

## Using Paired Passages to contemplate “Hearing That Different Drummer”

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### Objectives-

Students will compare and analyze literary passages to meet the following Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) 8.6 The student will read and analyze a variety of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

### Resources

Short story “[Dinosaur](#)” by Bruce Holland Rogers

Excerpt from [Walden](#), “Where I lived and what I lived For” by Henry David Thoreau

**Procedures:** Students will read “Dinosaur,” then an excerpt from *Walden* to answer questions, make inferences, and draw conclusions based on explicit or implied information.

**Anticipatory set-** have students brainstorm or write about what it means to be successful in life, ask students what they want to be when they grow up, and how they have made decisions that guide their future.

### Dinosaur

By Bruce Holland Rogers, an American short fiction writer (1958- )

When he was very young, he waved his arms, gnashed the teeth of his massive jaws, and tromped around the house so that the dishes trembled in the china cabinet. “Oh, for goodness sake,” his mother said. “You are not a dinosaur! You are a human being!” Since he was not a dinosaur, he thought for a time that he might be a pirate. “Seriously,” his father said at some point, “what do you want to be?” A fireman, then. Or a policeman. Or a soldier. Some kind of hero. But in high school they gave him tests and told him he was very good with numbers. Perhaps he would like to be a math teacher? That was respectable. Or a tax accountant? He could make a lot of money doing that.

It seemed a good idea to make money, what with falling in love and thinking about raising a family. So he was a tax accountant, even though he sometimes regretted that it made him, well, small. And he felt even smaller when he was no longer a tax accountant, but a retired tax accountant. Still worse, a retired tax accountant who forgot things.

He forgot to take the garbage to the curb, forgot to take his pill, forgot to turn his hearing aid back on. Every day it seemed he had forgotten more things, important things, like which of his children lived in San Francisco and which of his children were married or divorced.

Then one day when he was out for a walk by the lake, he forgot what his mother had told him. He forgot that he was not a dinosaur. He stood blinking his dinosaur eyes in the bright sunlight, feeling the familiar warmth on his dinosaur skin, watching dragonflies flitting among the horsetails at the water’s edge.

**Lesson one objectives:** The student will read and analyze a variety of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

**Questions:**

1. Underline a sentence in the first paragraph that you find meaningful, and free write about your thoughts or connections.
2. What do you think ultimately drives the protagonist's choice to become an accountant? Use evidence from the text to support your thoughts.
3. How does the protagonist feel about his choice to become an accountant?
4. What are your thoughts about the resolution of the story?
5. What is the author trying to convey through this story?
6. What is the theme of the passage?

**Lesson two:**

**Objectives:**

Analyze the writer's craft

1. Underline and identify figurative language used in the text.
2. What is the point of view used in the story?

**Lesson Three:**

**Objectives:**

Students will write using a recursive process that includes planning and drafting.

1. Rewrite the first paragraph of "Dinosaur" making yourself the protagonist. Choose a point of view and style to do this effectively.

## Paired Passage

**Background:** Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was an American author, essayist, abolitionist, and philosopher. He was one of the major figures of Transcendentalism, alongside writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller. The following text comes from his best known work, *Walden*, a reflection upon his two years spent living in the wilderness near Walden Pond in Massachusetts.



**Thoreau's Cabin Walden Pond-photo by Anne Pennypacker**

**Excerpt from Walden: “Where I Lived and What I Lived For” by Henry David Thoreau**

Note: As you read, take notes on Thoreau’s use of figurative language.

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.

**Lesson one**

**Objectives:** The student will read and analyze a variety of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

**Questions:**

1. Research the definition **deliberately** in sentence one, and write the one that you feel best suits the author's purpose below. There may be multiple meanings that fit the author's purpose.
2. Research the meaning of the stem *liber* note your findings below:
3. What conclusions can you draw from the author's word choice about how he wanted to live his life?
4. What message is Thoreau trying to convey in this passage?
5. How are the passages alike, whether in terms of subject matter, theme, purpose, tone, etc.?
6. What specific lines and details from each passage echo each other or connect?

### **Lesson two:**

#### **Objectives:**

Analyze the writer's craft

1. Underline and identify figurative language used in the text.
2. What is the point of view used in the story?

### **Lesson Three:**

#### **Objectives:**

Students will organize writing structure to fit form or topic and establish a central idea incorporating, tone, and voice to fit the audience and purpose.

Use [comic creator](#), or another online comic strip creator to establish a meaningful connection between the two passages. You can use Thoreau in dialogue with the protagonist, or Rogers. What might they have in common, what might they talk about, what advice or suggestion might one writer give the other?