Introduction

Thank you so much in your interest in the attached lessons! There are two separate lessons within this slideshow that should take approximately 2-3 class periods, depending on your class time. These lessons were written with the intention of being the first two “real” academic lessons of the school year in my 10th grade, American Literature, courses. These lessons will be taught over a variety of levels- I will modify by condensing the excerpts as needed. The purpose of both lessons is to introduce my students not only to Henry David Thoreau and the Transcendentalist movement, but also to writing and thinking expectations of my classroom with emphasis on connotative v. denotative meaning, diction, and annotation. It is my intention that the writings in this series will encourage students to think bigger than their current situation, and to motivate them to always think beyond as the year progresses. The excerpts, of course, can be swapped out at your preference. You will notice that I do not have a complete, formal lesson plan. I felt that slides were fairly self explanatory and feared redundancy. If you have any questions at all, please don’t hesitate to reach me at shannon.martin@amityregion5.org

One final note: I intentionally chose not to include a formal works cited slide as I will not have covered that yet in my classroom. That is a personal choice, but I did provide credit to anything that is not of my own thinking or creation in the final slide.
CCSS Standards:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Materials:
1. slideshow
2. printed copies of excerpts
3. dictionaries or access to internet to look up word meanings
4. notebook/paper
5. writing utensil

Assessments:
1. do now
2. discussion
3. independent practice
4. exit questions
Connotative and Denotative meaning:
An intro to reading and thinking expectations through Transcendentalist literature

Learning target:
I can define connotative and denotative meaning in a variety of texts, and use those definitions to support further interpretation.
Do Now
Turn and Talk:

What is the meaning of the word “Transcend”? 

2 minutes
Turn and Talk:

What is the meaning of the suffix “-ism”?
-ism (as suffix):

1. Forming nouns denoting an action or its result.
   'baptism'
   'exorcism'
   a. Forming nouns denoting a state or quality.
      'barbarism'

2. Forming nouns denoting a system, principle, or ideological movement
   a. Forming nouns denoting a basis for prejudice or discrimination.
      'racism'
Turn and Talk:

What is the meaning of “transcendentalism”?
Transcendentalism

An idealistic philosophical and social movement which developed in New England around 1836 in reaction to rationalism. Influenced by romanticism, Platonism, and Kantian philosophy, it taught that divinity pervades all nature and humanity, and its members held progressive views on feminism and communal living. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were central figures.
The Progression of American Literature Leading to Transcendentalism

Native
- Oral tradition
- Poetry
- Creation myths

Colonial
- Emphasis on religion and way of life

Rationalism
- Emphasis on reason and deduction

Romantic/Gothic
- Valued intuition, feeling and idealism; Gothic added supernatural elements

How would the historical happenings in these times support/parallel the literature that produced?
Turn and Talk:

Have you ever heard the word “connotation”?  

2 minutes
**Connotation (noun):**

An idea or feeling which a word invokes for a person in addition to its literal or primary meaning.

“While these examples have obvious connotations, some words are ambiguous.”

**Origin:**

Mid 16th century from medieval Latin connotatio(n-), from connotare ‘mark in addition’
Turn and Talk:

Now that you know the definition of “connotation,” what might “denotation” mean?

2 minutes
Denotation (noun):

The literal or primary meaning of a word, in contrast to the feelings or ideas that the word suggests.

“beyond their immediate denotation, the words have a connotative power”
Let’s Practice!

Create a T-chart in your notes
One side labeled “connotation”
The opposite side labeled “denotation”
What can you denote?
What are some connotations?
With the person next to you, share your denotation lists.

Then, for every denotation, write a connotation.

5 minutes

(Santoleri)
Let’s share!

(Santoleri)
Turn and Talk:

What similarities/differences might occur when analyzing denotation and connotation of a photograph?
Let’s Practice!

Create a **second** T-chart in your notes
One side labeled “connotation”
The opposite side labeled “denotation”
Henry David Thoreau

July 12th, 1817 - May 6th, 1862
What can you denote?
What are some connotations?
With the person next to you, share your denotation lists.

Then, for every denotation, write a connotation.

5 minutes
Let’s share!
Can you denote differences?
What can you infer? (connotation)
Tomorrow we will look at Thoreau, the author. We will apply this same practice of analysis to words.
Exit Ticket:

Why would it be important to analyze denotation AND connotation - why not one or the other?
Annotation and diction: An intro to reading and thinking expectations through Transcendentalist literature

Learning target:
I can use annotation as a tool and analyze diction in order to gain a larger understanding of a text.
Do now (written in notes):

In your own words, what does it mean to “annotate” a text?
Annotation (noun): A note by way of explanation or comment added to a text or diagram.

“I appreciate, too, the scholarship you appear to be undertaking this endeavor as indicated by your extensive annotations and explanations.”
While we are at it...
-ion(suffix):
Forming nouns of action, condition, etc.
such as completion, relation
Rewind

**Connotation**
The act of identifying associations to words/ideas, etc.

**Denotation**
The act of identifying indicated meaning

**Annotation**
The act of note taking/interacting within a text
Annotation is not optional

Annotating your readings is an expectation
Turn and talk:

What would warrant an annotative note in a reading?
Diction

specific word choice and usage
Annotation Model

follow my annotations on the passage in front of you
I went to 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 did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. 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 life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.”

-Walden, Henry David Thoreau
Annotation Model

This time, you help me!
Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds.

Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion.

-Walden, Henry David Thoreau
Annotation Practice

With your partner, annotate the next passage together- focus SOLELY on diction
If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our lives to improve them, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irish-man, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

-Walden, Henry David Thoreau
Finally, complete the last passage on your own- still focus SOLELY on diction.
Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine to-morrow. As for work, we haven’t any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus’ dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself.

-Walden, Henry David Thoreau
Turn and talk:

What do you notice about Thoreau’s word choice? Any patterns?

2 minutes
Exit Discussion: Based on the excerpts and annotations from today, what inferences can you make about Thoreau as a person? As a writer?
Credits

- Presentation template by Slidesgo
- Definitions from Lexico.com
- Walden excerpts from Project Gutenberg
- On Walden Pond, watercolor painting by Nicholas Santoleri