

Grade Level: 7/8th Grade Humanities

## **Living in Nature**

**Essential Question:** What skills do we need to become keen observers of nature? How does becoming a better observer help us become better writers?

### **Objective:**

- \*Students will be able to make observations in nature and record details in their journal.
- \*Students will be able to write descriptive sentences using their senses.
- \*Students will be able to write a narrative essay from their journal entry based on their observations in nature.

### **Focusing Quotes:**

*“In society you will not find health, but in nature” (Natural History of Massachusetts)*

*“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.” (Walden)*

*“For I believe that climate does thus react on man, -- as there is something in the mountain-air that feeds the spirit and inspires.” (Walking)*

### **Materials:**

Focusing Quotes

Journal

Place to observe nature

### **Day 1: Introducing Nature and Thoreau**

1. Teacher will introduce the class lesson by asking the questions: Does nature inspire you? What connection do you have to nature? Students will be asked to think for a couple of minutes before asking, which will then lead to a class discussion.
2. Next, the teacher will divide the class into three groups. Each group will get a focusing quote. Students will be asked to analyze the quote and make connections to their own beliefs, experiences, and attitudes towards nature. Each group will share what they discussed with the class.
3. In their groups, students will draw on a picture symbolizing their quote.

## **Day 2: Observations in Nature**

1. Teacher will write the Essential Question: What skills do we need to become keen observers of nature? Students will then do “Think-Pair-Share” with a partner. Students will then be asked to share with the class. The class will discuss strategies and skills needed to make observations in nature.
2. The class will go outside and find a spot in nature to make and record observations. Students will need journals and pencils.
3. Students will sit quietly for a few minutes making observations.
4. The teacher will ask students to record what they see, hear, smell, and feel.
5. Students will then have 10 minutes to write a response to the journal prompt: *Describe a significant memory or experience with nature. Try to remember the sights, sounds, and smells. Did it have a positive or negative effect on your relationship with nature?*
6. The teacher will ask students to circle key terms related to nature or their senses they used in their writing. This will allow students to stay focused and to go deeper in their writing.
7. Students will have 5 minutes to finish their writing.
8. If time permits, students may share their writing with the class.

## **Day 3: Narrative Essay**

1. Teacher will write the Essential Question: How does becoming a better observer help us become better writers? Students will reflect on their observations from the previous day and what impact it had on their writing. This will lead to a whole class discussion. Students may share their writing.
2. Students will then write a narrative essay from their journal entry. Students will focus on using their observations and descriptive sentences utilizing the senses.
3. Students will go through the writing process of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.

### **Assessment:**

Collect students journals and essays and evaluate them based on them following the directions and rubrics.

