

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

Jacquie Carter  
Nashoba Regional High School  
Bolton, MA  
Approaching Walden Unit  
July 27, 2011

**Subject and Grade Level:** English - American Literature – 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Students

**Title:** *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21<sup>st</sup> Century Eyes*

**Abstract:** Henry David Thoreau wrote, “The value of an experience is measured, of course, not by the amount of money, but the amount of development we get out of it” (Thoreau, Journal vol XIV 274). And –“The chief want is ever a life of deep experiences” (Thoreau, Journal vol 8 181). With this in mind, this unit will focus on how Transcendentalism: an American literary, political, and philosophical movement of the early nineteenth century took the idea of living simply, deliberately and by one’s intuition and put it into action, while discovering a “sense of place”. In addition, it will concentrate on how this philosophical time period, largely through Emerson and Thoreau’s (among others) actions, left a lasting legacy on future movements, environmentalism, and individuals throughout our country and the world. It will examine the primary players and literary works through research, journaling, reading, discussion, self examination and the discovery and importance of our local and natural surroundings.

**Objectives:** Students will learn and be able to:

- understand the characteristics of Transcendentalism and the power it had on the lifestyles, writing and thinking of American Transcendental authors and influential people of the time
- understand how literature and art can be a reaction to the time period or historical events
- connect with the natural world in order to understand the association between individuals and nature
- understand how the Transcendentalists affected the development of American thought
- hone observation skills to better identify the fine points in Nature and in their own lives
- recognize how some elements of Transcendentalism may help them to live more deliberate lives

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

- use note taking and journal writing to process and understand their thinking and analyze the way in which they live their own lives
- use appropriate reading strategies to comprehend and interpret complex texts
- formulate ideas from research, reading, and their own thinking
- make personal connections between literary texts and their own lives
- participate in thoughtful discussions about literature and how they can find connections to their lives
- discover the impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> century transcendentalist in recent history

**Duration: 23 class periods – 3 of which are long blocks of 1 hour and 15 minutes**

**Literature:**

- Excerpts from Henry David Thoreau’s essays, “Life Without Principle,” and “Civil Disobedience”
- Excerpts from Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*: “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” “Economy,” “Solitude,” “Bean Field,” and “Conclusion”
- Excerpts from Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Self-Reliance,” “Harvard Address,” and “Nature”

**Outline:**

<b>Outline: Lessons</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Readings/Activities</b>
<b>Lesson 1:</b> Defining and understanding Transcendentalism <b>Essential Question:</b> • What is Transcendentalism and who played a part in its development?	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction – by teacher -1 day</li> <li>• Research and presentations done in pairs - 2 days in lab</li> <li>• Presentations posted to Edmodo.com</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 2 – Following One’s Intuition</b> <b>Essential Question:</b> What does it mean to follow one’s intuition? What obstacles exist between a self-reliant life and conformity?	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerson’s “Self-Reliance” excerpt – “Harvard Address” Excerpt</li> <li>• Journal Question and discussion on intuition</li> <li>• Gallery Walk</li> </ul>

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

<p><b>Lesson 3:</b> Being awake and alive - Living Simply</p> <p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean to be awake and present?</li> <li>• Is it possible to live simply in today’s society? What can we learn from Thoreau’s writing?</li> </ul>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal Questions – Being Awake – and – Can We Simplify?</li> <li>• Thoreau – excerpts from <i>Walden</i> - “Economy” and “Where I lived and What I Lived For” “Solitude” and “Conclusion”</li> <li>• Watch – 10 minute excerpt from "Life With Principle: Thoreau's Voice in our Time"</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson 4:</b> Learning from Nature – Discovering “A Sense of Place” (4 days)</p> <p>Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we define “Sense of place”?</li> <li>• What is our relationship to Nature?</li> </ul>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerson’s “Nature” (excerpt)</li> <li>• Thoreau’s “Walking” (excerpt)</li> <li>• Nature Journaling</li> <li>• Field trip to “their place”</li> <li>• Homework Chapters 1-7 of <i>Into The Wild</i></li> <li>• Journal Question</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson 5:</b> Identifying how some Individuals find inspiration in Thoreau and Emerson’s writing.</p> <p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there risk in romanticizing Thoreau’s and Emerson’s writing?</li> </ul>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal Question – When do people go too far?</li> <li>• Examine Epigraphs</li> <li>• Homework – Timeline for <i>Into the Wild</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson 6:</b> Taking Action – Marching to Your Drummer</p> <p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the responsibilities of individuals within a society and why do those responsibilities exist?</li> <li>• Does an individual have the ability to change society?</li> </ul>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal Question – Hearing your inner voice</li> <li>• Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” excerpt</li> <li>• Large Group Discussion</li> <li>• Watch DVD "Life With Principle: Thoreau's Voice in our Time" Marching to a different drummer section</li> <li>• Envelope Please - HW</li> </ul>

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

<p><b>Lesson 7:</b> Exploring Modern Transcendentalism  <b>Essential Question:</b> What lasting effects did Transcendentalism have on society and the world?</p>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern Transcendentalist Assignment</li> <li>• Lab 1 Day</li> <li>• Post to Edmod.com</li> <li>• Presentations 1 Day</li> </ul>

### **Lesson Detail:**

#### **Lesson 1:** Understanding Transcendentalism

**Essential Question:** What is Transcendentalism?

#### **Day 1 – 3**

The first three days of this unit will be about establishing an understanding of Transcendentalism and the major players of the movement.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> day, a PowerPoint will be used to introduce students to the key ideas in Transcendentalism.

- They will explore what it means to transcend and the PowerPoint will give an overview of the time period.

During the second day, students will research an author or major contributor of the time and develop a presentation that they will post on Edmodo.com (an educational networking site).

#### **(Appendix A)**

On Day 3, students will focus on exploration of and note taking from the presentations while in the computer lab.

- The students will be asked to find connections between authors and document 5-10 key points regarding each author in their journal.
- For homework students will create an A-Z list of facts, dates, names and places regarding Transcendentalism as an activator for day 4. **(Appendix B)**

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Lesson 2:** Following Ones Intuition

**Essential Questions:** What does it mean to follow one's intuition? What obstacles exist between a self-reliant life and conformity?

### **Day 4-5**

On Day 4, students will showcase their A-Z List in a Gallery Walk to activate a discussion and reinforce what they learned from the on-line presentations. (**Appendix C**)

- Students will read an excerpt from Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and "Harvard Address". They will explore what Emerson meant by self-reliance and how society and conformity often eliminate personal freedom and growth. As they read they will look for examples (similar to the following) that support these ideas and hone their note taking skills at the same time. They will finish this activity for homework.
- Quote -"To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius" (Emerson, *Self Reliance*). Every educated man, he writes, eventually realizes that "envy is ignorance" and that he must be truly himself. God has made each person unique and, by extension, given each person distinct work to do. To trust one's own thoughts and put them into action is, in a very real sense, to hear and act on their spiritual side.

On Day 5 (46 min class), students will share and compare the examples that they found in "Self-Reliance", through a Chalk-Talk activity, to explore Emerson's ideas regarding self-reliance, non-conformity and genius (**Appendix D**).

- Students will then be introduced to the Journal Question Assignment that will reappear throughout the unit. Although the expectations of the assignment will be the same each time, the questions will differ depending on the topic being discussed.
- The journal assignment, the expectations and examples will be reviewed and students will be given an opportunity to ask questions. (**Appendix E**).

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Lesson 3: Being Awake and Alive - Living Simply**

**Essential Questions:** What does it mean to be awake and present?

Is it possible to live simply in today's society? What can we learn from Thoreau's writing?

### **Days 6-8**

In this lesson students will read excerpts from Thoreau's *Walden*. They will read sections of "Economy", "Where I lived and What I Lived For", "Solitude" and "Conclusion".

- Students will select a quote from each piece that demonstrates their understanding of Thoreau's main idea as well as their interpretation of what it means to live deliberately and simply.
- Students will share their quotes in a read aloud activity, which will lead into a large group discussion – The facilitator will highlight and make comparisons about how our society has changed and if it is possible to live a simple life.
- Many students do not know that Thoreau and Emerson were not simply writers, but were known for being wonderful and effective speakers. Emerson was powerful and eloquent, while Thoreau was engaging and humorous. Much of this is lost by merely reading their work.
- To showcase some of these powerful qualities – the class will read their quotes aloud – one following the next.
- Students will choose a quote, stand up and read aloud, moving around the classroom.

On Day 6, (46 min class) students will read excerpts in class from the writing of Thoreau.

- They will use the entire class period to note important quotes using proper MLA citations.
- They will write the quotes on note cards and be prepared to share the quotes on Day 7.

On Day 7, (46 min class) students will participate in a *Penny for Your Thoughts* activity in order to discuss the quotes that they selected and how they support Thoreau's ideas on what he

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

believed was most important in life and why he thought many individuals “slumbered through” It. (**Appendix F**).

On Day 8, – 75 min class - students will watch a 10 minute excerpt from the video, "Life With Principle: Thoreau's Voice in our Time" that makes a connection from Thoreau’s writing to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- A large group discussion will follow which will ask the student’s to draw their own conclusions regarding the video.
- Students will also be presented with a journal question which they will begin in class and finish for homework that will be due on Day 11. ( **Appendix G**).

**Lesson 4:** Learning from Nature – Discovering “A Sense of Place”

**Essential Questions:** How do we define “Sense of Place”? What is your relationship to Nature?

**Days 9 – 13**

Over the next five days of the unit, students will be learning about what it means to have a “sense of place” as well as how to unearth their relationship with nature by reading, journaling, discovering and observing the places that surround them.

On Day 9, (46 min class) students will be presented with a note card as an activator and will be asked to define “sense of place”.

- Students will be paired up to compare their definitions and asked to debate their definitions with their partner. After 5 minutes of collaboration, students will bring one definition to the white board for a large group discussion for about 10 minutes.
- After the large group discussion, the following quote/definition will be posed to the class for further debate and comparison. *“People develop a "sense of place" through experience and knowledge of a particular area. A sense of place emerges through knowledge of the **history, geography and geology** of an area, its **flora and fauna**, the **legends** of a place, and a growing sense of the land and its **history** after living there for a time” (Woods).*

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

- As a summarizer, students will think about and write down the place they will focus on during future assignments.
- Homework – students will read excerpts from Thoreau’s, *Walking* and Emerson’s, *Nature* for Day 10 – see small excerpt of *Walking* below as an example.

“I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks--who had a genius, so to speak, for SAUNTERING, which word is beautifully derived "from idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretense of going a la Sainte Terre," to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, "There goes a Sainte-Terrer," a Saunterer, a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean. He who sits still in a house all the time may be the greatest vagrant of all; but the saunterer, in the good sense, is no more vagrant than the meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea” (Thoreau).

On Day 10 – 46 min class - students will discuss how Emerson, and especially Thoreau, were in touch with a “sense of place”?

- They will be asked to gather evidence that supports their ideas from the texts
- Homework – they will be asked to “saunter” in their chosen place and make note of their observations; in order to really notice Nature (**Appendix H**).

On Day 11 (46 min class) – students will take their notes and observations and share them in small groups of three or four, while considering the following quote that was posed to them regarding a “sense of place” (about 15 minutes).

*“The feel of the sun on your face or the rain on your back, the rough and smooth textures of the land, the color of the sky at morning and sunset, the fragrance of the plants blooming in season, the songs and antics of birds and the cautious ramblings of mammals are **environmental influences** that help to define a place. **Memories** of personal and cultural experiences over time make a place special, **favorite objects** that shape to your hand or body with use, **songs or dances***

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

*that emerge from the people of a place, special skills you develop to enjoy your area--these too help to define a place and anchor you in it. Through time, shared experiences and stories (history) help to connect place and people and to transmit feelings of place from generation to generation” (Woods).*

- In a large group setting, students will share their observations and reactions to other student’s work and ideas (30 minutes).
- Homework - Students will prepare for their walking field trip. They will research the history of the Sawyer House in Bolton as well as Pond Park where the class will spend time discovering the place where they live.

On Day 12 – (75 min class) students will come prepared for a “saunter” through the town and conservation land at Pond Park, in Bolton, MA.

- Society volunteers will weave Bolton's past into its present as they guide the students to such sites as Sawyer House, First Parish Church, the old post office, and Pond Park.
- Homework – Students will reflect in their journals regarding what they took from the field trip, regarding a sense of place and in connection with the following quote. “A space that is an **integral part** and an **extension** of the natural world around it, yet reveals the **individuality** of those who reside there and allows people to **interact meaningfully** to create a deep sense of belonging” (Woods). They will answer the question – what makes their chosen place, “their place” and how does it connect to the views of Thoreau and Emerson? (**Appendix I**).

**Lesson 5** – This lesson will ask the students to look at a real person who was greatly inspired by the Transcendentalists; so much so in fact that his mission was to conduct his life in a similar way as those of Jack London’s characters and Henry David Thoreau’s life. Although this person lived by a certain code, his actions proved to be costly as he ultimately lost his life. Students will read a non-fiction piece to explore both the negative and positive sides of putting words into action.

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

**Essential Questions:** Is there risk in romanticizing Thoreau's and Emerson's writing?

### **Days 14-16**

On Day 14 – (46 min class) Student will reflect on their homework and move to the non-fiction text, *Into the Wild*.

- As an activator for class, students will write two facts that they discovered about the town they live in or cite a connection to Thoreau and Emerson's writing on a note card provided for them (5mins). This will be a wrap-up activity that connects to the prior day's assignment.
- Then as an introduction to the true story, *Into the Wild*, students will be asked if it is possible to go too far when following Thoreau's and Emerson's writing and to record their responses in their journal (5 mins).
- They will then begin reading Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*, a true story about Chris McCandless, a young man inspired by Emerson, Thoreau, Jack London and others, to go into the Alaskan Bush and experience Nature (35 min).
- Homework – students will read up through chapter 7 (pages 1-69), not including the Author's Note.

Day 15 – (46 min class) students will reflect and respond to their reading of *Into the Wild*.

- Students will individually complete guided reading questions for *Into the Wild*. -20 minutes. **(Appendix J)**.
- A large group discussion will follow that will include making connections to the Author's Note and the epigraphs from Thoreau, London and others (25 mins).
- Homework – students will create a time line of Chris McCandless' journey and life and compare it to the Thoreau's writing **(Appendix K)**.

### **Lesson 6:** Taking Action – Marching to Your Drummer

**Essential Questions:** • What are the responsibilities of individuals within a society and why do those responsibilities exist? Does an individual have the ability to change society?

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

Day 16 – (46 min class) This lesson will link the life of Chris McCandless and Henry David Thoreau. It will highlight what Thoreau truly meant by “Civil Disobedience” and Emerson by “Self-Reliance”. It will give students the opportunity to see that although Thoreau and Emerson were often idealistic, and their movement may have died out in theory, it actually lived on, still lives today and can be an inspiration for individuals who are seeking a life that is curious, non-conforming and rich with experience.

- Students will use the McCandless’ time line to discuss the essential questions above as part of a Gallery Walk activity (**Appendix C**).
- Students will post their time-lines around the room and students will carousel through, read and make notes about the different time lines – they may reflect on differences, similarities and omissions that they see as significant (10 min)
- As a larger group they will explore what McCandless thought about his responsibilities to himself, his family and society; as well as to look at his ideas about society and his ideas to change society (35 min).
- Homework – Students will read excerpts from Thoreau’s essay, *Civil Disobedience*

Day 17 – (46 min class) students will write down their definition of civil disobedience on a note card as an activator for class.

- Volunteers will write their definitions on the board for a large group discussion
- Students will then cite examples from Thoreau’s text and will demonstrate their understanding of how Thoreau was civilly disobedient. How Chris McCandless may have been? How the ideas connect to Emerson’s Self-Reliance? Each question will be posed individually for a large group discussion.
- Homework – Journal Question – When is right to take a stand? (**Appendix L**).
- 

Day 18 – (75 min class) students will pass in their journals and a few volunteers will share their ideas. (10 minutes)

- Students will watch the DVD "Life With Principle: Thoreau's Voice in our Time" Marching to a Different Drummer section and will be asked to make connections to their journals as well as Thoreau’s life

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

- Homework – Students will identify an individual who “marches to his or her own drummer” in our time. Someone who has stood up to injustice or hypocrisy in a way that has possibly changed, is changing or you believe, can change society for the better.

### **Lesson 7:** Exploring Modern Transcendentalism

**Essential Question:** What lasting effects did Transcendentalism have on society and the world?

Day 19 -21 (46 min classes) students will be presented with their final, summative assessment; Modern Transcendentalists (**Appendix M**).

- Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and brainstorm ideas.
- Students will go to the computer lab to research a modern transcendentalist.
- Students will research and write a three – four page paper – using MLA formatting- regarding what makes their person a transcendentalist.
- Students will also create a PowerPoint, Glogster or Prezi regarding their transcendentalist as part of their final assessment, which will be posted to Edmodo.com.
- Students will present “their” transcendentalist and on-line presentation to the class
- Students will help prepare using the provided Rubric (**Appendix N**).

### **Link to Massachusetts Language Arts Standards:**

#### **Reading Standards for Literature 6–12**

- 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.
- **7.** 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

#### **Writing Standards for Literature 6-12**

- **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.

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

- **4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

### **Appendix – Individual Lessons**

**Lesson 1** - *What is Transcendentalism and who helped shape this philosophy? Group investigation of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Louisa May Alcott, William Lloyd Garrison, Captain John Brown, and George Ripley*

**Lesson 2** – Following Ones Intuition - Emerson’s “Self-Reliance” excerpt – “Harvard Address” Excerpt -Journal Question and discussion on intuition - Quote Carousel

**Lesson 3** – Being awake and Alive- Living Simply. Journal Questions – Being Awake – and – Can We Simplify? Thoreau – excerpts from *Walden* - “Economy” and “Where I lived and What I Lived For” “Solitude” and “Conclusion” - Watch – 10 minute excerpt from "Life With Principle: Thoreau's Voice in our Time"

**Lesson 4** – Learning from Nature – Discovering “A Sense of Place” - Journals – “Your Place” Field Trip - self exploration, critical thinking and connecting to Nature

**Lesson 5-** *Civil Disobedience excerpt – Self-Reliance excerpt - Into the Wild* Assignments - March to your drummer

**Lesson 6** – Modern Transcendentalist assignment

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Appendix A**

### **The American Transcendentalists**

#### **Lesson 1 – Assignment and Rubric**

#### **Group Members:**

In order to help understand the writings of Thoreau and Emerson as well as the basic concepts of Transcendentalism, you will research one of the following individuals associated with this time period and present your findings to the class. While doing this, please make sure you answer the following questions and make note of important information in connection with the questions below. Your research will be presented to the class using Prezi or PowerPoint.

(A **REMINDER** about presentations – A PPT or Prezi is a powerful and helpful tool in conveying information from the speaker to the audience. To be effective, the presenter must only use bulleted notes and must not read from his or her slides. The presenter must have practiced and or have notes to help guide the presentation. Graphics should enhance, not detract from the presentation).

**Define** (10 pts) 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

What is Transcendentalism and how does the following person fit into this movement and philosophy?

**Biography** (10 pts) 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- Birth, death, marriage, children
- Friendships with, influences from or on other Transcendentalists
- Reactions to issues of the day
  1. Include at least three events or influences that were important to the writer. Choose ones that will stick in the minds of the audience.
  2. At least one of these influences must be historical.

**Quote** (10 pts) 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Include and analyze a quote from, or about the person that connects to the movement or a significant issue of the day.

**Ascetics** (5 pts) 1      2      3      4      5

Include interesting visuals or graphics - including at least one picture of the author

**A works cited page** (5 pts)      1      2      3      4      5

(a slide for the class to view and printed copy to turn in to the teacher) in appropriate MLA format

**Presentation** (5 pts)      1      2      3      4      5

A copy of the presentation is to be uploaded to the class Edmodo website

**Time** (5 pts) - Proper use of lab time and resources

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Appendix B**

### **A-Z Summary**

In the following squares write a fact regarding a Transcendental author, a connection or significant idea that you find while reviewing the presentations on Edmodo.com

A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	

N	
O	
P	
Q	
R	
S	
T	
U	

*Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place  
through 21st Century Eyes*

---

I	
J	
K	
L	
M	

V	
W	
X	
Y	
Z	

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## Appendix C

### Gallery Walk



**Purpose:** To reflect and reinforce the ideas and details surrounding Transcendental authors

**Instruction:**

- Have each student post their A-Z Summaries around the room, ensuring that they are spread out so there is sufficient room between each paper. You may group the students in pairs, however instruct them that this assignment is meant to be done silently.
- Each student should have their journals with them for the walk
- Ask students to read and make note in their journals of any information that they did not come across during their review of the on-line presentations
- Optionally, music can be played in the background – this often helps to keep students focused and silent

**Time:**

- Timing may vary depending on how many students or student groups there are
- Students will spend approximately 2-3 minutes at each station
- When completed, the activity should have reinforced for students some of the larger ideas regarding Transcendentalism

**Assessment –**

- Have students complete a quiz that asks them to write two facts about each author or contributor and five facts about Transcendentalism

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Appendix D**

### **Chalk Talk**

Chalk Talk is a silent conversation in writing that allows students to have an equal opportunity to participate. It is a versatile protocol that can be used for many purposes. Students and teachers love it!

Here's the protocol, adapted from the website of the National School Reform Faculty.

### **Process**

1. The facilitator explains VERY BRIEFLY that Chalk Talk is a silent activity. No one may talk at all and anyone may add to the Chalk Talk as they please.
2. The facilitator writes a relevant question in a circle on the board or chart paper
3. Sample questions:
  - What did you learn today?
  - What are the benefits of conformity?
  - What do you know about Croatia?
  - Is Emerson's ideas realistic or idealistic, why?
4. The facilitator either hands a piece of chalk or marker to every student, or places many pieces of chalk or markers at the board. Students can comment on the initial question—and subsequent comments—by simply drawing a connecting line to the question or comment.
5. People write as they feel moved. They can read and respond to the comments of others. There are likely to be moments where not much seems to be happening—that is natural, so allow plenty of wait time before deciding it is over.
6. How the facilitator chooses to interact with the Chalk Talk influences its outcome. The facilitator can stand back and let it unfold or expand thinking by:
  - circling other interesting ideas, thereby inviting comments
  - writing questions about a participant's comment
  - adding his/her own reflections or ideas
  - connecting two interesting ideas/comments together with a line and adding a question mark

Being an active participant encourages students to do the same kinds of expansions.

7. When it's done, it's done.

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Appendix E**

### **Journal Assignments 25points**

### **Transcendentalism and a Sense of Place**

#### **Guide Lines:**

- Each journal question will have two parts, a preparation to write activity and a journal prompt. Each section is to be completed, however only the response to the journal prompt is to be put in your journal for a grade
- Within the prompt there will be a number of questions posed. Although each question does not have to be answered individually, you should attempt to answer the question as a whole while letting the questions guide you to a complete and thoughtful answer.
- Each answer should be typed, using proper grammar and punctuation, while attempting to choose appropriate and rich diction.
- The journal should be taped, glued or stapled into your journal after it is graded.
- Each journal is worth 25 points and will be graded based on the rubric below.

#### **Journal Rubric**

##### **25 points**

- The journal answers the overall question completely, using thoughtful ideas and quotes that support ideas.
- Correct MLA formatting is used
- Proper grammar, punctuation and sentence structure is used
- Interesting language and rich diction is used

##### **20 points**

- The journal does not answer the question completely, but has thoughtful ideas and uses quotes to support ideas – May lack one other grammatical or formatting issue

##### **15 points**

- The journal is vague and the ideas are not thoughtful, but rushed and incomplete.
- There are more than one formatting, grammatical or language issue.

##### **5-10 points**

- The journal is completed, however there is very little to grade, lacks substance and the basic instructions are not followed.

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Appendix F**

### **Penny for Your Thoughts Activity**

As an activator for discussion regarding the previous night's homework or a selected reading, this activity can work nicely by giving everyone a chance to share their thoughts and ideas, not just a select few.

#### **Set-up**

- As students enter the classroom, give each of them two pennies. If the class is small, hand out three pennies.
- Have the students move their desks, if possible, in a circle or semi-circle so that they can see one another.

#### **Rules**

- Each student must use at least one of his or her pennies to contribute an idea, a quote, a connection to the reading, or in response to another student's ideas.
- A student may give away a penny to a neighbor, as long as they have already used one
- A student may ask a neighbor for a penny if they would like to contribute more than twice, however they may not ask for more than two additional coins - This will allow for a more balanced discussion
- In order to speak, the student must move one of his pennies to the front of his or her desk and the facilitator must call on the individual.
- In order to respond or comment, a student must be chosen and have a penny at the front of his or her desk.

#### **Wrap-up**

- The activity will end after everyone has either used at least one of their pennies, or if there are two minutes left in class in order for the facilitator to summarize the discussion.

*Adapted from a lesson by Kelly Budd at Fitchburg State University*

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## Appendix G

### Reading Response *Walden*: Thoreau

Consider the following passage to get you started; however refer to the excerpt as well when answering the prompt.

**Passage:**

*“Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake.”*

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, “Where I Lived and What I Lived For”

**Preparation to Write:**

Make a list of the activities of your typical day. How much of what you do is routine? Does that routine create a situation where you are just going through the motions and thinking very little about the meaning of your day? Do you spend more of your time “slumbering” through life or are you “awake” and intellectually engaged? Why? At what point in your day do you feel most invigorated, most alive? What would it take to make you “fully awake”?

**Journal Prompt:**

Drawing on the examples from your own life and those of your peers, explain whether or not you agree with Thoreau’s ideas. Are people conscious of their actions? Are they fully awake? What gets in the way of conscious, deliberate living? What does it take to get people to “wake up and move on to a more deliberate life? Give specific examples from both *Walden* and your own experiences.

Rubric – See Journal Assignment Rubric – previously handed out. Also, on Edmodo.com

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Appendix H**

### **“Sauntering” in Your Place Assignment**

In preparation for a journal assignment regarding “sense of place” you will be asked to identify a natural place that is special to you. For homework, you are to complete the following

- Choose “your place”. Go with your first impression or your instincts on this, they rarely guide you in the wrong direction.
- Once you’ve determined “your place”, go there for at least 30 minutes and “saunter” through it while making observations and noting them in your journal.
- Try to answer the following questions in your journal.
- What is it about a place or landscape that fosters an attachment to a place?
- How does place shape people, their personalities, their worldviews?
- What is it about this place that is instinctively special to you?

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## Appendix I

### Reading Response – Sense of Place – Thoreau Journal

Consider the following passage about “sense of place” and the following quote from *Walking* to get you started; however refer to your reading as well when answering the prompt.

#### Passage

I often think that I would like to have my house front on this mass of dull red bushes, omitting other flower plots and borders, transplanted spruce and trim box, even gravelled walks — to have this fertile spot under my windows, not a few imported barrow-fuls of soil only, to cover the sand which was thrown out in digging the cellar. Why not put my house — my parlor — behind this plot instead of behind that meagre assemblage of curiosities — that poor apology for a Nature and art, which I call my front yard? It is an effort to clear up and make a decent appearance when the carpenter and mason have departed, though done as much for the passerby as the dweller within. The most tasteful front-yard fence was never an agreeable object of study to me; the most elaborate ornaments, acorn tops, or what not, soon wearied and disgusted me. Bring your sills up to the very edge of the swamp then, (though it may not be the best place for a dry cellar,) so that there be no access on that side to citizens. Front-yards are not made to walk in, but, at most, through, and you could go in the back way.. — (Thoreau, *Walking*).

*The feel of the sun on your face or the rain on your back, the rough and smooth textures of the land, the color of the sky at morning and sunset, the fragrance of the plants blooming in season, the songs and antics of birds and the cautious ramblings of mammals are **environmental influences** that help to define a place. **Memories** of personal and cultural experiences over time make a place special, **favorite objects** that shape to your hand or body with use, **songs or dances** that emerge from the people of a place, **special skills** you develop to enjoy your area--these too help to define a place and anchor you in it. Through time, shared experiences and stories (history) help to connect place and people and to transmit feelings of place from generation to generation (Woods).*

#### Preparation to Write:

How can the following quote be connected to Thoreau’s excerpt from *Walking* or to Emerson’s *Nature*?

“A space that is an **integral part** and an **extension** of the natural world around it, yet reveals the **individuality** of those who reside there and allows people to **interact meaningfully** to create a deep sense of belonging” (Woods).

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

### **Journal Prompt:**

After spending time in “your place” and your surrounding town, what observations can be made? Were you surprised at what you saw? What is special about “your place”, historically, sentimentally, and environmentally? What is your understanding of a “sense of place”? Do you feel we are losing a “sense of place”? Did Thoreau have a sense of place? Do you? Explain and connect to or in opposition to Thoreau’s ideas.

Rubric – See Journal Assignment Rubric – previously handed out. Also, in the library on Edmodo.com

*Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place  
through 21st Century Eyes*

---

Appendix J

Into The Wild

Assignment #1 Pages 1-69 (Chapter 1-7)

Start date:

In-class and HW reading due:

Class Discussion:

Assignment Due:

**PART ONE:** Answer the following questions thoughtfully—in other words, use strong diction and explain thoroughly.

1. Why does Krakauer begin the account of McCandless' odyssey with Gallien dropping him off in Alaska and then shift in the next chapter to hikers finding Chris's dead body in the bus? (Please, I beg of you, do NOT say "to get the reader's attention"...).
2. How does Chris McCandless differ from his "alter ego", Alex Supertramp? How are they the same?
3. What rhetorical devices has Krakauer used thus far in the book that reveals his feelings about McCandless? Choose one and write one paragraph about it; be sure to cite examples from the text.
4. What elements of Transcendentalism do you find in McCandless? Explain, citing the text.
5. In the "Author's Note" at the front of the book, please turn to the last paragraph and re-read it. Krakauer says, "I will leave it to the reader to form his or her own opinion of Chris McCandless." What is your opinion of this man thus far? Why do you feel this way? At this point, can you tell how Krakauer feels about McCandless?

**PART TWO:** Read the Author's Note – Does your opinion of Krakauer change?

*Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place  
through 21st Century Eyes*

---

Appendix K

*INTO THE WILD*

TIME LINE

Assignment

**PART THREE:** For Homework - Create a timeline of McCandless' journey from pages 1-69. Be as specific as possible, noting days, months, people and the year as well as the states/cities and sights he sees. What motivations can you find that influence his journey?

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## **Appendix L**

### **Reading Response - Civil Disobedience – Thoreau Journal**

Consider the following passage and quotes to get you started; however refer to your reading as well when answering the prompt.

In discussing the role of the individual, and which quote best outlines your philosophy?

#### **Preparation to Write:**

1. “if the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go... perchance it will wear smooth - certainly the machine will wear out.... If it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then , I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine.” Thoreau
2. "an individual must do what his city or country demands of him or he must change their view of what is just." Socrates
3. "ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country."  
Kennedy

#### **Journal Prompt:**

What problems or limitations do you see with the various views? What should be the relationship between the individual and the government? What is the best reason (or what are the best reasons) for obeying the law? Are there some circumstances that outweigh these reasons? Is there ever a valid reason for breaking a law? What should the consequences be for someone who breaks the law because of moral convictions? Can you see yourself breaking a law in order to obey a higher principle? Explain and connect to or in opposition to Thoreau’s ideas.

Rubric – See Journal Assignment Rubric – previously handed out. Also, on Edmodo.com

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## Appendix M

## “Modern” Transcendentalists”

Research a modern (or near-modern) example of the transcendentalists and present your findings to the class according to the following criteria:

1) Thoroughly **explain your example**:

- What is their purpose/goal?
- Background info: what motivates them? Why are they doing it?
- Who are their role models?
- How do they go about achieving their goal?
- How are they viewed by society?
- Are they successful? What impact have they had?
- Are they on solo missions or out to change the world?

2) Explain how they **connect to the Transcendentalists** and provide additional support by **citing three specific passages** from Emerson or Thoreau

3) Our culture is reflected through our art, so you will need an **artistic element** to further prove your point—**music AND art**. You must explain how the music and art **simultaneously connect to your example AND to Transcendentalism**.

- **ART**: photograph, poster, drawing, painting, etc...(It can either directly connect to movement or relate in a more general way which you will explain during your presentation)
- **MUSIC**: more than likely you will rely on the lyrics, but I could easily imagine someone making a point by just using a Punk Rock instrumental

### Examples for Environmentalism – Civil Rights

- **ART**—a photograph of an Earth First Member chained to a tree in order to prevent loggers from cutting it down – or a photo of the individual who stood in front of the tank in Tiananmen Square
- **MUSIC**—Joni Mitchell singing “Big Yellow Taxi” (“They paved paradise / And put up a parking lot...” or Neil Young – “After the Gold Rush” - “Look at Mother Nature on the run In the nineteen seventies”) or Woody Guthrie, during the Dust Bowl era.

*Note—the art and music alone do not support your claim—you must explain how they connect*

4) **Choose from among the following or find a modern example of your own :**

- Civil/Human Rights—MLK, Gandhi, Recent – Bono – Princess Diana, Elizabeth Taylor - Amnesty International, boycotts –
- Women’s Movement
- Anti-War Movement
- Environmentalist Movement—Earth First!, Greenpeace, Sierra Club -

## *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

- Animal Rights—PETA
- Communes, Alternative/Utopian Communities
- Montessori schools
- “Grungies”/Panhandlers/Homeless Teens (who are making a statement by CHOOSING to be homeless)
- Your own idea?

Adapted from P. Mason - PBWorks

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

## Appendix N

### NRSD Standards-Based Writing Rubric Analytical Essay: Grade 11

Writing/Organization Techniques (Organization, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency)	Analytical Structures/Techniques (Ideas, Voice, Sentence Fluency)	Mechanics/Usage (Sentence Fluency, Conventions)
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizes well, writing is logical and clear  <input type="checkbox"/> Makes strong word choices  <input type="checkbox"/> Uses sentence variety  <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs argue one main idea in at least 5-8 sentences  <input type="checkbox"/> Uses smooth transitions between paragraphs and examples	<u>Introductory paragraph:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Grabs reader's attention with good hook  <input type="checkbox"/> Introduces author and work  <input type="checkbox"/> Intro provides context and leads to thesis  <input type="checkbox"/> Creates strong argumentative thesis  <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis lists the topics and informs the reader of the order of paragraphs  <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis answers "so what?"  <u>Body paragraphs: Each body paragraph:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Begins with a clear topic sentence that links the paper's overall argument and the paragraph's topic  <input type="checkbox"/> Introduces background and context for textual evidence  <input type="checkbox"/> Quotation is compelling and relevant to thesis  <input type="checkbox"/> Supports each topic sentence (at least two per paragraph) with textual evidence  <input type="checkbox"/> Paraphrases, summarizes and quotes textual evidence with MLA citations  <input type="checkbox"/> Provides insightful commentary on textual evidence that relates back to topic sentence and the overall argument/thesis  <input type="checkbox"/> Ends with a concluding sentence that restates the overall argument and the topic of the paragraph.  <input type="checkbox"/> Remains focused on the overall argument of the paper and the paragraph's topic.  <u>Conclusion Paragraph:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasizes the main ideas of the essay  <input type="checkbox"/> Ends with a new and original insight	Provides evidence of mastery of: <input type="checkbox"/> Correct spelling  <input type="checkbox"/> Correct punctuation  <input type="checkbox"/> Correct capitalization  <input type="checkbox"/> Present tense verbs  <input type="checkbox"/> Subject verb agreement  <input type="checkbox"/> No I, you, we (1st or 2nd person)  <input type="checkbox"/> Elimination of fragments and run-on sentences  <input type="checkbox"/> Correct capitalization and italicization of the title of the work  <input type="checkbox"/> Correct formatting of in-text citations  <input type="checkbox"/> Correct usage of MLA format for Works Cited  <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Reputable sources are used  <input type="checkbox"/> Paper is 4-5 pages long

(Note: Checkmarks/highlighting indicate areas of excellence within the standard.)

- 5 = The student demonstrates excellent understanding and strong skills. All of the listed characteristics in the standard of excellence describe the student's work.
- 4 = The student demonstrates good understanding and strong skills. Most of the listed characteristics in the standard of excellence describe the student's work—a few are missing or done improperly.
- 3 = The student demonstrates a satisfactory understanding and skill. Approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the listed characteristics in the standard of excellence describe the writer's work— $\frac{1}{4}$  of the characteristics are missing or done improperly.
- 2 = The writer demonstrates some understanding and skill. Only  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the listed characteristics in the standard of excellence describe the student's work;  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the characteristics are missing or done improperly.
- 1 = The writer demonstrates little or no understanding or skill. Few of the listed characteristics in the standard of excellence describe the writer's work—more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the characteristics are missing or done improperly.

*Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place  
through 21st Century Eyes*

---

0 = Not completed or unscorable.

**Your Grade:**

**Writing/Organizational** \_\_\_\_\_ **X 5 =** \_\_\_\_\_

**Analytical Structures/Techniques** \_\_\_\_\_ **X 10=** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mechanics/ Usage** \_\_\_\_\_ **X 5 =** \_\_\_\_\_

**Progress in the writing process** \_\_\_\_\_ **x1**

**Final grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Understanding Transcendentalism and Discovering a Sense of Place through 21st Century Eyes*

---

## Works Cited

Emerson, Ralphp Waldo. *Nature*. Beacon Press. New York. 1994.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Self-Reliance. Create Space. New York. 2010.*

Krakauer, Jon. *Into the Wild. Anchor Books. New York. 1997.*

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*. Everyman Library. New York. 1992.

Woods, Thomas. *Sense of Place*. 2011. <http://www.importanceofplace.com/2009/04/what-is-sense-of-place.html>