

Anne Ruka
Unit: The Power of Place
Connecting *Our Town* with *Transcendentalism*
Pembroke High School
80 Learning Lane
Pembroke, MA 02359
Grade: 11
Subject: American Literature
Date: July 18, 2016

Unit Overview:

The following lessons are additions to embellish a unit plan on Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town* (previously submitted to Framingham State University, summer 2014). The original plan is submitted as Appendix A. The purpose of these lessons is to expose students to the writings of Henry David Thoreau and for them to see the inter-connecting ideas of Transcendentalism and the power of place between two works. The following lessons are to be inserted into the original unit as indicated.

Length: The original unit spans approximately three weeks. The new lessons will extend the unit an additional week or more. Each lesson is designed for a 55 minute period.

Unit Objectives:

- Students will understand the key concepts of Transcendentalism and provide evidence of Transcendentalist ideas in the play *Our Town*.
- Students will gain an understanding of who Henry David Thoreau was as a writer and Transcendentalist and be able to identify the ways his life reflected his ideas.
- Students will demonstrate how the setting or sense of place influences characters in a play and real people, including themselves.

Common Core Standards:

- RL.11-12.1/RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RL.11-12.9 Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
- W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Lesson 1: Introduction to a Sense of Place (replaces lesson 1 of original plan)

Objective:

- Students will understand how a place impacts individuals and communities.

Class Activities:

1. Opening activity – Journal entry (10 minutes).
Prompt: Imagine you were writing to someone who has never been to Pembroke, Massachusetts. Write a paragraph describing the town of Pembroke as you see it. Include specific buildings, the landscape, the kinds of people who live there, the way of life, etc.
2. Have a few students volunteer to read their journals. Conduct a class discussion of how each person sees the town – differences/similarities; positives/negatives (10 minutes).
3. Segway into the next activity by telling the students they will be reading a quote about someone else's experiences of a place. Pass out the following worksheet (summarized below; also included as Appendix B) and have students complete independently (15-20 minutes).

Read the following quotation from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau (“The Village”) and then answer the questions that follow.

“After hoeing, or perhaps reading and writing, in the forenoon, I usually bathed again in the pond, swimming across one of its covers for a stint, and washed the dust of labor from my person, or smoothed out the last wrinkle which study had made, and for the afternoon was absolutely free. Every day or two I strolled to the village to hear some of the gossip which is incessantly going on there...As I walked in the woods to see the birds and squirrels, so I walked in the village to see the men and boys...The village appeared to me a great news room...I observed that the vitals of the village were the grocery, the bar-room, the post-office, and the bank; and as a necessary part of the machinery, they kept a bell, a big gun, and a fire engine, at convenient places...”

1. List all the things we know about the **speaker/writer**.
2. What do we know about **where he lives** (house, community)?
3. What might you **infer about the speaker/writer**? Write a sentence or two analyzing him (personality, lifestyle, age, interests, job).
4. What does this **community value**?
5. Can you figure out the time period of this piece? Take a guess and explain.
6. Discuss the relationship of the speaker with his community.

Class Activities (continued):

4. Share answers with a partner, then as a class (10-15 minutes). Students should observe that the speaker/writer was hoeing (implying he may be a farmer), reading and writing in the morning (implying he is disciplined); he bathed (cleanliness is important), etc.

Homework: Students should reflect on the ways the place in the passage is alike/different from their community of Pembroke and how they (students) are alike/different from the speaker in the passage. They should jot down their discoveries/observations in a T-chart or Venn diagram.

Lesson 2 – Introduction to *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify Henry David Thoreau and show how his experience at Walden Pond shaped him and American literature.

Class Activities:

1. Post (on board in the front of the class) the following quote from the first paragraph of *Walden* (“Economy”) and read to students. Direct them to jot down 3-5 questions they can create about the quotation. Examples: Who is speaking? What are “the following pages”? Why did he live alone in the woods? What kind of “labor of my hands” did the writer accomplish? What is a sojourner? (5 minutes).

“When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.”
2. Show youtube video: “Thoreau’s Simple Life at Walden” (5 minutes).
3. Conduct a round robin class discussion (each person in the class contributes something) where students reflect on the following questions -and attempt to answer their own questions - based on the video, Thoreau’s quotes (from today and yesterday), and their homework assignment. Teacher will clarify any misunderstandings about Thoreau/*Walden* (40 minutes):
 - How does the man described in the video compare/contrast to the man described in the passage we read yesterday?
 - How do you think his surroundings shaped his character?
 - What do you think about his experience living at Walden Pond?
 - How is Concord, Massachusetts alike/different from Pembroke, Massachusetts?
 - How does Pembroke influence you and others?
 - How are you alike/different from Henry David Thoreau?
4. After everyone has shared, teacher will explain to the class how Thoreau’s experiences and ideas latched on to many people of his time as well as later writers. They will be reading more about this for homework (5 minutes).

Homework: Students will read a brief biography of Thoreau’s life and an explanation of Transcendentalism and take notes on key concepts. *Elements of Literature, 5th course*, pages 210-212; 230-231.

Lesson 3: Introduction to Thornton Wilder’s play *Our Town*

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain the concept of Transcendentalism.
- Students will show how their community impacts them personally.

Activities:

1. Begin class with a discussion of homework (Thoreau/Transcendentalism). Explain to students that they will be revisiting Thoreau’s work and Transcendentalist ideas in conjunction with reading the play *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder.

2. Resume original lesson plan, day 1: journal and discussion on the genre of drama, oral reading of the beginning of Act 1, discussion of the Stage Manager and setting of the play (see Annex A). Because of the additional class discussion at the beginning of the class, move the class activity (monologue) to become a homework assignment.

Modification to original plan: As students discuss the setting of the play, Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, they will be instructed to consider the setting of Walden as well as their own community as points of comparison/contrast.

Homework: Write a **monologue** about Pembroke.

- Choose a person or an object to deliver the monologue (as the Stage Manager acted as a guide to introducing Grover's Corners in *Our Town*).
- Consider your audience to be outsiders to Pembroke.
- Stay true to the voice and point of view of your **speaker**. A monologue is meant to be *spoken*. It should not be the same as the paragraph you previously wrote for lesson 1 in your journal, although you may use some of the same details.
- Include traits of Pembroke that you consider important for an outsider to know.

Share monologues during the next class period.

Continue with original unit plan, adjusting times as necessary (days 2-4).

New Lesson: The Ordinary Transcends the Mundane

This lesson follows day 4 of the original unit (Appendix A) – following the completion of Act 1 of *Our Town*.

Objective:

- Students will be able to show how an ordinary activity can symbolize abstract ideas.

Class Activities:

1. Brief discussion/recap of Act 1 of *Our Town*. Remind students how Wilder used ordinary, daily activities, such as shucking peas or chopping wood, as a vehicle to address complex ideas, such as love and respect – (10 minutes).
2. Pass out the worksheet on Thoreau's "Bean Field" (Appendix C). Explain how Thoreau also used an ordinary activity to express complex ideas. Instruct students to read the quote from the hand-out and answer the questions that follow – (15 minutes).
3. Assemble students into groups of 3-4 and complete the following (30 minutes):
 - Share answers from "The Bean Field" hand-out. Teacher will circulate to assess understanding and clarify misconceptions.
 - Create a new scenario using something ordinary to express complex ideas. The end result can be expressed through a skit, a prose piece, a poem, a drawing, or a song.
 - Each group will present their products at the end of class or the next class period if more time is needed.

Homework: Begin reading Act 2 of *Our Town*.

Begin next class with presentations/overall discussion of previous day's lesson.
Continue with original lesson plan (Appendix A), day 5.

New Lesson: A Life of Purpose

This lesson replaces the original Day 8 lesson – the conclusion of the play.

Objective:

- Students will be able to summarize the main ideas from Act 3 of *Our Town*.
- Students will be able to analyze characters from the play *Our Town* in relation to a quotation from Thoreau.
- Students will be able to support their positions with textual evidence.

Class Activities:

1. Journal and discussion from original plan (20 minutes)
 - Journal response: What happens in Act 3? How is it different from Acts 1 and 2? How did you feel at the conclusion of the play? What questions do you have?
 - Class discussion of Act 3 based on journals.
2. Four corners activity (35 minutes):
 - At the four corners of the room, post signs that read STRONGLY AGREE, SOMEWHAT AGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE, and SOMEWHAT DISAGREE.
 - Present the students with the following quote from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* ("Economy): "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation."
 - Students must stand in the corner of the room that best represents their opinions of this quote as it pertains to the characters in the play *Our Town*. The groups will confer with each other discussing exactly what this quote means and designate different group members to represent different characters from the play *Our Town* who best apply to the quotation. Each group will then be asked to defend their position to the other groups. Students may move from one corner to another at any time that their position changes based on evidence presented.

Homework: Write a reflection on the day's four-corner activity. Discuss in which corner you ended up and why. Find three quotes from the play to defend your position. Discuss your own personal opinion of this quote as it relates to people in general today – and to you personally.

New Lesson: Quotation Application

(next day)

Objectives:

- Students will be able to analyze characters from the play *Our Town* in relation to a quotation from Thoreau.
- Students will apply key concepts from a Thoreau quotation to their own lives.

Class Activities:

1. Students will share their homework assignments with a partner. Ask a few students to share with the class (10 minutes).

2. Review the concepts of Transcendentalism (5 minutes).
3. Quote Application (40 minutes) - Divide students into groups of 4-5. Pass out the Thoreau quotation sheet (Appendix D) and assign each group one quote or allow students to choose one. Instructions:
 - Someone in the group will read their assigned quotation out loud.
 - Group will discuss the general meaning of the quotation. If any words in the quotation are unfamiliar, students should look up the definitions.
 - Group will discuss how the quote relates to the characters in the play *Our Town*. They may choose one or more than one character to relate to the quote.
 - Find 2-3 quotations from *Our Town* to support their positions.
 - Present findings to the class.

Homework: Students will choose a different quote than the one their group discussed and write a reflection of how that quote pertains to them *personally*. Their chosen quote may be taken from the quotation sheet or from one found through their own research using The Walden Woods Project Quotation page or another reputable source.

Share homework reflections the next day in small groups. Continue with original lesson plan, day 8 – beliefs/traditions about death and the after-life.

Modified Lesson: Field Trip and Stage Reading of Act 3 of *Our Town*

This unit is modified from Day 13 of original unit (Appendix A).

Original plan included a field trip to Mount Auburn Cemetery (Cambridge, MA) to view a stage reading of *Our Town*. Instead, students will take a field trip to the local cemetery and participate in a stage reading of Act 3 of the play. Students will ponder the key questions below and share their thoughts at the conclusion of the performance.

Key Questions:

- How does a stage reading/performance of the play differ from a silent reading and/or classroom reading?
- How does physical setting of where the play is read/performed affect the overall essence and meaning of the play?

Homework: Reflect on the experience of participating in or viewing the stage reading of *Our Town* in the cemetery. Reflect on your own ideas of life, death, and the after-life. Has reading this play changed any of your perceptions? Discuss.

Unit Assessments:

Journal entries, homework assignments, class discussions, and group work are graded on a three-point scale. Grades are averaged and each is counted as a test grade at the end of the term.

3=100/A 2.5= 90/A- 2=80/B 1.5=70/C 1=60/D less than 1=F

Each journal and homework assignment will be graded using the following criteria:

3 – Assignment is thoroughly and insightfully completed.

2 – Assignment is complete and accurate but may lack adequate analysis.

1 – Assignment was attempted but incomplete, inaccurate, superficial, or off topic.

Class Discussion Criteria:

- 3 – Student demonstrated active listening skills. Verbal participation was thoughtful and insightful.
- 2 – Student demonstrated active listening skills most of the time. Verbal participation showed effort, but may have lacked adequate detail or analysis.
- 1 – Student seemed distracted at times. Comments were superficial, inaccurate, or off topic.
- 0 – Student did not demonstrate active listening skills most of the time and/or did not participate verbally.

Group Work Participation:

- 3 – Student was actively engaged in the group activity at all times and made significant contributions to the end product.
- 2 – Student was actively engaged in the group most of the time and made a solid contribution to the end product.
- 1 – Student was partially engaged in the group and contributed minimally to the end product.
- 0 – Student was not actively engaged in the group and made no significant contribution to the end product.

Group Products:

- 3 – Product exceeds the standards.
- 2 - Product meets the standards.
- 1 – Product falls short of the standards.
- 0 – Product does not meet the standards.

APPENDIX A

Our Town by Thornton Wilder Unit Plan

**This unit was designed for a Junior American Literature class in Pembroke High School. Each class period is 55 minutes. The entire unit should take 15 class periods (3 weeks).*

Unit Objectives:

- Students will
 - read the play *Our Town*
 - experience a stage reading of the play
 - visit Mount Auburn (or a local) cemetery
- Students will be able to
 - analyze and explain the meaning and significance of the title of the play
 - understand the structure of the play and its historical significance
 - appreciate different ways people react to and respond to death
 - traditions and customs – funerals, memorials, burials
 - interpret scenes in the play in multiple ways and provide textual evidence that supports various interpretations
 - understand how different elements shape our experiences of the play
 - point of view
 - staging
 - identify themes in the play and explain how the themes are present in the text
 - the cycle of life and death
 - the sense of eternity in human beings
 - nature
 - time
 - make connections between the play and their own lives
 - by exploring what the idea of eternity means to them
 - by investigating their own town or towns and recognizing the unique qualities as well as the universal elements of them
 - by identifying what is most important to them in life
 - identify elements of the author's life that may have influenced him to write *Our Town*
 - relate the importance of specific elements of a play to *Our Town* and show how each element shapes our experience viewing the play (setting, sequence of events, sound effects, diction, staging)
 - identify the influences of Transcendentalism and other religious beliefs and philosophies in the play

Outline

Day 1: Introduction to the play

- The play form
- Role of Stage Manager
- Setting: Grover's Corner's

Day 2: Act I

- Point of view
- Characterization

Day 3: Act I (continued)

- Different interpretations of characters/scene

Day 4: Act I (continued)

- Development of characters

Day 5: Act 2

- Progression of events
- Development of characters

Day 6: Act 2 (continued)

- Arrangement of events
- Changing role of Stage Manager changing

Day 7: Act 2 (continued)

Days 8-11: Act 3 and the overall play

- Themes
- Religious/Philosophical Beliefs and Customs
- Transcendentalism
- Research Project

Day 12: Thornton Wilder's life

Day 13: Field Trip: View a Stage Reading of the Play at Mount Auburn Cemetery

Days 14-15: Follow-up Activities; Final Reflections

Our Town Lesson Plan

Day 1:

Key Questions:

- What is a play and how is it different from a novel, short story or poem?
- How is the play *Our Town* different from a typical play with which most people are familiar?
- How is Grover's Corners, New Hampshire of 1901 the same/different from Pembroke, Massachusetts today?
- What is the role of the Stage Manager in *Our Town*?

Activities:

1. Begin class with a journal prompt:
What is a play and how is it different from a novel, short story or poem? Have you ever been to or acted in a performance of a play? If so, how is it different from watching a movie or seeing a TV show? Describe your experiences. How is reading a play different from watching it? (10 minutes)
2. Share journals. (5-10 minutes)
3. Read Act I of *Our Town* (pages 5-8) aloud (teacher or student volunteer). (5 minutes)
4. Discuss. (15-20 minutes)
 - How is this play different from what we typically know about a play?
 - Lack of scenery
 - Stage Manager's role in addressing the audience
 - What do we learn so far about "our town"? – Generate a list of student responses on the board.
 - How is Grover's Corner's like/different from Pembroke? List responses on a T-chart.
5. Student assignment: Write a monologue about Pembroke. (10-15 minutes)
 - Choose a person or an object to deliver the monologue.
 - Consider your audience to be outsiders to Pembroke.
 - Stay true to the voice and point of view of your speaker.
 - Include traits of Pembroke that you consider important for an outsider to know.

Homework: Read through the rest of Act 1.

Our Town Lesson Plan

Day 2:

Key Questions:

- What elements shape a particular point of view?
- How does point of view shape a text and its interpretation of it?
- How are characters developed in a text – and is character development different in a play than in a novel or short story?
- How can a character be portrayed in different ways in a stage production? What effect does this have on the play as a whole?
- How can we justify different interpretations of a character in a production – or can we?

Activities:

1. Begin by sharing monologues (from Day 1) in groups of five. Choose one of the more interesting monologues from each group to share to the entire class. (10 minutes)
2. Discuss how point of view of the imaginary speaker as well as the perspective of the writer shapes the content and tone of the monologue. Relate this to *Our Town* by discussing how the Stage Manager might shape our perspective of Grover's Corners (5-10 minutes)
3. Whole class discussion of Act I (10-15 minutes)
 - What happens in Act I?
 - Which scenes seem most significant? Why?
 - Do you notice any themes developing? What are they?
 - What is the role of the Stage Manager: omniscient narrator, character, observer, God, other?
 - Which characters seem most important to the play as a whole? Why?
4. Character analysis activity: (15-20 minutes)

Divide students into small groups or pairs and have them delve into one particular character. Find quotes to support your answers to the following questions:
What do we know about your character from...

 - the Stage Manager?
 - their own words?
 - their actions?
 - what others say to them or about them?

Key characters: Dr. Gibbs, Mrs. Gibbs, George, Mr. Webb, Mrs. Webb, Emily, Simon Stimson, Mrs. Soames

Homework Discussion Questions:

- What information do we learn about Grover's Corners from "the experts" – Professor Willard and Mr. Webb?
- Why does Rebecca mention a letter by Jane Crofut at the end of Act 1? Comment on the significance of it. How do you feel about the concept expressed in the address?

Begin reading Act 2

Our Town Lesson Plan

Day 3:

Key Questions:

- How is reading about a character and seeing the performance of a character different?
- What factors influence a director's choices in staging a play?

Activities:

1. Have small groups from Day 2 meet to further discuss their assigned characters. Based on textual evidence, each group must generate a list of three adjectives that best describe their character.
2. Groups will then share their findings (quotes, adjectives, overall impressions of their assigned character) with the class. If several groups have the same character, note and discuss possible different conclusions each group draws about a similar character and discuss reasons for possible discrepancies.
3. New activity – form new groups. Each group will consist of 2 actors and 2 directors. Each group will discuss and practice how to stage a given scene. Directors must decide how the characters will deliver their lines and what actions they should take to create a particular impression.
4. Each group will perform the same scene before the class. Possible scene: Emily and Mrs. Webb shelling beans together.
5. Class will discuss how each scene was performed, noting different choices made by directors and actors and explaining how these choices impact the overall impression of the scene.

Homework: Students will reflect upon the day's activities in their journal, noting how each performance differed and commenting on the effectiveness of each. Students will then choose another scene from Act I and analyze how the scene might be staged in two different ways to create two different impressions.

Day 4

See Key Questions from Day 3

Activities:

1. Students will meet in the groups of four from yesterday. Each group will consist of 2 actors and 2 directors. Students will switch roles – students who were directors yesterday are now the actors; actors are now directors. Each group will discuss and practice how to stage a different scene. Directors must decide how the characters will deliver their lines and what actions they should take to create a particular impression.
2. Each group will perform the same scene before the class. Possible scene: George and Mr. Gibbs talking about George chopping wood.
3. Class will discuss how each scene was performed, noting different choices made by directors and actors and explaining how these choices impact the overall impression of the scene.

Homework:

Reflect on the activity in journal. Students should comment on which role they preferred: actor or director. List benefits and challenges of each.

Finish reading Act 2.

Our Town Lesson Plan

Days 5-7:

Key Questions:

- How have the characters changed? Why?
- How is time arranged in this scene? What impact does it have on the audience?
- How has the role of the Stage Manager changed? What is the significance of this change?

Day 5:

Activities:

1. Journal reflection: What happens in Act 2? Which scenes seem most important? Which characters seem to have changed? How? How has the town changed? What things stayed the same?
2. Class discussion of journal notes.
3. Students will create a time line of events from Acts 1 and 2 – in chronological order.
4. Students will note that some events occur as flashbacks in the play and will discuss why.

Homework: Finish time lines. Add quotes of significant events.

Day 6:

Activities:

1. Share timelines and discuss how the events are not in chronological order.
2. Discuss how George and Emily have changed. Review Act I and note any lines that may have foreshadowed their budding romantic relationship.
3. In small groups, have students select their own scenes to act out. The scene should reflect some element involving character change. Practice and prepare to present tomorrow.

Homework: Begin reading Act 3.

Day 7:

Activities:

- Groups will present their scenes and explain why they chose them.
- Class discussion of significant scenes and character changes.

Homework: Finish reading Act 3

Day 8

Key Questions:

- What message does *Our Town* send its audience?
- What overall themes are present in *Our Town*?

Activities:

- Journal response: What happens in Act 3? How is it different from Acts 1 and 2? How did you feel at the conclusion of the play?
- Class discussion of Act 3 based on journals.
- Class discussion of death and the after life. Brainstorm and make a list of beliefs and practices that the students know about this topic. Some possibilities:
 - Ancient Egyptians believed that the dead brought objects with them to the afterlife; therefore they buried items with them
 - Ancient Greeks believed in a physical afterlife of pleasure or pain
 - Reincarnation
 - Heaven and Hell
 - Funerals and wakes
 - Memorial services
 - Jewish tradition of covering mirrors when someone passes dies

Homework: Students will read an excerpt from Ralph Waldo's Emerson's essay, *Nature* and make connections with Emerson's Transcendentalist beliefs and Wilder's play *Our Town*.

Days 9-11

Key Questions:

- What religious or philosophical beliefs about life, death, and eternity are supported by Thornton's portrayal of events in Act 3?
- How can literature affect an individual's understanding of these topics?

Activities:

- Journal Response: What are your own personal views of life, death, and eternity?
- Student pairs or groups of three will be given different topics to research. Each topic will reflect a different religious belief or philosophy concerning life after death.
 - Christianity
 - Judaism
 - Buddhism
 - Islam
 - Confucianism
 - Hinduism
 - Reincarnation
 - Existentialism
- Students will have two days in the library to research their topic and prepare a 3-5 minute presentations to share with the class on Day 11.

Essay Assignment: Write an expository essay showing how one or more religious beliefs and/or philosophies are supported (or not supported) by the play *Our Town*. Students will need to provide textual support from the research project and the play itself to prove their position. Essay will be assessed using the Common Core standards and rubrics. Due in 5 days.

Pembroke High School English Department
Informative Essay Rubric - Grades 11-12

	Exceptional	Skilled	Proficient	Developing	Inadequate
Focus: <i>The text focuses on a topic to inform a reader with ideas, concepts and information that creates a unified whole</i>	The text clearly focuses on a compelling topic that informs the reader with ideas, concepts and information that creates a unified whole.	The text focuses on an interesting topic that informs the reader with ideas, concepts and information that creates a unified whole.	The text has a topic that informs the reader with ideas, concepts and information that creates a unified whole.	The text has an unclear with some ideas, concepts and information.	The text has an unidentifiable topic with minimal ideas, concepts and information.
Development: <i>The text presents facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations and examples. The text provides a conclusion that supports the topic and examines its implications and significance.</i>	The text provides significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations and/or examples that thoroughly develop and explain the topic. The text provides an engaging conclusion that supports the topic and examines its implications and significance.	The text provides relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations and/or examples that sufficiently develop and explain the topic. The text provides a competent conclusion that supports the topic and examines its implications and significance.	The text provides facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations and/or examples that develop the topic. The text provides conclusion that supports the topic and examines its implications and significance.	The text provides facts, definitions, details, quotations and/or examples that attempt to develop and explain the topic. The text may provide a conclusion that supports the topic.	The text contains limited facts and examples related to the topic. The text may or may not provide a conclusion.
Audience: <i>The text anticipates the audience's background knowledge of the topic. The text includes formatting, graphics, and/or multimedia when useful in aiding comprehension.</i>	The text consistently addresses the audience's knowledge level and concerns about the topic. The text includes effective formatting, graphics, and/or multimedia that enhance comprehension.	The text anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns about the topic. The text includes appropriate formatting, graphics, and/or multimedia that strengthen comprehension.	The text considers the audience's knowledge level about the topic. The text includes formatting, graphics, and/or multimedia that aid comprehension.	The text illustrates an inconsistent awareness of the audience's knowledge level about the topic. The text may include some formatting, graphics, and/or multimedia that may be distracting or irrelevant.	The text lacks an awareness of the audience's knowledge level about the topic. The text includes limited or inaccurate formatting, graphics, and/or multimedia that impede comprehension.
Cohesion: <i>The text explains the relationship between ideas and concepts. The text includes appropriate and varied transitions and syntax.</i>	The text strategically uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text explains the relationship between the topic and the examples and/or facts.	The text skillfully uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text identifies the relationship between the topic and the examples and/or facts.	The text uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text connects the topic and the examples and/or facts.	The text contains limited words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text attempts to connect the topic and the examples and/or facts.	The text contains few, if any, words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text does not connect the topic and the examples and/or facts.
Language and Style: <i>The text presents a formal style and objective tone and uses language, vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile and analogy to manage the topic.</i>	The text presents an engaging, formal, and objective tone. The text uses sophisticated language, vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.	The text presents a formal, objective tone. The text uses precise language, vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.	The text presents a formal, objective tone. The text uses relevant language, vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.	The text illustrates a limited awareness of formal tone. The text attempts to use relevant language, vocabulary, and some techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy.	The text illustrates a limited or inconsistent tone. The text uses imprecise language, vocabulary, and limited stylistic techniques.
Conventions: <i>The text demonstrates standard English conventions of usage and mechanics along with discipline specific requirements. (MLA format).</i>	The text intentionally uses standard English conventions of usage and mechanics along with discipline – specific requirements (MLA format).	The text demonstrates standard English conventions of usage and mechanics along with discipline – specific requirements (MLA format) - may include a few minor errors that do not detract from the text.	The text demonstrates standard English conventions of usage and mechanics along with discipline – specific requirements (MLA format) – may include a few minor errors.	The text demonstrates some accuracy in standard English conventions of usage and mechanics and some attempt to follow discipline-specific requirements.	The text illustrates inaccuracy in standard English conventions of usage and mechanics and lack of discipline-specific requirements.

***Our Town* Lesson Plan**

Day 12:

Key Questions:

- What factors in Thornton Wilder's life can be seen in *Our Town*?
- What social, religious, or philosophical beliefs were prevalent in the 1930's that may have influenced Wilder in writing *Our Town*?

Activities:

- Brainstorm ideas of what students know about the 1930's social, historical, political, geographical makeup (U.S.) and list ideas on the board.
- Pass out copies of notes on Thornton Wilder's life (from teacher toolbox) and ask students to read.
- Have students work together in groups of 2-3 and make connections between Wilder's life and the play.
- Share ideas to the class as a whole.

Homework: Respond to the question - Which aspect of Wilder's life do you think was most influential in shaping the play *Our Town*? Why? Support your point through evidence from the play.

Our Town Lesson Plan

Day 13:

Key Questions:

- How does a stage reading/performance of the play differ from a silent reading and/or classroom reading?
- How does physical setting of where the play is read/performed affect the overall essence and meaning of the play?
- What connections can be made between Mount Auburn Cemetery and the play *Our Town*?

Activities:

- Field Trip: view stage reading of *Our Town* – Acts 1 and 2 indoors; Act 3 outside in Mount Auburn Cemetery.
- Walk through the cemetery before or after the play.
- Note connections between the parts of the cemetery (trees, plants, tombstones) and the play through personal observation, journal writing and group discussion.

Day 14:

Key Questions:

Same as Day 13

Activities:

- Continue discussion from Day 13
- Create a “map” of Pembroke, noting things of importance to you, the student

Homework: Finish MAP

Day 15:

- How can each individual’s experiences shape their perceptions of a place?

Activities:

- Share maps of Pembroke; discuss differences
- Revisit monologues, created on Day 1; discuss how and why students may choose to change parts of it.

Homework: Journal Reflection – How has this unit shaped your views of life, death and eternity? What questions does this play bring up?

APPENDIX B

Read the following quotation from *Walden* (“The Village”) by Henry David Thoreau and then answer the questions that follow.

“After hoeing, or perhaps reading and writing, in the forenoon, I usually bathed again in the pond, swimming across one of its covers for a stint, and washed the dust of labor from my person, or smoothed out the last wrinkle which study had made, and for the afternoon was absolutely free. Every day or two I strolled to the village to hear some of the gossip which is incessantly going on there...As I walked in the woods to see the birds and squirrels, so I walked in the village to see the men and boys...The village appeared to me a great news room...I observed that the vitals of the village were the grocery, the bar-room, the post-office, and the bank; and as a necessary part of the machinery, they kept a bell, a big gun, and a fire engine, at convenient places...”

1. List all the things we know about the **speaker/writer**.
2. What do we know about **where he lives** (house, community)?
3. What might you **infer about the speaker/writer**? Write a sentence or two analyzing him (personality, lifestyle, age, interests, job).
4. What does this **community value**?
5. Can you figure out the time period of this piece? Take a guess and explain.
6. Discuss the relationship of the speaker with his community.

APPENDIX C

Read the following excerpt from *The Bean Fields in Walden*.

“Meanwhile my beans, the length of whose rows, added together, was seven miles already planted, were impatient to be hoed, for the earliest had grown considerably before the latest were in the ground; indeed they were not easily to be put off. What was the meaning of this so steady and self-respecting, this small Herculean labor, I knew not. I came to love my rows, my beans, though so many more than I wanted. They attached me to the earth, and so I got strength like Antaeus. But why should I raise them? Only Heaven knows. This was my curious labor all summer- to make this portion of the earth's surface, which had yielded only cinquefoil, blackberries, johnswort, and the like, before, sweet wild fruits and pleasant flowers, produce instead this pulse. What shall I learn of beans or beans of me? I cherish them, I hoe them, early and late I have an eye to them; and this is my day's work. It is a fine broad leaf to look on. My auxiliaries are the dews and rains which water this dry soil, and what fertility is in the soil itself, which for the most part is lean and effete. My enemies are worms, cool days, and most of all woodchucks. The last have nibbled for me a quarter of an acre clean. But what right had I to oust johnswort and the rest, and break up their ancient herb garden? Soon, however, the remaining bean will be too tough for them, and go forward to meet new foes...

“It was a singular experience that long acquaintance which I cultivated with beans, what with planting, and hoeing, and harvesting, and threshing, and picking over and selling them- the last was the hardest of all- I might add eating, for I did taste. I was determined to know beans. When they were growing, I used to hoe from five o'clock in the morning till noon, and commonly spent the rest of the day about other affairs. Consider the intimate and curious acquaintance one makes with various kinds of weeds- it will bear some iteration in the account, for there was no little iteration in the labor- disturbing their delicate organizations so ruthlessly, and making such invidious distinctions with his hoe, levelling whole ranks of one species, and sedulously cultivating another. That's Roman wormwood- that's pigweed- that's sorrel- that's piper-grass- have athim, chop him up, turn his roots upward to the sun, don't let him have a fibre in the shade, if you do he'll turn himself t'other side up and be as green as a leek in two days. A long war, not with cranes, but with weeds, those Trojans who had sun and rain and dews on their side. Daily the beans saw me come to their rescue armed with a hoe, and thin the ranks of their enemies, filling up the trenches with weedy dead. Many a lusty crest- waving Hector, that towered a whole foot above his crowding comrades, fell before my weapon and rolled in the dust...

“We are wont to forget that the sun looks on our cultivated fields and on the prairies and forests without distinction. They all reflect and absorb his rays alike, and the former make but a small part of the glorious picture which he beholds in his daily course. In his view the earth is all equally cultivated like a garden. Therefore we should receive the benefit of his light and beat with a corresponding trust and magnanimity. What though I value the seed of these beans, and harvest that in the fall of the year? This broad field which I have looked at so long looks not to me as the principal cultivator, but away from me to influences more genial to it, which water and make it green. These beans have results which are not harvested by me. Do they not grow for woodchucks partly? The ear of wheat (in Latin spica, obsolete specca, from spe, hope) should not be the only hope of the husbandman; its kernel or grain (granum from gerendo, bearing) is not all that it bears.

How, then, can our harvest fail? Shall I not rejoice also at the abundance of the weeds whose seeds are the granary of the birds? It matters little comparatively whether the fields fill the farmer's barns. The true husbandman will cease from anxiety, as the squirrels manifest no concern whether the woods will bear chestnuts this year or not, and finish his labor with every day, relinquishing all claim to the produce of his fields, and sacrificing in his mind not only his first but his last fruits also."

1. Summarize the way Thoreau tends his beans. Include his methods, the length of time he spends on them and the challenges he faces.
2. Find a quote showing how Thoreau feels about his beans.
3. Identify and explain the allusion Thoreau uses in paragraph 2.
4. The final paragraph contains some philosophical thoughts. Describe and respond to them.
5. What are the Transcendentalist components of this passage?

APPENDIX D

Quotations by Henry David Thoreau

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away.”

-*Walden*, Conclusion

“If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.” *Walden*, Conclusion

“What does education do? It makes a straight-cut ditch out of a free, meandering brook.”

— *Journal*, 1850

“How many things can you go away from? They see the comet from the northwest coast just as plainly as we do, and the same stars through its tail. Take the shortest way round and stay at home. A man dwells in his native valley like a corolla in its calyx, like an acorn in its cup. Here, of course, is all that you love, all that you expect, all that you are. Here is your bride elect, as close to you as she can be got. Here is all the best and all the worst you can imagine. What more do you want? Bear hereaway then! Foolish people imagine that what they imagine is somewhere else. That stuff is not made in any factory but your own.”

— *Journal*, 1 November 1858

“I feel that my connection with and obligation to society are still very slight and transient.”

— "Life Without Principle"

“The question is not what you look at, but what you see.”

— *Journal*, 5 August 1851

“Our life is frittered away by detail...Simplify, simplify.”

- *Walden*, Where I Lived and What I Lived For

“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*, Where I Lived and What I Lived For

“I would rather sit on a pumpkin, and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion.”

- *Walden*, Economy

“I have never found a companion that was so companionable as solitude.” - *Walden*, Solitude

“Not till we are completely lost or turned around... do we begin to find ourselves.” *Walden*, The Village)

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