson
- Sandra Harbert Petrulionis Introduction
- American Abolitionists and Antislavery Activists
- Bronson Alcott
- Databases: JSTOR, Salem Press, Bloom’s Literature

Objectives: 1) To understand the sense of community and society in Thoreau’s time 2) To work collaboratively with a small group to research a topic 3) To learn how to navigate the databases in the school library system 3) To create a google slideshow on one Circle in detail 4) To speak with clarity, concision, and confidence

Day 2 and 3: Circles: An introduction to mid-19th Century Communities in Concord

1) Bellringer: With a partner, discuss the meaning of any and all of the following (both literally and metaphorically) (5 min)

- The properties of a circle
- An “inner circle”
- To run in circles
- To move in a circle
- Circle of friends
- Circle of influence
- To come full circle
- To circle the wagon
2) Large group discussion on “circles.” What came up for you all? (5 min)

3) Circles, both literally and metaphorically, were quite prominent in Concord, MA during the mid-19th century. Today, with a small group, your task is to learn about one circle and present your findings to the class.

Group 1: Geographical Community of Concord
Group 2: Female Community
Group 3: Abolitionist Community
Group 4: Writing Community
Group 5: Religious Community
Group 6: Transcendentalist Community
Group 7: African American Community

YOUR TASK: (80+ min)
1. Choose a circle to study
2. Assign yourself roles: 1) Note-taker 2) Presenter 3) Slide-show creators (x2 if necessary)
3. You have 60 minutes to learn about your Circle in mid-19th Century Concord. You must present next class on the following topics. 1) Who were the most prominent players in the circle? 2) Where, geographically, did they live, and when did they live there? 3) What were their most notable contributions? 4) What obstacles may have impeded their progress? Please find photographs where you can of the main people in your circle.
4. Each group must use at least 3 reputable sources (at least 2 of which you found on your own in the school databases)
5. Each group will have approximately 5 minutes to present on your chosen Circle!
6. Everyone must take notes on everyone else’s Circle to be able to complete the chart in class

Grading Rubric
This presentation will be worth 50 points.

A range: Presentations in this range show excellent knowledge and understanding of the topic. There is a coherent and logical organization to the presentation, and students employ language that is clear and concise with a register that is appropriate for the task. Students are sophisticated in addressing all 4 required sub-topics and have used the required number and quality of sources.

B range: Presentations in this range show good knowledge and understanding of the topic. There is a coherent and logical organization to the presentation, and students employ language that is clear and concise with a register that is fairly appropriate for the task. Students address all 4 subtopics but may not go into quite as much depth as an A presentation. These students have met the requirement for sources.

C range: Presentations in this range show some knowledge and understanding of the topic. There is some organization to the presentation, and students employ language that is sometimes clear but there may be
inconsistencies in effectiveness. Students may not have used enough sources or the quality of sources may not be up to standard.

**D range:** This presentation is incomplete or very brief

### Note taking Sheet for Presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle</th>
<th>People in the Circle</th>
<th>Where they Lived</th>
<th>Accomplishments</th>
<th>Obstacles</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geography (Concord)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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<td>Abolitionists</td>
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<td>African Americans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcendentalists or Romantics</td>
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<td>Writers</td>
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<td>Religious</td>
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**Homework:** Compare circles and society in your time with the mid-19th century in Concord. The thinkers of this time were beginning to contemplate this question: *Does the individual serve society or is society meant to serve the individual?* What do YOU think?

**Note:** Left column is based on lecture from Professor Gross

| What is communal in Thoreau’s time? | What is communal in your time? |
As the century progresses, there is a break down in this early form of community
Religious pluralism (Unitarian and Trinitarian)
Elimination of mandatory service in Militia
Temperance movement
Introduction of private schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Tavern</th>
<th>Militia</th>
<th>Schools</th>
</tr>
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In what ways is community breaking down in your time?

This break down in larger community leads to the creation of smaller “circles” or voluntary associations. We see the birth of abolitionism, transcendentalism, feminism, the Lyceum, Debating Clubs, Agricultural Societies, etc.

| These Circles were meant to foster self-improvement and to better the collective morality. |

What “Circles” exist in your time or in your society?

| Do you believe that your “Circles” foster self-improvement and contribute to “collective morality”? How? Or Why not? |

Google Slideshow. An introduction to Transcendentalism through British Romanticism in art, music, and poetry

Key terms for understanding: sublime, negative capability, binary reasoning, enlightenment

Texts for brief study: Lord Byron’s poem, “My Soul is Dark”

Painting: Turner’s *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* exhibited 1842

Hudson River School paintings

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto #2 2nd movement
LESSON 3 (80 min)
Lesson Essential Question: How can we claim autonomy and self-agency amidst the pressures of community? How can one “improve society”?

Materials: “Self Reliance” by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Objective: 1) To analyze and evaluate the argument and ideas of Emerson in a short close reading passage 2) To write in journals as a way of knowing and thinking 3) To engage in discussion

Day 4: Close Reading Exercise from Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Self Reliance” -- a preview!
From: https://archive.vcu.edu/english/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/essays/selfreliance.html

As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For every thing that is given, something is taken. Society acquires new arts, and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil, and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat, and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under! But compare the health of the two men, and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal strength. If the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad axe, and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

1) Read the excerpt from “Self-Reliance actively. Annotate key lines that spark thought or question, underline particularly meaningful phrases, etc.
2) Go back and choose your favorite line (meaning it sparks the most thought, grappling, or questioning)
3) In your journal, copy that line down and then write a response in which you agree with, disagree with or qualify Emerson’s assertion about society’s “progress.” Consider specifically how this may relate to your own life.

4) Mini-Seminar: What does Emerson say about society and progress? Do you agree or disagree? Why? Consider specific examples from experiences or observations in your own life.

**Homework:** Read “Self-Reliance” in its entirety. Come prepared for seminar tomorrow.

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**LESSON 4**

**Lesson Essential Questions:** Can one improve society by improving the self? What does it mean to be self-reliant? Compare self reliance to self-indulgence. How are these different?

**Materials:** Self-Reliance

**Objectives:** 1) To use journal writing as a way of knowing and thinking 2) To create arguments in response to Emerson by using the text and your own experiences as evidence 3) To participate meaningfully in a seminar through inquiry

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**Day 5: Socratic Seminar on Self-Reliance; Learning through Inquiry**

1) Preparing for a Socratic seminar

JOURNAL: Read the list of quotes I have extracted from the reading. Choose one to write about extensively, or jot down notes in response to several. *Note: You may also go back to your own notes from last night’s reading and choose a quote that you found moving for response.* (10 minutes)

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**Quotes from Self-Reliance for Response**

“There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance, that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better or worse...” (20)

“What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within” (21)

“Truth is handsomer than the affection of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it” (22)

“What I must do is all that concerns me, not what other people think” (23)

“The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency, a reverence for our past act or deed, because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loath to disappoint them” (24).
“To be great is to be misunderstood” (25).

[Man] cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time” (29).

“Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not” (37)

2) Discuss with your tablemates at least one of the quotes (10 minutes)

3) SEMINAR: (35 min)
The purpose of a Socratic Seminar is to develop a deeper understanding of a text or idea through inquiry. The teacher will rarely contribute other than to ask further questions. The students must follow the following rules:

1. Talk to each other. Handraising is not necessary
2. Be respectful of each other’s ideas.
3. Invite and allow each other to speak
4. Ideas should be rooted in the text or in examples and observations from your life.
5. Discuss ideas rather than opinions
6. Stick to the point under discussion. Make notes for points to be made later.
7. Ask for clarification. Don’t stay confused!
8. Remember that you are responsible for the quality of the discussion!

4) Journal writing (10 min)
In your journal, revisit your writing from the start of class. Take 10 minutes to add to your initial response, as you consider our questions from the day: Can one contribute to the betterment of society by bettering the self? Now, consider our discussion today in class. Write down one of the following:

● A new idea that came to you by listening to your classmates
● A thought that changed because of discussion today
● An idea that you began class with that you kept in place
● A favorite quote

5) Final wrap-up discussion (10 min)

Homework: Read New Yorker article: “What It Takes to Put Your Phone Away” by Jia Tolentino
Guiding Question: Have you ever felt the impulse that Tolentino describes to “put your phone away” or disengage from the digital world? If so, why? If not, why not? Pull one quote for discussion tomorrow.

PART 2: PRACTICING SIMPLICITY (2 lessons)

LESSON 1
Lesson Essential Question: What is the impetus behind the “great experiments” of simplifying?
**Materials:** *New Yorker* article: “What It Takes to Put Your Phone Away” by Jia Tolentino

**Objectives:** 1) To analyze an article and develop oral responses to critical passages 2) To be introduced to and understand the canon of “great experiments”

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**Day 1**

1. *New Yorker* article: “What It Takes to Put Your Phone Away” (25 minutes)
   - **Padlet:** Post your quote on Padlet.
   - Then discuss with your tablemates last night’s reading and the pressures of social media and the digital world and teen “society.” Have you ever wanted to just walk away from it all, to disengage from the digital world or to “put your phone away”? Discuss.
   - Large group discussion

2. Google Slideshow (20 minutes)
   Introducing the “great experiments” of people who have experimented with a “simplified” life as a means to discover something more meaningful.
   - John Freyer: *All my life for sale.*
   - Chris McCandless: *Into the Wild*
   - Cheryl Strayed: *Wild*
   - Bill Bryson: *A Walk in the Woods*
   - **HENRY DAVID THOREAU:** *Walden*
     - Read “Simple House” from Robert M. Thorson’s *Guide to Walden Pond*

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3. Word work: What does it mean to live “deliberately”? (inspired by Laura Dassow Walls’s lecture) (10 min)
   *Deliberare:* To consider, weigh
   *Libra:* Balance on scales
From Latin Lib[е]r Free
Liberty, Library

Deliberate: Like in court

“We only weigh the tough stuff. To live deliberately means to live with freedom to read the world and weigh its meaning” -- Laura Dassow Walls

HOMEWORK: Read actively “Economy” (begin in class)
Guiding question: What does it mean for Thoreau to live “economically”? 

LESSON 2 “Simplify, simplify...”
Lesson Essential Question: How can “simplifying” help us live deliberately?

Materials: “Economy” from Walden

Objectives: 1) To participate meaningfully in a seminar through inquiry 2) To evaluate the arguments presented by Thoreau 3) To create arguments in response to Thoreau 4) To be open to new ideas by listening 5) To evaluate the impact of “great experiments” by participating in your own

Day 2:
1) Preparing for a fishbowl seminar: Journal Writing (10 min)
In your journal, jot down notes in response to each quote, or write more thoroughly in response to just one.

WORK
1) “But men labor under a mistake. The better part of the main is soon ploughed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool’s life” (3)

2) It is hard to have a southern overseer; it is worse to have a northern one; but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself” (4).

3) “Most of the luxuries of life, and many of the so-called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind” (8).

CLOTHING
4) “It is an interesting question how far men retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothes. Could you, in such a case, tell surely of any company of civilized men...”(14).

5) “I think that it cannot be maintained that dressing has in this or any country risen to the dignity of an art... Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new” (16).

SHELTER
6) "... our houses are such unwieldy property that we are often imprisoned rather than housed in them, and the bad neighborhood to be avoided is our own scurvy selves" (21).

7) "Before we can adorn our houses with beautiful objects the walls must be stripped, and our lives must be stripped, and beautiful housekeeping and beautiful living be laid for a foundation: now, a taste for the beautiful is most cultivated out of doors..." (24)

EDUCATION/ COLLEGE/ IMPROVEMENTS
8) "I mean that they should not play life, or study it merely, while the community supports them at this expensive game, but earnestly live it from beginning to end. How could youths better learn to live that by at once trying the experiment of living?" (33)

9) “Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end...” (33).

CHARITY
10) “You must have a genius for charity as well as for anything else. As for Doing-good, that is one of the professions which are full. Moreover, I have tried it fairly, and, strange as it may seem, am satisfied that it does not agree with my constitution” (47).

2) Fishbowl Seminar (45 min)
   - Students on the inside of the circle share ideas, work through questions, present opinions etc. while the students on the outside only listen and take notes on what they hear.
   - After about 15- 20 minutes of sustained conversation and discussion, students will switch places.
   - Students may use the quotes to help them explore the Lesson Essential Question
   - All rules for Socratic Seminar listed above apply to Fishbowl Seminar, as well

3) Wrap up and Introduction of Individual Projects (to be completed by the end of our study of Walden)

Homework: Read “Where I Lived and What I Lived For”

PROJECT

“If you are a seer, whenever you meet a man you will see all that he owns, ay, and much he pretends to disown, behind him, even to his kitchen furniture and all the trumpery which he saves and will not burn, and he will appear to be harnessed to it and making what headway he can.... I look upon England to-day as an old gentleman who is travelling with a great deal of baggage” (61).

“Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory”(73)
“I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms...” (85)

For two years, Henry David Thoreau abandoned his life in the village to build a cabin in the woods near Walden Pond. In the name of “economy” he lived minimally, but he argues that it is through a “stripped down” lifestyle that one truly lives freely.

150 years later, photographer John Freyer also became fascinated by the relationship between objects or “things” and identity. More simply, he questioned: how does what we own define who we are? In exploration of this question, he decided to sell everything he owned on ebay. He then wrote a book called All My Life for Sale. In the Syracuse Post-Standard (July 2001) Freyer wrote, “The overall idea is that increasingly we are defined by the objects that we own... I wanted to see what would happen to me when I no longer have the objects that define me.”

**Your task:**

1) In the spirit of Thoreau and Freyer, take some time to reflect on one object or thing that you think most defines you... or consider something that feels like the comfort of home.

2) Then, for **at least** one day, give up that item. A great example would be to give up your cell phone or your access to social media. You have two weeks to do this experiment.

**Assessment:** You must write one 2-3 page Response Paper (see details below) on the effects you experienced through “simplifying” for a day as they compare to Walden. You will have the opportunity to present your experiment to the class at the end of our study of Walden.

**Rubric for Response Paper**

**RESPONSE**

A response moves from re-stating to the much more interesting work of **interpreting.** This response paper invites you to do any or all of the following:

1) Make **academic connections** between your experience and your reading of Thoreau and the ideas we have discussed in this class

2) **WONDER:** Ask questions of the text as it connects to your experiment. Wonder if Thoreau’s ideas are particular to his time or if they transcend time and place. Imagine if your experiment were to last longer, how might it impact the way in which you see and live in this world?

3) **Struggle** to reconcile any idea that is presented by Thoreau with another opposing idea that you already have.

Responses do not need to have the organizational structure of a formal essay; however, they should have an academic tone. A really great response should read as if you are thinking on paper! You should
be alighting upon new ideas, struggling to make sense of something, or making valuable and insightful connections!

**How you are graded:**

**A paper:** This student has written a thoughtful and articulate response. The response reveals a sophisticated understanding of a complex topic and grapples to reconcile conflicting truths, rather than planting itself firmly in one stance. This student is able to point out effective points in some of Thoreau’s writing, but also recognize arguments that may be fallible. This kind of paper has an academic tone and register and reads as if the student is thinking on paper.

**B paper:** This student has written a good response. The response reveals a good understanding of a complex topic but may plant itself firmly in one stance rather than explore multiple perspectives. This student is able to point out effective points in the article and may recognize arguments that are fallible. This kind of paper is well written, but may have a less formal tone.

**C paper:** This student’s response and understanding of the topic is more simplistic. This paper likely only reveals a superficial understanding of Thoreau and makes surface connections between *Walden* and the student’s own “great experiment.” The complexity of some issues may be lost in this paper. The writing is less lucid, and there may be grammatical errors. A C paper is likely brief and underdeveloped.

**D paper:** Incomplete or very brief

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**PART 3: Being Awake, Aware, and Alive (2 lessons)**

**LESSON 1 Waking up:** “I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing at his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up” (79)

**Lesson Essential Question:** From what “slumber” is Thoreau hoping to wake up his readers, and in what ways does that relate to simplifying?

**Materials:** “Where I Lived and What I Lived For”

**Objective:** 1) To use the journal as a way of knowing and thinking, 2) To evaluate the ideas presented by Thoreau 3) To create individual response to Thoreau

1. **In your journal:** Write HDT’s title “Where I Lived and What I Lived For” at the top of your paper and then write a response. Where do you live and what do you live for? You eat, breathe, and sleep at your house, but where do you truly LIVE? (10 min)

2. Large Group Discussion regarding journal topic (10 min)
Guiding question: How does “living” in this sense relate to being “awake”? Do you think you have been “awake” or “asleep”?

3. Small Group Work

**With your group, choose one topic from the reading to discuss.**

You should follow these prompts in your discussion:

1. What is Thoreau saying about your topic?
2. Do you agree or disagree (or can you qualify elements of his argument?)
3. Use examples from your own life (observations, experiences, readings) to support your ideas

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**Simplify**

“As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to the farm or the county jail” (78).

“Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!” (86)

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**Nature**

“‘There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon’” (82).

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**Awake**

“The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred million to a poetic or divine life” (85)

“I went into the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived... I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life” (85).

“Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life?” (87)

“Still we live meanly, like ants...” (86)

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**Truth**

“Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages” (91).

“Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business” (92).

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4. Large Group Discussion: Do you think that “simplifying” our lives is the only means to be more “awake”? How important is the natural world to both of these things?
Lesson 2: Being Present
Lesson Essential Question: What does it mean to be “present,” according to Annie Dillard, and how does that compare to Thoreau’s sense of being “awake”? 

Materials: Annie Dillard’s “Seeing” from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

Objectives: 1) To analyse the ideas through close reading, 2) To create written and oral arguments in response to reading

Annie Dillard on trade-offs between productivity and presence (From *The Writing Life*)

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing. A schedule defends from chaos and whim. It is a net for catching days. It is a scaffolding on which a worker can stand and labor with both hands at sections of time. A schedule is a mock-up of reason and order—willed, faked, and so brought into being; it is a peace and a haven set into the wreck of time; it is a lifeboat on which you find yourself, decades later, still living. Each day is the same, so you remember the series afterward as a blurred and powerful pattern.”

1. Take account of your own living. Consider the last 24 hours and see if you can chart out everything that you did, even sleep! Then, mark the things in your day that were scheduled, and mark the things in your day that were unscheduled. *(inspired by James Finley)* (15 min)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How you spent the last 24 hours</th>
<th>Scheduled or unscheduled</th>
<th>Reactions</th>
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Reflection
Annie Dillard says, “How we spend our days is how we spend our lives.” Reflect here after this exercise on the question: How are you spending your day and your life? Are you present? Productive? Both? Neither? What was your most unexpected discovery through this exercise?

2. Paired Work  (35 min)
   • Guiding Question: What do you think it means to live “presently,” as defined in this chapter by Annie Dillard. Do you feel that presence and productivity are diametrically opposed? Do you feel that to have one you are losing the other?
   • Quotes to guide your discussion

   “Catch it if you can. The present is an invisible electron; its lightning path traced faintly on a blackened screen is fleet, and fleeing, and gone” (80).

   “Experiencing the present purely is being emptied and hollow; you catch grace as a man fills his cup under a waterfall” (82)

   “Self-consciousness, however, does hinder the experience of the present” (82)

   “I’ll start living; next year... I’ll start my life” (83)

   “Living is moving; time is a live creek bearing changing lights” (84)

   “I don’t come to the creek for sky unmediated, but for shelter” (90)

   “The courage of children and beasts is a function of innocence. We let our bodies go the way of our fears” (91)

   “Only children keep their eyes open” (91)

   “I am sitting under a sycamore tree: I am soft-shelled and peeled to the least puff of wind or smack of grit. The present of our life looks different under a tree” (93)

   “The chrysalids of butterflies linger here too, folded, rigid, and dreamless. I might as well include these creatures in this moment, as best I can. My ignoring them won’t strip them of their reality, and admitting them, one by one, into my consciousness might heighten mine...” (95)

   “Big trees stir memories” (100)
   “Live water heals memories” (101)

   • Pairs of students present to the class the following: (30 min)
     ○ Annie Dillard’s definition of “presence” as you have come to understand it in this chapter
A comparison of that definition to your understanding of Thoreau’s sense of being “awake”

Quotes from Thoreau and from Dillard to support your ideas

An answer to this question: Do you think you are living “presently” and/or “awake” in the world? If yes, explain how with examples. If no, explain why and what you could do to wake yourself up?

Teasing question: How important is the natural world to our ability to simplify and be more awake and present?

Homework: Read 2015 NY Times piece “Why Do We Experience Awe?” and write one response paper to this reading. (approx. 2 typed pages double spaced)

What is the difference between a summary and a response?

**SUMMARY**
A summary does precisely what it suggests: SUMMARIZES. If I ask you to write a summary (which will be rare), I am asking you merely to pull out the most important parts of a reading. You are restating, rephrasing, rearticulating. The prefix, “re,” means “again.” Summaries are useful if we are reading a really challenging text and we need to start by making sure we understand the basic argument or idea. There is no original thought in summarizing; rather, it is simply giving new words to an already stated idea.

**RESPONSE**
A response moves from restating to the much more interesting work of interpreting. Responses invite you to do any or all of the following:

1) Make **personal connections** to some aspect of the text as it relates to your life or the way in which you see the world
2) Make **academic connections** to other texts you have read or ideas discussed in this class or another class
3) **Agree** or **disagree** with any portion of the text
4) **WONDER**: Ask questions of the text! Wonder if the author may have had any biases or certain agendas in presenting the text in a certain way.
5) Consider the **circumstances** in which it was produced or received.
6) If there is **data** presented, question where it came from or how it was interpreted and by whom.
7) **Struggle** to reconcile any idea that is presented with another opposing idea that you already had.

Responses do not need to have the organizational structure of a formal essay; however, they should have an academic tone. A really great response should read as if you are thinking on paper! You should be alighting upon new ideas, struggling to make sense of something, or making valuable and insightful connections!
If you are ever unclear about whether you are writing a summary or response, ask yourself this question: Have I said something new in this paragraph? If you have only used your writing to SAY AGAIN (or summarize) someone else’s ideas, then you have not written a response.

Why write a response paper?
The purpose of these assignments is to give you an opportunity to grapple with an idea. It is a place to connect thought with writing in a small prompt, BEFORE getting to a larger paper assignment. Students find, if done correctly and seriously, that they often come up with some of their best ideas in these small responses, and it is not infrequent for those ideas to become fodder for a longer paper down the road.

How you are graded:
A paper: This student has written a well organized and articulate response to the article chosen. The response reveals a sophisticated understanding of a complex topic and grapples to reconcile conflicting truths, rather than planting itself firmly in one stance. This paper is able to point out effective points in the article but also recognize arguments that may be fallible or logic that may have fallacies. This kind of paper has an academic tone and register and reads as if the student is thinking on paper.

B paper: This student has written a good response to the article chosen. The response reveals a good understanding of a complex topic but may plant itself firmly in one stance rather than explore multiple perspectives. This paper is able to point out effective points in the article and may recognize arguments that are fallible. This kind of paper is well written, but may have a less formal tone.

C paper: This student’s response and understanding of the topic is more simplistic. This paper likely only responds to one point in the article rather than exploring the complexity of an issue. This paper is not well written. There may be grammatical errors, and it is likely brief.

D paper: Incomplete or very brief

PART 4: LIVING IN NATURE (8 days)

Lesson 1: Awe and Nature: “...awe is the ultimate “collective” emotion, for it motivates people to do things that enhance the greater good” (Piff and Keltner)

Lesson Essential Question: How important is the natural world to the experience of “awe”?

Materials: “NY Times piece “Why Do We Experience Awe?”
Objectives: 1) To analyze a text through close reading 2) To create ideas in response to reading and to articulate them both through writing and speaking 3) To understand the idea of “Nature Deficit Disorder”
1) Partners: Discuss your response papers with each other. What resonated in this article for you? What did you agree with? Disagree with? How did these authors define that goosebump-inspiring “awe,” and what brings you awe in your own life? How important is the natural world to this experience? (10 min)

2) Large group discussion: What brings you awe? (10 min)

3) **Google Slideshow** (15 min)
   
   An introduction to Richard Louv’s idea of Nature Deficit Disorder
   
   Interview and Video about Last Child in the Woods
   
   Trailer for documentary “Play Again”
   
   Discussion

4) Close Reading Exercise from Henry David Thoreau’s *Walking* (45 min)

   The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the World. Every tree sends its fibers forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plow and sail for it. From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind. Our ancestors were savages. The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a meaningless fable. The founders of every state which has risen to eminence have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a similar wild source. It was because the children of the Empire were not suckled by the wolf that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the northern forests who were.

   I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows. We require an infusion of hemlock, spruce or arbor vitae in our tea. There is a difference between eating and drinking for strength and from mere gluttony. The Hottentots eagerly devour the marrow of the koodoo and other antelopes raw, as a matter of course. Some of our northern Indians eat raw the marrow of the Arctic reindeer, as well as various other parts, including the summits of the antlers, as long as they are soft. And herein, perchance, they have stolen a march on the cooks of Paris. They get what usually goes to feed the fire. This is probably better than stall-fed beef and slaughterhouse pork to make a man of. Give me a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure—as if we lived on the marrow of koodoos devoured raw.

1) Read the excerpt from “Walking” actively. Annotate key lines that spark thought or question, underline particularly meaningful phrases, etc.
2) Go back and choose your favorite line (meaning it sparks the most thought, grappling, or questioning)
3) In your journal, copy that line down and then write a response in which you agree with, disagree with or qualify Thoreau’s assertion about “Wildness.” Consider specifically how this may relate to your own life. Explore how this might be similar or different from wilderness.
4) Mini-Seminar: What does Thoreau say about the necessity for Wildness? Do you agree or disagree? Why? Consider specific examples from experiences or observations in your own life.
Homework: Read actively “Walking” in its entirety. Come prepared for seminar tomorrow.

Lesson 2: “What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods?” -- Thoreau
Lesson Essential Question: What does Thoreau’s version of “walking” look like, and how can it help free the individual and contribute to society?
Materials: “Walking” by Thoreau
Objectives: 1) To analyze a text through close reading, 2) To create written and oral arguments using evidence 3) To use journal writing as a way of knowing and thinking

Socratic Seminar on “Walking”: Learning Through Inquiry

1) Preparing for a Socratic seminar
JOURNAL: Read the list of quotes I have extracted from the reading. Choose one to write about extensively, or jot down notes in response to several. Note: You may also go back to your own notes from last night’s reading and choose a quote that you found moving for response. (10 minutes)

Quotes from “Walking” for Response

“We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return, prepared to send back our embalmed hearts only as relics to our desolate kingdoms. If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again—if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man—then you are ready for a walk.”

“Moreover, you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking. When a traveler asked Wordsworth's servant to show him her master's study, she answered, ‘Here is his library, but his study is out of doors.’”

“I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. It is not indifferent to us which way we walk. There is a right way; but we are very liable from heedlessness and stupidity to take the wrong one.”

“For I believe that climate does thus react on man—as there is something in the mountain air that feeds the spirit and inspires. Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences?”

“Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest.”
“When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest woods the thickest and most interminable and, to the citizen, most dismal, swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place, a sanctum sanctorum. There is the strength, the marrow, of Nature.”

“A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. A township where one primitive forest waves above while another primitive forest rots below—such a town is fitted to raise not only corn and potatoes, but poets and philosophers for the coming ages.”

“In short, all good things are wild and free.”

“A man's ignorance sometimes is not only useful, but beautiful—while his knowledge, so called, is oftentimes worse than useless, besides being ugly. Which is the best man to deal with—he who knows nothing about a subject, and, what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, or he who really knows something about it, but thinks that he knows all?”

“Above all, we cannot afford not to live in the present.”

2) Discuss with your tablemates at least one of the quotes (10 minutes)

3) SEMINAR: (35 min)
The purpose of a Socratic Seminar is to develop a deeper understanding of a text or idea through inquiry. The teacher will rarely contribute other than to ask further questions. Rules for Socratic Seminar must be followed.

4) Journal writing (10 min)
In your journal, revisit your writing from the start of class. Take 10 minutes to add to your initial response, as you consider our questions from the day: What does Thoreau’s version of “walking” look like, and how can it help free the individual and contribute to society? Now, consider our discussion today in class. Write down one of the following:

- A new idea that came to you by listening to your classmates
- A thought that changed because of discussion today
- An idea that you began class with that you kept in place
- A favorite quote

5) Final Wrap up
Homework: Read “Pond in Winter” and “Spring”
Guiding question: How does HDT “walk” at Walden Pond. How is he awake? How is he present? What does it allow him to see? What does it allow him to observe? What does it allow him to witness? Prepare for in-class essay
Day 3: In-class essay (80 min)

Digital Walden: [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/205/205-h/205-h.htm](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/205/205-h/205-h.htm)

Choose one excerpt from Walden below (or choose your own passage of a similar length). Then, write a well-reasoned essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Thoreau’s ideas. Use evidence from your own experiences, reading, or observation to develop your essay.

Your essay should demonstrate:

- A sound grasp of Thoreau’s ideas
- A clear and thoughtful thesis statement
- Evidence to back up your thesis from experience, reading, or observation
- Mature command of language and style (the register should be academic)

**CHOICE #1 from “Spring”**

Our village life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it. We need the tonic of wildness,—to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of Nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and Titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees, the thunder cloud, and the rain which lasts three weeks and produces freshets. We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander. We are cheered when we observe the vulture feeding on the carrion which disgusts and disheartens us and deriving health and strength from the repast. There was a dead horse in the hollow by the path to my house, which compelled me sometimes to go out of my way, especially in the night when the air was heavy, but the assurance it gave me of the strong appetite and inviolable health of Nature was my compensation for this. I love to see that Nature is so rife with life that myriads can be afforded to be sacrificed and suffered to prey on one another; that tender organizations can be so serenely squashed out of existence like pulp,—tadpoles which herons gobble up, and tortoises and toads run over in the road; and that sometimes it has rained flesh and blood! With the liability to accident, we must see how little account is to be made of it. The impression made on a wise man is that of universal innocence. Poison is not poisonous after all, nor are any wounds fatal. Compassion is a very untenable ground. It must be expeditious. Its pleadings will not bear to be stereotyped.

**CHOICE #2 from “Pond in Winter”**
Every winter the liquid and trembling surface of the pond, which was so sensitive to every breath, and reflected every light and shadow, becomes solid to the depth of a foot or a foot and a half, so that it will support the heaviest teams, and perchance the snow covers it to an equal depth, and it is not to be distinguished from any level field. Like the marmots in the surrounding hills, it closes its eye-lids and becomes dormant for three months or more. Standing on the snow-covered plain, as if in a pasture amid the hills, I cut my way first through a foot of snow, and then a foot of ice, and open a window under my feet, where, kneeling to drink, I look down into the quiet parlor of the fishes, pervaded by a softened light as through a window of ground glass, with its bright sanded floor the same as in summer; there a perennial waveless serenity reigns as in the amber twilight sky, corresponding to the cool and even temperament of the inhabitants. Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.

**Rubric (adapted from AP Lang and Lit style rubric)**

**High-Range Essay (A range)**
- correctly identifies the writer’s position
- effectively presents a position about the writer’s ideas (clear and articulate thesis statement)
- successfully defends his or her position
- presents carefully reasoned argument, making appropriate references to specific examples from personal experience, observation, or reading
- clear and effective organization
- mature command of language and style (sophisticated, elegant)
- few, if any syntactical errors
- clear writer’s voice

**Mid-Range Essay (B range)**
- correctly identifies the writer’s position
- understands the demands of the prompt
- clearly states a position about the writer’s ideas (clear thesis statement)
- presents a generally adequate argument that makes use of appropriate examples (but the evidence may be insufficient or less relevant and/or there may be lapses in logic)
- clear and effective organization
- less developed than a high-range essay
- generally well-written, but there may be a few errors in language and style (less sophisticated vocabulary, some errors in diction and/or syntax)

**Low-Range Essay (C range)**
- inadequate response to the prompt
- misunderstands, oversimplifies, or misinterprets the writer’s position
- less thoughtful thesis statement
• fails to convince the reader: insufficient or inappropriate examples used to develop the writer’s position
• lack of mature control of the elements of essay writing
• poor organization
• possible confusion in ideas and superficial thinking
• frequent errors in language and style

Low-Range Essay (D range)
• lacks clarity and coherence
• overly obvious thesis or no thesis at all
• contains little or no evidence
• the connection between the thesis and evidence is shallow or non-existent
• the paper is unusually short
• weak sentence construction and persistent weakness in command of language

Lessons 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
A class experiment: Outdoors English Class: Putting Thoreau into practice!
Lesson Essential Question: Can we “get enough nature” in our backyard here at school?
Please read the selection of poems that accompany each day’s exploration. Many of the works function as a kind of “ode” to nature; some caution readers about the dangers of losing what we have in the natural world. Some of these poems come from the anthology, So Little Time: Words and Images for a World in Climate Crisis. As you contemplate the poetry, keep in mind the movement behind creating this anthology. Thoreau, in his essay “On The Duty of Civil Disobedience,” says that it is our duty as citizens not just to talk but to act. This is indeed the engine behind many of our movements in history. What role can poetry or art play in a movement of protest or a plea for change? Is poetry and art talking or acting?

Materials: See Below in Chart

Objectives: 1) To use journal writing as a way of knowing and thinking 2) To evaluate the impact of a full class “experiment” 3) To compare and contrast the ideas of Thoreau with poets and artists 4) To try living the ideas we have studied in this unit
For our final unit of the year, we will be taking the time to be reflective and thoughtful observers of nature. Each day, we will spend class outdoors with our journals. Our focus will be determined by short readings of the day. We will try putting into practice the ideas that Thoreau and Emerson and Dillard wrote about sauntering and seeing, being present and being in wildness.

True observation invites us to see and notice outwardly, but ultimately to let it all in. A good journal will show both outward, careful observation along with inward reflection. These two should exist in a lovely state of symbiosis, where your quiet mind allows you to see carefully your outside world, which in turn inspires profound reflection. Naturalists don’t just see. They witness, they detach, and they become part of nature itself. All journal entries should be approximately 2 pages in length and demonstrate: 1)
observation of your surroundings in the woods, 2) reflection on what you see and think 3) connection to the reading and to your understanding of the writers in this unit as a whole.

Our journey will begin where all good journeys do, right in our own backyard! We will spend much of our time in the trails behind the school, so please dress accordingly. We will go out in rain or shine, unless the weather is extreme. Note: you may want to wear long pants and long sleeves and spray with bug repellant. Please be sure to check yourself and each other for ticks each day! Light colored clothing makes them easier to spot.

### Today's Exploration

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1: “Walking” in the Woods</th>
<th>1) Journal in response to reading and walk</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paired reading: “The Peace of Wild Things” -Wendell Berry</td>
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<tr>
<th>Day 2: Mindfulness (An experience doing Yoga and Meditation)</th>
<th>2) Journal in response to experience with Mrs. Gowen doing yoga and meditation and the reading</th>
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<tr>
<th>Day 3 Seeing and Shadow Taking Nature Photographs: A visit from photographers and QHS graduates Liam Stewart and Autumn Collignon</th>
<th>4) Your own photograph and journal about “Seeing through the lens of a camera”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paired “reading” photographs by Herbert W. Gleason of and Carl Heilman, Adirondack photographer</td>
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<tr>
<th>Day 4 Looking at Trees “In Blackwater Woods” by Mary Oliver</th>
<th>5) Imitation poem for journal response. Find your own spot in the woods and use Mary Oliver's poem to inspire the writing of your own. In ________________ By ________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Blackwater Woods by Mary Oliver</td>
<td>Look, the trees are turning their own bodies into pillars of light, are giving off the rich fragrance of cinnamon</td>
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Look, ________________
____________________
____________________
____________________
are giving off the rich fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,
the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders
of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its name is, is
nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned
in my lifetime
leads back to this:
the fires and the black river of loss
whose other side is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world
you must be able
to do three things:
To love what is mortal;
to hold it against your bones
knowing your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

Mary Oliver New and Selected Poems

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Day 5 “Castles in the air”
Henry David Thoreau excerpt from Walden

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six

6) Final Journal response to Thoreau
Sometimes circumstances create new meaning. Reflect on this passage as it relates to your knowledge of Thoreau and Transcendentalism, but also as it relates to this time in your life preparing to graduate from high school.
years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true,
I fear that others may have fallen into it, and so
helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft
and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the
paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty,
then, must be the highways of the world, how deep
the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to
take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast
and on the deck of the world, for there I could best
see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish
to go below now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment;
that if one advances confidently in the direction of
his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he
has imagined, he will meet with a success
unexpected in common hours. He will put some
things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new,
universal, and more liberal laws will begin to
establish themselves around and within him; or the
old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in
a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license
of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he
simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will
appear less complex, and solitude will not be
solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness
weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your
work need not be lost; that is where they should be.
Now put the foundations under them.

YOUR JOURNAL: To this date, the entirety of Henry David Thoreau’s journals have yet to be
published. Some scholars consider them to be a barn, a warehouse of ideas that stored the thinkings and
phrasings that eventually became the speeches and essays and books that we know today. Other scholars
argue that the journals, as they exist, are in fact the magnum opus themself. In your case, your nature
journal should be both a storage place for ideas AND it will be your final compilation of work to be submitted for assessment using the rubric below:

**Rubric:**

**A:** An A journal will have a minimum of 5 responses that are thoughtful and reflective in nature. This journal shows a willingness to think meaningfully about the topics and readings as they connect to our entire unit of study. An A journal would have a variety of responses (for example: typical journal responses, poetry, photography, art... perhaps this student even went so far as to find readings of his or her own to include and respond to). An A journal shows thought, creativity, effort, curiosity, and wonder. This student makes meaningful connections, careful observations, and insightful reflections on

**B:** A B journal has many of the elements of an A journal, but it may be less developed. This student shows a willingness to try the various prompts, but maybe takes less time to flesh out his or her responses. This journal shows some effort and creativity, but there may be a less genuine sense of wonder.

**C:** A C journal is likely incomplete. This student may have completed some of the journal entries in class but did not go above and beyond to think past the immediate prompts.

**D:** This journal shows minimal effort.