

Unit Plan

English 3, Grade 11: “Choosing a Life of Principle”

UNIT TOPIC AND LENGTH:

- An introduction to the ideas of Henry David Thoreau and their application to our common life.
- Two-week unit, inclusive of class-time for development of final projects.

COMMON CORE CONTENT STANDARDS:

- CC.1.2.11-12.A: Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the central ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.2.11-12.F: Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.
- CC.1.2.11-12.I: Analyze foundational U.S. and world documents of historical, political, and literary significance for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.
- CC.1.4.11-12.A: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.
- CC.1.5.11-12.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CC.1.5.11-12.D: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective; organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

BIG IDEAS/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Living “deliberately” requires that we devote time and find spaces for introspection.
- Choosing a life guided by our principles requires the cultivation of an inner life.
- Reading, writing, and discussion are integral to developing a set of moral principles.
- Living in society requires a negotiation between idealism and pragmatism.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How can we develop and sustain spaces for reflection in our daily lives?
- How can we develop and retain moral principles to guide the course of our lives?
- How can we test these principles to ensure that they are true?

CONTENT:

- Engagement with actions and

SKILLS:

- Students will formulate, modify, and

<p>consequences of living “deliberately” in Thoreau’s sense of the word.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establishment of student moral principles and individual plans for living in society in accordance with those principles. ➤ Recognition of the impact of Thoreau’s ideas in the twentieth century and their relevance to the twenty-first century. 	<p>pursue original questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students will develop strategies for reading complex texts. ➤ Students will practice listening and responding to peers through oral and written communication. ➤ Students will develop and refine original ideas through discourse: class discussion, written reflection, and student/teacher feedback.
<p>VOCABULARY/KEY TERMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DELIBERATION/DELIBERATE; MORALS; ETHICS; PRINCIPLES; ETHOS; SUSTAINABILITY; INSTITUTIONS; SYSTEMS; IDEOLOGY; ANXIETY; CULTURE; SOCIETY; NATURE; ECOSYSTEM; ECOLOGY; BOYCOTT. 	
<p>ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE AND ACTIVITIES:</p> <p>INITIAL ASSESSMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “I Collage.” Students bring in three images that each represents something important to them. After students have explained their images and placed them on a whiteboard or classroom wall, time is allotted for individual reflection and group discussion: <i>Why are these images or objects valuable to us? What do they say about our individual, societal, and/or cultural principles?</i> 	
<p>FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Midweek Reflection. After students have written six journal entries (in which students have the opportunity to attune themselves to emotions, feelings, thoughts, and intellect), they must re-read these entries to determine, if possible, a value system from which they can derive principles to guide their life. Students will submit a 500-word reflection to an online discussion board prior to the second week of this unit. 	
<p>FINAL PERFORMANCE TASK:</p> <p>Choice A: Op-Ed Article. The student will compose an editorial that exposes systems in which we participate that conflicts with or threatens our moral beliefs. The student must identify these systems, explain the commensurate conflict(s), and offer solutions for living with them, within them, or away from them. 850-1000 words.</p> <p>Choice B: Civil Disobedience “Action Plan.” Students will create a powerpoint presentation and accompanying 500-explanation that a) presents an ethical dilemma, b) explains why it is unethical or incongruous with one’s individual moral principles, c) offers a plan of civil action to peacefully protest, disobey, or removing oneself from this dilemma, and d) anticipates the consequences of this civil action.</p>	

LEARNING PLAN & ACTIVITIES:

- Daily Journaling: offers students the opportunity to find a “Walden,” a reflective physical or intellectual space to be alone with their thoughts for 30 minutes each day. This activity guides students to familiarize themselves with their emotions, feelings, thoughts, and intellect.
- Reading Logs: students develop skills as active readers of complex texts. For each reading assignment, students are required to record three questions or comments—along with corresponding quotations—for class discussion.
- Harvard Education Question Formulation Technique: this activity helps students develop original questions that promote critical thinking, reflection, and argumentation.
- “I Collage”: see formative assessment.
- Systems Recognition Activity: a group thinking routine and activity that requires students to detach themselves from society and critically examine their place in a complex web of human interaction; here, the goal is for students to recognize their own complicity or participation in systems that may compromise or even conflict with their individual values.
- Pragmatism vs. Idealism: a partnered brainstorming activity for students to recognize how one might fairly participate in society a way that negotiates ethical obligation with the realities of everyday life.

Week One (5 Days):

- Introduce the ideas of Henry David Thoreau by reading excerpts of *Walden* and “Civil Disobedience.”
- Establish with students physical or mental spaces (our “Walden”) to promote a reconnection with the “inner-self”: one’s emotions, feelings, thoughts, values, purpose, place in the world, etc.
- Recognize and rank personal values or principles (whole class and individual).
- Assist students become conscientious of societal and/or cultural institutions (“systems”) in which we participate that may or may not accord with their principles.
- Practice journaling with students by providing models of study and allowing time for silent in-class writing.
- Engage with ideas of author Parker Palmer to recognize how introspection promotes self-knowledge, self-actualization, lives of purpose, and ethically-minded living.

Week Two (5 Days):

- Engage with other thinkers (Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela) to explore what civil disobedience has looked like in the past, esp. when impetus for social action comes from inner strength or personal principles.
- Devote time in class and at home to develop individual projects (see guidelines in summative assessment).

READINGS:

- L.J. Rittenhouse: “Leadership and the Inner Journey.” Interview with Parker Palmer.
Henry David Thoreau: excerpts from *Walden*, “Civil Disobedience,” and “Slavery in

Massachusetts.”

- Martin Luther King: excerpts from “Letter from Birmingham jail.”
- Nelson Mandela: excerpts from *Long Walk to Freedom*.

Resources:

Harvard Question Formulation Technique: https://www.hepg.org/hel-home/issues/27_5/helarticle/teaching-students-to-ask-their-own-questions_507.

Center for Courage and Renewal: <http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/>

Anti-Defamation League Resources for Educators: <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families>

Seven Ways to Decrease Your Carbon Footprint: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/7-instant-ways-to-reduce-your-carbon-footprint_b_59321992e4b00573ab57a383

Supply Chain Management 101: <https://www.smartsheet.com/supply-chain-management>

The Ethical Corporation: <http://www.ethicalcorp.com/>

“Behind the Barcodes.” (Study produced by Oxfam to monitor ethical policies behind production and supply chains of top supermarkets): <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/take-action/campaign/food-farming-and-hunger/behind-the-barcodes/>

LESSON: THE ECOLOGY OF THE WORLD

Objective:

Students will record a daily log to help them recognize the various interconnected systems in which they participate.

Duration:

One 45-minute class period

Standards Addressed:

- CC.1.2.11-12.A: Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the central ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.2.11-12.F: Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.
- CC.1.2.11-12.I: Analyze foundational U.S. and world documents of historical, political, and literary significance for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

Materials Needed:

Handout (see below), pens/pencils, copies of “Civil Disobedience.”

Warm Up (5 minutes):

Project the following prompt: *If you could change one thing in the world for the better, what would that be and why?*

Step One (15 minutes):

1. Ask students to read relevant passages of “Civil Disobedience” in pairs.
2. After they have finished reading, ask them to discuss the following prompt: *Was Thoreau sincere when he refused to pay his taxes, or was this a demonstration, a “performance”? Be prepared to explain your reasoning in class.*
3. *Discuss answers as a class.*

Step Two (15 minutes):

1. Distribute handout and model the first several entries to the class.
2. The handout contains three columns. The left-hand column, the “log,” is a space to record daily activities; students should be as complete as possible (ideal: wake up, shower, eat breakfast, brush teeth; not ideal: wake up, go to school, go to bed). The middle column, “tools,” is a space to record what you need to perform that activity (e.g. in order to wake up on time, I need my phone, my charger, and electricity). The right-hand column, “entity” is a place for brainstorming what entities make it possible for you to use that tool (e.g. with my phone, I would put Google because it makes my phone and PECO because it’s my energy supplier).
3. To help students fill in the “entity” column, they can ask themselves the following questions:
 - a. Who made what I use?
 - b. Who brought it to me?
4. After you have modeled 1-2 entries, allow students to do the same with one additional entry. Allow time for questions and share-outs.

Step Three (10 minutes):

1. Before the bell rings, ask students to identify the importance of each activity and each tool on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being absolutely unnecessary and 10 being completely necessary in order to live.

Homework:

1. Students should spend the next 24 hours thinking about their log and recording entries. You can pick up this activity not the next class period, but the one following that.
2. Assign students relevant reading as necessary: further reading of "Civil Disobedience" or "Slavery in Massachusetts."

Name and date:

My Log Book

Every day we participate in global systems that allow us to live and function in the world as we are accustomed. In order to understand the breadth of these interconnected systems, you will record a log of daily activities in the columns below.

- Activity: record something you do each day
- Tools: record what allows that activity to happen
- Entity: Ask yourself, who has made this tool? Who has brought it to me? What materials are used to make that tool?

It goes without saying that the "entity" column could include countless entries. Do not feel overwhelmed; just write what comes to mind. You can do additional research if you like, but that's not necessary at this point in the exercise.

Activity	Tools	Entity
Waking up	Cell phone, charger, electricity	Verizon, Google, PECO, plastic
Shower	Water, soap, towel	PGW, Johnson & Johnson, Bed Bath & Beyond, cotton

Lesson: Identifying Cultural Heroes

Objective:

Students will identify salient characteristics of cultural heroes in order to recognize their own values and determine their individual moral principles.

Duration:

One 45-minute class period

Standards Addressed:

- Standard - CC.1.2.11-12.G: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- CC.1.5.11-12.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Materials Needed:

Smartboard, magazines, laptops, chart paper, glue stick, tape, markers: anything to assemble a collage images—print or digital.

Previous Homework:

Students have been assigned to collect the images of five “heroes”; our working definition of a hero has been a person that embodies qualities that a culture admires. Students have been required to survey a friend and four family members (ideally from different generations), asking them who their heroes are, and bring in images of these heroes.

Warm Up (10 minutes):

Project the following prompt when students enter the room: *In your journal, reflect on your experience assembling your collection of five heroes. What surprised you, if anything? What did you learn about your friends/family from this research? Are there any commonalities you see between these different heroes?*

Step One (15 minutes):

1. Ask students to grab a marker and tape. Students should then mount their images on chart paper or a chalk board and label each of them. Alternatively, if you prefer to work digitally, you could use an application like Google Docs or Google Slides as a way for multiple students to collaborate on the same document.
2. Once the collage has been assembled, students should walk around with their journals and note their observations.
3. Discuss initial observations as a group.

Step Two (20 minutes):

1. Introduce the Harvard Question Formulation Technique (see link in “references” section of unit plan). Model brainstorming by coming up with 1-2 questions and improving them. (Sample questions might include: *Who are the most common heroes? What are the most common*

accomplishments? What do you notice about race, age, gender, nationality? Are there any common stories between these heroes?)

2. Ask students to work in pairs, making sure that each step is completed: students should *produce*, *improve*, and *prioritize* their questions, and determine *next steps*: how they are going to use them.
3. Share results as a class. Ultimately, you want to direct students to ask themselves the following questions, which can be done for homework if you run out of class time:
 - a. Do I want my life to follow, in some way, the pattern of the lives these heroes? If so, what do I need to do to accomplish this?
 - b. Why do we (or I) admire the accomplishments or character of these heroes?

Homework:

Assign the following prompt to students to complete and submit online:

Select one of the heroes we have examined in class. Pretending to be that person, write a letter to Henry David Thoreau as if you were that person. Even though it surpasses reason—given that your hero was probably born decades after Thoreau—pretend your hero has nonetheless just heard Thoreau deliver his address “Slavery in Massachusetts.” Choose one passage in particular to inspire your response. Here’s an example:

*“I walk toward one of our ponds; but what signifies the beauty of nature when men are base? We walk to lakes to see our serenity reflected in them; when we are not serene, we go not to them. Who can be serene in a country where both the rulers and the ruled are **without principle**? The remembrance of my country spoils my walk. My thoughts are murder to the State, and involuntarily go plotting against her.”*

What would your hero say to Thoreau to restore his faith in humanity? Would s/he describe her efforts to live according to his/her own principles? Would s/he describe his/her efforts to inspire social change? Would s/he invite Thoreau to participate in coordinated efforts of “civil disobedience” or protest? Be as creative as you like. Demonstrate a knowledge of your hero’s beliefs and actions, as well as your familiarity with Thoreau’s text.