Like Emerson, I gained a ‘Circle of Friends’ on this adventure! :-)

The whole gang!
THREADS:
5. Living in Nature
6. Practicing Simplicity

OBJECTIVES:
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the readings of Emerson and Thoreau by reflection and connection to their own creative responses.
3. Students will see how these Transcendentalist Writings are the anchor texts for all Nature writings moving forward in time to the present.
4. Students will view the Historical Landmark sites and homes where these men lived, wrote, and walked around Concord, Mass. “From Revolution to Revelation,” Concord is their place, where they created their Master Works.

STANDARDS:
- **READING:**
- **RI.2:** Determine two or more central ideas of a text . . .
- **RI.5:** Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure . . .
- **WRITING:**
- **W.3:** Write narratives . . .
- **LANGUAGE:**
- **L.4.c.:** Consult general and specialized reference materials . . .
- (looking up the Greek/Latin roots of words)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
- What skills and choices do we need to become keen observers of nature?
- WHERE do YOU go when you want solitude, and to think about important things? WHY do YOU go there?

Lesson #1: “Where’s YOUR Walden?”

THINK: “Close your eyes for a moment (play Nature bird sounds) Think of a place to where you feel GREAT in Nature. You can think,there, away from all the distractions in Life . . .

“Think on that for a moment quietly. Close your eyes, and picture that place.” (Says Teacher)

PAIR: Turn to your shoulder partner (right or left) and SHARE your Walden with that person.
SHARE: Ask the entire class if anyone wants to SHARE their Walden with the class.
Next, you (students) will be sharing a selfie of that place (your Walden.) Add your name/class period, and the name of that exact place. You will then add it into our Shared Google Slides (teacher shows HOW to do this process.) (Jayne G. asked us to do this exercise orally at the beginning our our Seminar. Then, it was on the big sign at Walden Pond. I want to display that visually with Google Slides for each class period. I will SHARE the Slides, so each student can add their individual Walden, and also view everyone else’s as a ‘Getting to Know YOU activity’ and beginning the Nature Reading and Writing Unit. Selfie!! Student needs to be IN the Pic! Student’s name and class period should be clearly visible. ‘My Walden’ is on the first slide.

My Walden is Lake Blanche.
(3 mile hike, 2,500 increase in elevation, Big Cottonwood Canyon, SLC, Utah.)
Assessment: Students will take a selfie at their own Walden, and submit into the Class Google Slides: My Walden is . . . with Name/Class Period/Name of Place clearly visible (12 pt. Font, BOLD) by: DUE DATE: ) Teacher will SHOW SLIDES in class after Due Date)

Lesson #2: Read Primary Source/Text Excerpts:

Next, we read the primary source excerpts that are in the textbook:

1. R. W. Emerson, from Nature: “Nature is a setting . . . (p. 205-6, myperspectives Pearson text) The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.”

2. Emerson, from Self-Reliance: “There is a time in every man’s education . . . (pg. 207-208) To be great is to be misunderstood.”
Emerson's home was always welcoming for his ‘Circle of Friends’:

Emerson’s home is well-preserved, and tour guides take you through it.
Emerson wrote *Nature* while living in The Old Manse:
Replica of chair, in the room where Emerson wrote *Nature*:
Assignments:

- “Quote (cite properly) and Visual” (create your own drawing, or photo of choice that connects for YOU.) DUE:
  - Make your own Bookmark. Find a second “quote” (cite properly) that connects to YOU. Don’t copy my example! Create a Google Doc. and link it into your Google Classroom Assignments by DUE:

Read the Complete Instructions, View Rubric Assessment for each Assignment.

Assessment Requirements:

- “Quote” (must be properly cited)
- Visual (created and connected to quote-see student examples)
- Student may either create a drawing or photo to connect.
- Student adds their own slide into Google Slides for their class period. Name/Class Period must be clearly visual on slide.

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The following is an example of the Bookmark Assignment for The Great Gatsby. Students complete these two assignments for EVERYTHING we read in class, as well as a Six-Word Memoir/”Quote” from the Author OR about one character. So they are quite used to this process by the time we read Emerson and Thoreau, The Transcendentalists.

Bookmark Assignment Directions are in a Google Doc. Within their Google Classroom for English 11:
Bookmark Assignment and Assessment:

The Great Gatsby
By F. S. Fitzgerald

"So, we beat on,
boats against the current,
Borne back
Ceaselessly into the past."
(Fitzgerald, p. 180)

"Quote" (Author, pg. #)

My commentary:
As one stands on the shores
Of the Atlantic Ocean, one might
Consider the past.
We all think about and consider
The past, and our relation to the
Time that has passed us by;
The people who are gone,  
And those who still remain.

Your commentary is unique to YOU!  
You read the quote, and you have  
Remembered it for some reason.  
It meant something to you.  
If you choose a quote about one character,  
You could then use that for your  
Character Chart, and add a visual  
Of that Character.

DO NOT COPY THE QUOTE ABOVE!!  
Don’t Copy, CREATE!!

Assessment Requirements:  
1. Title and Author  
2. Book Cover  
3. “Quote” (cited correctly, Author/ page #)  
4. Your Commentary**** (Key!!)  
5. PROOFREAD!!!

Teacher Examples of Fine Art connections are on top, with the artist cited. Emerson/Thoreau connected quotes underneath the picture.  
Student creative drawings of their “Quote” + Visual (name and class period are on the back of the drawings.)

This wall connects my neighbor, USHistory teacher to my room. The overall Theme of this Unit is: The Individual and Society. The pink card in the middle is also an example of a Six-Word Memoir (Hemingway) I ask my students to write Six-Word Memoirs all the time: about themselves, authors, and characters while we read.
Lesson #3: Journal Writing Prompt

More background information (teacher lecture) on R.W. Emerson. Emerson wrote *Nature*, lived in Concord, Massachusetts, and well understood that Concord was a Landmark from Revolution Times (“shot heard round the world.”) Will show students the Minuteman Statue and that area. “From Revolution to Revelation” (great phrase, Dr. Bob Gross) Emerson began the ‘Transcendentalist Movement’ with his revolutionary ideas of God being found in *Nature*, not in a church setting. He spoke at the Harvard Divinity School graduation in 1838, and basically told them that God was to be found in *Nature*, NOT in a church service. This was revolutionary talk for the son of a long line of ministers. Emerson was expected to follow the family path up to the pulpit.

After this lecture, ask students to write from the following Journal Prompt:

*Have you, or anyone in your family, diverged from your family’s expectations? How so? How and why did you (or someone you know) ‘follow your own path’? Reflect and Connect back to Emerson to begin your response.*
For example, here’s my starter:
(I always complete my assignments/assessments with my students.)

Like Emerson, I chose to follow my own path by moving to Salt Lake City, away from my family in Fairfield, Connecticut, where I was attending Fairfield University. I left to live near mountains because I love to ski . . . (and so on . . . your story will be different, because it will be unique to your Life . . . this is a Free Write, don’t edit, WRITE Freely.)

Assessment:

Students should write at least ONE Paragraph in response to the prompt. You might have them hand it in, submit it online as a Google Exit Ticket, or handwritten as an Exit Ticket for the day’s response. I generally correct these as a completion of one paragraph, but if they want me to READ and RESPOND (they like what they’ve written) then, they Write: READ ME at the top. :-) 

Lesson #4:
Henry David Thoreau
Close Reading, and Vocabulary

We will read together the following excerpts in class. I play the audio, students follow along in their text. They circle/then write in their journal any words that they don’t understand. We will circle back to that ‘understanding Vocabulary’ lesson afterwards. They have a paper and online version of this text, so they can annotate/mark up their paper. I am looking for that active reading: ‘Reading with a Pencil’ and taking notes as we read these difficult and dense texts. This is an ongoing process and standard that we work on throughout the entire school year.

Henry David Thoreau’s excerpts in our text include:

1. From Walden: (pgs. 215-222) “At a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house . . . The sun is but a morning star.”
We will have discussed some background on Thoreau, his connection with Emerson and Concord, Mass. His family’s pencil factory, his surveying, and his ‘Economy’ in his lifestyle. Both Threads: Living in Nature, and Practicing Simplicity will be sewn through the fabric of these lessons.

**Assignment:**

After reading the Walden excerpt, and discussing how Thoreau went to the woods “to live deliberately,” I will ask the students to design their own space to think in nature, and in solitude. Thoreau had a bed, desk, and three chairs in his small cabin.

Students will design their own ‘Walden Cabin’ or “Tiny Home” for their own contemplation in nature (more of a writer’s retreat.)
Inside the replica of Thoreau’s cabin:

Students **must** remember: Thoreau had no electricity (so obviously no cell phones/chargers,) no running water, and no heating or air-conditioning. They must keep within the dimensions of the actual cabin, in order to design their space.

**Economy** (connected with the James Finley graph assignment: Costs/Benefits/Work to pay for materials needed.) Students must come up with a detailed Economy/Business Plan as Thoreau did, answering the Question: How are you going
to pay for those materials? Students will sketch out their floor plan, with the correct dimensions, and furniture.

**READ:** *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg* by D.B. Johnson (Jayne presented to us)

I will show/read aloud this book to my students, to connect with this same idea of Economy. Plus, it’s a fun book, that demonstrates the concept easily with fun pictures. If students decide to buy something for their cabin, they will have to explain how to work for the money to pay it off. They cannot just say, “Mom will give me the money.” However, if there is spare wood, or there is extra furniture to be donated, that is fine.

Next, I will put down the blue painter’s tape on the floor in the hall where we go outside my classroom. There’s enough room for the 35-40 students I may have in a regular English 11 class. The dimensions will be the same as Thoreau’s cabin:
- 10 ft by 15 ft.
- Fireplace, bed, table, desk, and three chairs.
- Thoreau used recycled wood and materials
- Total cost in 1856: $28.12

So, students need to recreate their own floor plan, and the total cost of their building of a cabin in the woods. Like Thoreau, they don’t have to pay for the land (Emerson donated the land to Thoreau.)

Students will complete a chart (similar to the one James Finley had us complete) about all of the materials needed to build their cabin from scratch. If something is to be donated, by whom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of materials: (column one)</th>
<th>Benefit: (two)</th>
<th>Work to pay for this item: (three)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Johanna and Jayne led us on a walk by the river to reflect, take photos, and write.
Assignment: Students will read the Walking sections, and find “one quote” (cited properly) to include within their creative piece. They can either CREATE a poem, a journal entry, a paragraph, or perhaps a dialogue between Thoreau and Emerson while walking through Concord. Any historical details should be accurate to the time (no texting in other words!) but simply Be Creative!

As a class, we will go on one of our “Outdoor Nature Walks” around Wheeler Farm, with the digital photography students. Take a photo, and come back and write creatively, connecting a “quote” from Emerson or Thoreau about walking around in nature, what you see, hear, and feel; connect and reflect upon your own life’s experiences while out in Nature.

Assessment: Check rubric. Requirements include:
- “Quote” (cited properly) from either Emerson or Thoreau about Walking (sauntering around in nature. These men walked 3-4 hours daily in Nature, and then reflected upon their ambles. THINK about that. REFLECT upon that. CONNECT to your own ‘nature walk’ experience.
- Photo in nature (might have animals from Wheeler Farm, might not.)
- Creative Writing: poem, journal response, dialogue, etc. (lots of choices)
- YOUR personal connection is KEY!
- SHARE with your class writing partner for a reader’s response. Some may choose to PUBLISH on our SHARED Class Page.

Johanna took us to the river to write and reflect:
My English 11 students read Siddhartha in English 10, so I can connect the river metaphor quite easily. Also, I discuss the Buddhist philosophy of the river, stepping in and out of the river throughout our lives. This concept connects quite nicely with that ‘river trip’ that Thoreau took with his brother. In English 10, they also explore the ‘Hero’s Journey’ throughout the entire year, so the Thoreau brothers’ river trip could tie in nicely with that as well.

Nature Walkabouts with students:

One of my students asked to go on a ‘Nature Walk.’ We had just finished a Unit, and they had done really well with their work. I try to go on these walks at least once per term, in each of my classes (It doesn’t matter what the class is called, I fit it in!) This particular class was my Grammar Vocabulary class, so I said they would be required to write one paragraph using that week’s vocabulary words, take a photo in Nature, and submit a ‘Perfect Paragraph’ about our walk. They could include dialogue (properly punctuated of course,) and the sights and sounds of Nature. We made the plan.

Then, this same student suggested we go to Chick-fil-A on the way to the park for a quick snack. On Wednesdays, the nearby restaurant was giving one free breakfast item per customer. Great! Then, I decided to contact the manager, and got his email from the Main Office secretary. They do a lot for our students and teachers. I told him our plan, so that his staff would be prepared for my thirty plus teenagers arriving at his store. He said, “Might they each like a chicken biscuit to go along with the free hash brown?” “You bet they would!” I exclaimed, flabbergasted by his generosity. We walked from the high school, stopped for a nice snack, went to the park, and returned to school before the bell for the next class period! We have ninety-minute class periods, so it worked. It was a great Nature Walk with free food as an added bonus!