

Approaching Walden Curriculum Unit – Developing a “Listening Point”

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Grades 11-12

English – For “Call of the Wild,” a semester elective course concerning humankind’s relationship to the natural world. The course was initially designed in the 1970s, and taught for over 30 years by visionary English teacher Bob Gillette, whose ideas and inspiration still flow through this curriculum.

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Developing a “Listening Point”

This unit asks students to engage in some of the “slow and difficult / Trick of... finding” (Mary Oliver, “Going to Walden”) Walden in a local open space. Following the example of naturalist writers like Mary Oliver, Annie Dillard, Sigurd Olson, Hal Borland, and Henry David Thoreau, students will establish and develop a close relationship with a parcel of designated “open space” in their home landscape. To do this, they will visit this space many times over the course of the semester, completing a variety of lessons designed to help them observe closely, getting to know some of the flora and fauna, and to record their observations and reflections in their field journals. They will also do some research about the ecological and more recent social history of this space, tracing its story as they are able. After they have come to know this particular open space in a richer way, they will publish an informational pamphlet (or, alternatively, a web document on a “Wikispace”) including a map and visuals (to be kept in a Call of the Wild classroom repository of local places to hike/explore), as well as a short piece of creative non-fiction which communicates some of the highlights of what they have observed and learned from this process over the course of the semester, about the place, about themselves, and about their home environment.

Explanation of “Listening Point”:

Sigurd Olson coined the phrase “Listening Point” to describe a rustic one-room cabin that he built along the rugged coast of the north shore of Lake Superior. He visited and revisited this place to gather sensory images, to study the natural world, and to get the “spiritual lift” he needed to inspire his writing. This was for him, a “point of departure” from what Thoreau would call “village life,” a place to reconnect with the ancient rhythms of the planet, the solar system, the universe. Olson defined a listening point as “some place of quiet where the universe can be contemplated with awe,” a place to inspire wonder and curiosity about the world. So while Olson’s listening point was highly dramatic and well removed from the traffic of life, his definition also allows room for us to find little rays of this kind of inspiration even in the smaller bits of the natural world preserved in local “open spaces.” As long as one is willing to go to such places, “aware and still,” Olson urges, we might even

learn “from rocks and trees and all the life that is found there, truths that can encompass all” (Olson, *Listening Point*, 3-8).

Duration:

This semester-long (20 week) project will be intertwined with and informed by many of the other readings and activities of the course. Students will be encouraged to apply content and skills covered in the course to their Listening Point projects throughout the semester. What is included in the following “unit” plan (along with some specific parts of the project) is a small representative sample of some of the most relevant readings and formative activities from the course, which will inform the experiences they have at their Listening Points.

Objectives:

Students will

- Find a “Listening Point”: Locate a local (within short drive of home) open space which offers a “point of departure”(Olson, 4) from the business and stress of their day-to-day lives, and which they find beautiful
- Visit this place often (10+ times over the semester) to explore and observe, practicing quiet awareness and inquisitive interactions with the place
- Record experiences, observations and reflections from these visits in a “Field Journal”, which includes brief notations of things observed, and also exploratory free-writes, sketches, haiku, photos, pressed leaves, etc.
- Read widely from the works of prominent nature-writers to understand and consider the value of exploring local landscape, and also to begin to appreciate the formatting and style of excellent nature-writing
- Build a deeper understanding of the layers of stories and systems underlying the present state of local landscapes, continually developing their own abilities to be “forever on the alert... Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer?”(HDT, *Walden (Writings)* Volume 2, 123)
- Journal to record observations and to think on paper about the truths to be gleaned from repeated visits to Listening Points
- Publish a polished pamphlet which communicates some of the highlights of their learning about this place in a manner which will help future visitors to better understand and appreciate this place
- Produce an edited and polished piece of nature writing which captures some essential part of their relationship with their Listening Point, and which reflects course lessons in structure, style and craft of nature writing

Outline of Lessons:

Lessons 1-4: A Wake-Up Call

Duration: 4 days

This is a structured series of readings and discussions designed to show students the need for alertness/attentiveness to beauty.

Key Questions:

- Do most people “lead lives of quiet desperation?” Why?
- How does our “modern” lifestyle lull us into a sort of sleep-walking?
- What kinds of methods can we consider and experiment with to “keep ourselves awake,” and try to live more “deliberately”?
- What activities keep you most alert in your own life?

Texts:

- Passages from “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” by HDT
- 15 minute clip from *Koyaanisqatsi*, a film by Godfrey Reggio
- “Thought,” poem by Walt Whitman
- “When Death Comes,” poem by Mary Oliver
- “Living Like Weasels,” essay by Annie Dillard

Assessment – 2 Page reflection synthesizing student’s responses to the content and discussions covered in week one

Key Skills –

Active discussion, close reading, thoughtful interpretation, analysis, and synthesis

Lessons 5-7: Starting a Field Journal

Duration: 3 Days

This is an introduction to keeping a “Field Journal” to document visits to a local open space which will become their “Listening Point.”

Key Questions:

- What is a “Field Journal,” and how do I start one?
- How can specific observations in nature lead to richer understanding of self and place? Where should I do my field journaling?
- What are the characteristics of alert observation?
- How does journaling lead to valuable reflection?

Texts:

- Short exercises from Clare Walker Leslie's book, *Keeping a Nature Journal*
- Passage from "Spring," from HDT's *Walden*
- "Frog," a chapter from *The Island*, by Gary Paulsen

Assessment:

Field Journal Entry (this assignment will be repeated every two weeks or so throughout the semester)

Key Skills:

Close observation in the field, writing for documentation and reflection, sketching, close reading and analysis

Lessons 8-9: Defining a Listening Point

Duration: 3 Days

This is an introduction to keeping a Sigurd Olson's concept of a "Listening Point"

Key Questions:

- What is a "Listening Point," what is its value?
- How can specific observations in nature lead to richer understanding of self and place?

Texts:

- "Listening Point," Chapter 1 of Sigurd Olson's book, *Listening Point*
- Clip from short documentary film, *The Wilderness World of Sigurd Olson*
- "The Secret Place," a chapter from *The Education of Little Tree*, by Forrest Carter
- "The Peace of Wild Things," poem by Wendell Berry

Assessment:

Multiple drafts of a formal "Listening Point" Narrative Essay reflecting their relationship to their own Listening Point.

Key Skills:

Active discussion, close reading, thoughtful interpretation, analysis, and synthesis, reflective narrative writing, editing and revising

Lesson 10: Q&A With a Local Expert on Open Spaces

Duration: 1 Day

Students will meet an experienced hiker/researcher/writer interested in Fairfield's open spaces.

Key Questions:

Why explore open space? What comes of it? What are the best sources of information when I am trying to find out more about an open space? What can we learn about the writer's process?

Assessment:

This activity will help students understand the research process for the "Interpretive Guide" summative assessment.

Key Skills:

Listening, close reading, thoughtful questioning

Over-Arching Summative Assessments (ALL OF THESE ASSESSMENTS ARE IN APPENDIX):

- Produce a pamphlet detailing highlights of what you have learned about your “Listening Point” – including the stories behind the land as open space, and what you are able to determine about how it was used by people before that, and also including some cataloguing of major plant/animal species, and other key features of landscape
- Write a formal processed piece of nature writing which captures some essential elements of your time at your “Listening Point”
- “Field Journal” entries every two weeks should show a developing connection to the “Listening Point”

NOTE: These three summative assessments will count equally, and taken together, will account for about half of a student’s grade in the course.

Some Other Relevant “Call of the Wild” Lessons Not Included in This Packet:

- Students practice with using haiku poems as a way to record their observations in nature, and I use contemporary haiku from an anthology edited by Cor Van Den Heuvel (see works cited) as models
- They read about Connecticut geologic history, and the history behind all the stone walls running through the woods (passages from *Stone by Stone*, by Robert Thorson). This helps them to understand the layers behind landscape stories
- Students read a great variety of “nature writing” by a number of different authors, always with an eye toward understanding the craft of writing and some of the central themes of nature writing
- I lead students on a day-hike across a local farm property that has been a farm since the late 1700s. While there, we practice reading the story of the landscape over time, and identifying key species and ecological relationships. These lessons help to sharpen their vision at their own Listening Points

Lessons 1-4: A Wake-Up-Call

Lesson 1 – Confronting “Quiet Desperation”

Preparation:

Prepare copies of selections from “Where I Lived and What I Lived For.”

Write “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.’ –Henry David Thoreau” on the board. Need index cards.

Initiation:

I do this lesson on the first day of class, so for initiation I do general introductions, and go over basic guidelines of the course. Distribute index cards. (15 min)

Activities:

Ask students to write down the Thoreau quote, and to consider whether and why they agree with it, writing their initial thoughts on an index card. Before they start ask briefly about the literal meaning of the quote, coming to an agreed upon definition of “the mass of men,” and “quiet desperation” using student input. (10 min)

Ask for a show of hands, “Who agrees with Thoreau?” (Invariably, the vast majority of my students will raise their hands that they agree.) Then discuss – how is this possible? What does this mean for our future, if three quarters or more of the class is going off to lives of “quiet desperation”? Isn’t that something we should be looking into? Who wants a life of quiet desperation? Shouldn’t our advanced society, with our high standards of living be able to provide better than this? Then start to discuss WHY it is possible for so many to lead such lives? How does this happen?(15 min)

Collect index cards and distribute Homework.

Homework: Read through packet, looking for any advice from HDT about how this tragedy could have befallen us. Underline phrases that represent HDT’s clearest advice, considering whether you think it is sensible.

Lesson 2 – Engaging Henry

Preparation:

Read through yesterday's note-cards for any new ideas/approaches not mentioned in discussion. Prepare copies of "Thought," by Walt Whitman, and "Living Like Weasels" (<http://www.courses.vcu.edu/ENG200-lad/dillard.htm>) assignment (see APPENDIX for writing prompt).

Initiation:

Ask students to review the packet, and pick out one quote from the packet which offers HDT's best insight about why/how it is that people lead lives of quiet desperation, and be prepared to share it. (5 min)

Activities:

Ask students to share some of their chosen quotes, and explain why they think it might have value for the discussion, keeping discussion circling always back to the text and the over-all question of "How can we avoid lives of quiet desperation?" How can Thoreau be relevant to this? (15 min)

Present a brief encapsulation of Henry David Thoreau and his life / work. I show pictures of Thoreau, the replica of his house, and will include a few pictures of Walden Pond and Mt. Monadnock from my trips there. This will build on and reinforce/clarify some of the ideas that came up in discussion. Explain Henry's philosophy on working too much. Explain Henry's educational philosophy (letting inspiration and curiosity guide one as on a huckleberry hunt), and his thoughts on walking as a daily crusade, and his love for "beeline" hiking. Distribute/explain homework. (20 min)

EXTENSION IDEA- It would be fun to add a day to this, perhaps a couple of weeks later in the marking period, during which students would have the opportunity to interview Jeffery Cramer via SKYPE, to ask him questions they have formed about HDT. I would like them to have read a little more of Thoreau first. I have not traditionally done more than a few short passages from Walden, but I am looking for ways to fit more in – to maybe give them a list of longer passages (perhaps "Walking," "Autumnal Tints," "Brute Neighbors," or "Ponds") to choose from, so that they must read/annotate one of them well to help them prepare questions.

Homework:

Read "Thought." Look up and define any words you don't know. Draw a picture which depicts an important image in the poem. Write a one-sentence explanation of Whitman's "thought."

Due next week: "Living Like Weasels" response- start working on this.

Lesson 3 - *Koyaanisqatsi*

Preparation:

Make copies of *Koyaanisqatsi* handout (See APPENDIX). Write “Koyaanisqatsi” on board.

Initiation:

Ask for volunteers to share their drawings, and briefly discuss “Thought.” Collect and check work for comprehension. (5 min)

Activities:

Tell students to write “Koyaanisqatsi” in notes, and that this is a Hopi Indian word, which translates into a phrase in English. It is also the title of a film they will be viewing , today (about a 15 minute clip – I use the section of the film called “The Grid”). As they watch the film, they should be writing down their ideas about what they think the title means. What would you call this? (5 min)

Show “The Grid” from Godfrey Reggio’s film, *Koyaanisqatsi*. (15 min)

Ask students to share their title ideas, and to begin discussing their reactions to the film. Usually students find it assaultive, but respond to its ideas, and will bring up connections to Thoreau and the Whitman poem, both of which describe drone-like, sleepwalking behavior. After a while, distribute the handout which includes the actual translation (“Lives out of balance”) and some of Reggio’s comments about the film. He says the film’s role is to “raise questions, that only the audience can answer.” What questions do kids think it raises? (15 min)

Homework: Keep working on “Living Like Weasels” reading/response.

Lesson 4 – “When Death Comes”

Preparation:

Copy Mary Oliver’s “When Death Comes” for students(see APPENDIX). Review “Thought” homework for comprehension and sense of images.

Initiation:

Remind students about “Living Like Weasels” assignment. Address any questions they have. Distribute “Thought” homework and Oliver poem. Remind students that they need to be making specific connections to multiple texts in their response to “Living Like Weasels.” (5-10 min)

Activities:

Students should read the poem through quietly. As they read, they should mark any unfamiliar words / curious phrases. They should also try to figure out – who is talking to us here? In other words, who is the speaker in this poem? What can we tell about him/her from the context of the poem? What is the speaker’s situation? Is there a specific audience? (5-10 min)

Start with questions about unfamiliar words. Help to define them. Then read poem aloud for students. Ask them what their thoughts were about the speaker/situation. Male or female? Young or old? Attitude about death? About life? Try to force students to use the text to justify their claims. (5-10 min)

Move to a consideration of whether and how this poem speaks to the tragedy of “quiet desperation” raised by Henry. What figurative language does the poem use? Can you be a “bridegroom married to amazement” outside the world of a poem? How can we make sense of this desire? How many of you feel this way about your learning? Are you “alert” (HDT) to “amazement” in your day to day life? “Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a **seer?**”(HDT) Tomorrow we will begin to practice better vision. (10 min)

(Reminder about “Living Like Weasels” Response – due in a couple of days. This will serve as an assessment of students’ abilities to synthesize the dialogue among these texts, and begin to consider their own personal responses to the challenges they pose.)

Lessons 5-7: Starting a Field Journal

Lesson 5 – Practice Journal

Preparation:

Students should be notified in advance that they will be going outside as part of class, today. They should also come in with a spiral notebook, composition book, stenographer's book, or some other type of bound journal, which they will use throughout the semester. Consider a "natural" place near the school to take them to. I have a nice wooded hillside right near my classroom. Even though there is garbage there, and traffic nearby, there is always plenty of natural wonder to observe.

Initiation (5 min):

On board, list out initial requirements for a Field Journal entry (see assignment below): Date, Time, Place, Weather Observations, Several Notes on what you notice. Students should write these things on top of the first page.

Instruct students that they will be going outside to do some observations, and that they are responsible for jotting down what they observe. They should be encouraged to keep an open mind, to "be alert" to the subtle details of the natural world – the vein structure of a leaf, the texture of a cloud, the sound of a woodpecker foraging. They must also be willing to maintain quiet as they walk, staying focused on their observations.

Activities:

Walk with the class outside, modeling alertness, and pointing out some interesting details. Insist on quiet and attentiveness to what they observe. Encourage them to take notes, but also to spend considerable time looking, listening, smelling, feeling, etc. I keep the first walks with my classes pretty short, about 10-15 minutes (total 20-25 min, including transfer time).

Bring them back inside, and have them do a 5 minute free write. They must keep writing the whole time, simply doing free association starting with what they just observed on the walk. The actual free-write for the formal assignment is 10 minutes, but doing it for 5 is enough in class to show them how much they can produce in a short time if they just keep writing (7 min).

Discuss their questions and initial reactions to the walk and the free-write with remaining time (5 min).

Collect journals on their way out.

Lesson 6 – Journal Practice Continued - Sketching

Preparation:

Review student journals from Day 1, picking out several exemplary observations to write on the board. Make up a few less specific observations (rather than display specific student examples as negative examples) to write up as contrast, so they can see the difference between sharp observation and less focused observations. Also put up a few quotes from the “Free Write” portions of the journals to point out interesting reflections, questions, or rich topics which came up. Use a highlighter to mark exemplary passages in student journals. Copy “Spring” passage (see APPENDIX).

Bring in an interesting natural object for today’s sketching activity. It should be something with flowing lines and some varied texture. I use a deer antler. You could also use multiple small objects, having kids work in small groups, or ask them to bring in an object of their own.

Initiation:

Ask students to examine the exemplary observations, and to write in what characterizes good observation and description as contrasted with the weaker notes. Redistribute journals. (5 min)

Activities:

Discuss the qualities of exemplary observations and reflections. (5-10 minutes)

Using a natural object as a subject (again, I use an antler), do the series of sketch activities outlined by Clare Walker Leslie in her book, *Keeping a Nature Journal* (http://www.amazon.com/Keeping-Nature-Journal-Discover-Seeing/dp/1580174930/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1344196176&sr=8-1&keywords=claire+walker+leslie). I have students do a “Blind Contour” drawing and a “Modified Contour” drawing (page 173 – See APPENDIX). The key is to really have them focus on following the organic lines of the object, and pay less attention to the actual drawing. Leslie’s book offers lots of great advice on teaching non-artists to do field sketches. (10 minutes)

Write a brief description of the object’s size, color + texture. (5 minutes)

Discuss the sketching process, showing some examples from Leslie’s book, or previous student sketches. Emphasize that it is less about artistry than about accurate observation. Discuss descriptions – force them to be specific. (10-15 minutes)

Distribute homework.

Homework: Read *Walden* passage from “Spring” about the hawk (see APPENDIX). Underline HDT’s most effective descriptions.

Lesson 7 – Discuss “Spring” and Explain “Field Journal” assignment

Preparation:

Have “Field Journal” assignment ready to distribute (see APPENDIX). I will also have a map to project, showing local open spaces.

Initiation:

Have several students pick one brief passage (less than 10 words) from “Spring” to write on board. The passage should be one that they consider exemplary, based on previous day’s discussions. Other students should write down a written summary one of HDT’s central ideas from this piece in their own words –on back of the piece or in notebooks.(5 min)

Activities:

Discuss several examples of excellent observational detail from “Spring.” Try to point out particularly effective and careful word choices. Move eventually into trying to build an understanding of HDT’s comments on “the tonic of wildness,” and the need to get out and observe nature. (20 minutes)

Distribute “Field Journal” assignment. Students should read it thoroughly, and have a chance to ask questions. At this point I will explain to them that this will be a recurring assignment, and begin to point out some of the local areas they may use for it. I also explain that they will do one of these every two weeks for the rest of the semester, and complete some long term research and formal writing about the place after they have come to know it better. (15-20 minutes)

NOTE: Students will be asked to choose a local open space to use as their listening point. My objective is to have each student in the class pick a space they are interested in, but also to try to get a good variety. I will have them sign up on a master list of spaces (still working on getting this right), and also give them the option to propose other places that might work, as long as we conference about it.

Follow-Up Homework: Read “Frog,” a chapter from Gary Paulsen’s book, *The Island*, and ask students to write a reflection on the chapter discussing what it reveals about field observation, quoting from the chapter, and making some specific connections to HDT and other related class content.

NOTE: I often repeat each of these lessons at least once over the course of the semester. If the subject is different, then there is value in continued practice of Day 1 and Day 2. Short selections from any naturalist writer can be used for day 3. After seeing one or two of their Field Journal entries, you can choose focal points to help them improve on specific qualities of their journaling that need attention. Field Journal entries will be due every two weeks.

Lessons 8-9: Defining a “Listening Point”

Lesson 8 – Reading Olson’s “Listening Point”

Preparation:

Make copies of Chapter One of Olson's *Listening Point* and Carter's "The Secret Place." Write annotation instructions on the board (see initiation below).

Initiation:

Distribute "Listening Point."

Instruct students to annotate the essay for: words they don't know (circle them), key phrases that help to define a "listening point"(underline), particularly effective description(mark with a star). (5 minutes)

Activities:

Read chapter aloud, pausing occasionally to ask students about their annotations, and to help them identify and explore the significance of several key phrases about the value of a "Listening Point." (20 minutes)

Ask students to draw the metaphor Olson uses in the second half of paragraph 3, about fanning the latent glow of curiosity and wonder to flame. Discuss implications of this metaphor. (10 minutes)

After finishing essay, ask students to make a bullet list of advice they believe Olson would give them to guide their "Field Journal" work(5 minutes).

Homework: Read "The Secret Place," from Forrest Carter's *The Education of Little Tree*. Note connections to Olson's chapter.

NOTE: I am not including copies of chapters from these books in the appendix because of copyright concerns. The books are readily available online and in most libraries, though.

Lesson 9 – Defining a “Listening Point,” continued

Preparation:

Set up Olson video (*The Wilderness World of Sigurd Olson*) to key parts.

Initiation:

Challenge students to provide proof that they are not “dead people,” as defined by Little Tree’s Grandmother in the “Secret Place” chapter. (5 min)

Activities:

Review “The Secret Place” by asking students to draw a diagram depicting the dichotomy of “body mind” and “spirit mind” as explained in the chapter. Discuss the concept, and ask students to explain how it is connected to the idea of a “Secret Place.” Review connections to S. Olson, and tell them they are going to watch a video of Olson at his Listening Point, and that as they watch, they should look for evidence that Olson has a well developed “spirit mind.”(15 min)

Watch 10-15 minutes of video of Olson at “Listening Point,” discussing his connection to the place. Encourage students to write specific actions or phrases which show his “spirit mind,” or to use HDT’s language, which show Olson to be “awake.”(15 min)

Review their findings in discussion, emphasizing what we may be able to learn from his example about visiting our own listening points. (5 min)

Assignment: After students have submitted several Field Journal assignments, and have come to know their own “Listening Points” fairly well, I will distribute the “Listening Point” Essay assignment. SEE BELOW. I have also included some sample passages from previous student essays, which I distribute to students as models.

Lesson 10 – Q&A With a Local Expert on Open Spaces

Preparation:

I will set up a classroom visit with retired pediatrician and freelance writer Ron Blumenfeld to come and speak with my class about his experiences writing a column for the local newspaper about hiking and researching local open spaces. Students will have read a few of his columns as preparation. Here is one of his columns: <http://www.fairfieldcitizenonline.com/opinion/article/Open-Spaces-1403112.php>

Note: I just met Ron as a result of doing some preliminary research to find out what information was available about local open spaces while planning this project. I am looking forward to spending more time building this relationship.

Initiation:

Students should have questions prepared for Ron based on their reading of his columns, and also based on their needs for doing their own research (see interpretive guide project at end of appendix). Introduce Ron. (5 min)

Activities:

Ron will talk about why he is interested in local open spaces, and give some highlights of his explorations and research. Students will then be able to ask him their questions. (35 min)

Assessment:

This activity will help students understand the research process for the “Interpretive Guide” summative assessment. I will schedule Ron’s visit for soon after they have received the assignment. (See last pages of APPENDIX below)

APPENDIX

Excerpt from “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” a chapter in *Walden*, by Henry David Thoreau

(FOR LESSON 1, ABOVE)

[Here, Thoreau is explaining why he chose to live simply in a small one room home he built for himself on the shore of Walden Pond, over a mile from his home in Concord, for just over two years.]

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora (12) as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of King Tching Thang (13) to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey (14) in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air — to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas (15) say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, (16) are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. 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. How could I have looked him in the face?

[15] We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done. [16] I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of

life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."[\(17\)](#)

[17] Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy,[\(18\)](#) made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan [\(19\)](#) simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers,[\(20\)](#) and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

[18] Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine tomorrow. As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance,[\(21\)](#) and cannot possibly keep our heads still.

<http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden02.html>

"Living Like Weasels" by Annie Dillard ([FOR LESSONS 1-4, ABOVE](#))

Discussion – Friday Written Response – due Monday
<http://www.courses.vcu.edu/ENG200-lad/dillard.htm>

Read the essay carefully, noting any questions or comments you have as you go. Underline words or phrases that seem important. Note any connections you are able to make between Dillard's essay and this week's class content.

On Friday, we will spend some time discussing "Living Like Weasels." **Be ready to talk about-**

- Why does Dillard go to this place? How does it serve her purposes?
- How does she describe her actual encounter with the weasel? What images does she use?
- What interesting information does Dillard learn about weasels in her follow-up research?
- Why does Dillard think "living like a weasel" would be a good thing? Do you?

Follow up written response – DUE MONDAY

Write a 2 page (typed, double-spaced) commentary on this essay, and the first week of Call of the Wild. What do you think of Dillard's central idea about living a quality life? How does it resonate for you, if at all? In discussing Dillard's essay, make specific reference to TWO other pieces of content from this week's classes.

Objectives:

- Summarize and thoughtfully respond to the philosophical challenges posed by Dillard, Thoreau, Reggio, etc.
- Use specific language from "Living Like Weasels" to explore ideas and develop your essay.
- Show that you are thinking about and making specific connections to the first week of class content.
- Reveal something of yourself in your response.
- Edit your response for clarity, flow and mechanics.

50 POINTS

(FOR LESSON 2, ABOVE)

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By Walt Whitman, from *Leaves of Grass*

Of persons arrived at high positions, ceremonies, wealth,
scholarships, and the like;
(To me all that those persons have arrived at sinks away from them,
except as it results to their bodies and souls,
So that often to me they appear gaunt and naked,
And often to me each one mocks the others, and mocks himself or herself,
And of each one the core of life, namely happiness, is full of the
rotten excrement of maggots,
And often to me those men and women pass unwittingly the true
realities of life, and go toward false realities,
And often to me they are alive after what custom has served them,
but nothing more,
And often to me they are sad, hasty, unwaked sonnambules walking the dusk.)

[http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1322/1322-h/1322-
h.htm#2H_4_0210](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1322/1322-h/1322-h.htm#2H_4_0210)

When Death Comes (FOR LESSON 4, ABOVE)

When death comes

like the hungry bear in autumn
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse

to buy me, and snaps his purse shut;
when death comes
like the measles-pox;

when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,

I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering;
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?

And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,
and I consider eternity as another possibility,

and I think of each life as a flower, as common
as a field daisy, and as singular,

and each name a comfortable music in the mouth
tending as all music does, toward silence,

and each body a lion of courage, and something
precious to the earth.

When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was a bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened
or full of argument.

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

~ Mary Oliver ~

(New and Selected Poems, Volume I)

[http://www.panhala.net/Archive/When Death Comes.html](http://www.panhala.net/Archive/When%20Death%20Comes.html)

KOYAANISQATSI, film by Godfrey Reggio, 1982

(FOR LESSON 3, ABOVE)

**ko.yaa.nis.katsi (from the Hopi language), n. 1. crazy life.
2. life in turmoil. 3. life disintegrating. 4. life out of
balance. 5. a state of life that calls for another way of
living.**

We usually perceive our world, our way of living, as beautiful because there is nothing else to perceive. If one lives in this world, the globalized world of high technology, all one can see is one layer of commodity piled upon another. In our world the "original" is the proliferation of the standardized. Copies are copies of copies. There seems to be no ability to see beyond, to see that we have encased ourselves in an artificial environment that has remarkably replaced the original, nature itself. We do not live with nature any longer; we live above it, off of it as it were. Nature has become the resource to keep this artificial or new nature alive.

<http://www.koyaanisqatsi.org/films/koyaanisqatsi.php>

Call of the Wild
Field Journal (FOR LESSON 7 ABOVE)

BACKGROUND:

Nature journaling is a proven way to help people become aware of the environment around them and to develop their sense of connection with it. Field journals make nature the subject, and use observation, reflection, drawing, and writing as the process for learning. As you observe and record nature through drawing and writing, you can get to know an area intimately and personally.

Process:

Go out and spend some time (plan for an hour) exploring a “Listening Point” at a local open space. The spot you pick should be removed from traffic and noise, and offer you a peaceful vantage point on the natural world. You will return many times over the course of the semester (once every two weeks). You may explore a couple of different places in the beginning, but I will ask you to pick one particular spot as “your” Listening Point for the semester. Bring a notebook or journal with you to document your visit in writing and sketches as outlined below.

Requirements:

Each entry should include:

- Setting: the date, the specific location, the time, weather observations (sky, wind, moon phase if applicable, approximate temp).
- Several bulleted notations about specific elements you observe
 - Write details as you are there – just briefly note the little details which strike you as you walk about, or sit and observe. As you walk, just pause periodically to note things which catch your senses. Haiku work well here.
 - What can you tell about this place based on your observations? What questions do you have about what you observe?
- At least one hand-drawn sketch
 - Your sketches should be rough field drawings, but you are ENCOURAGED to add color or other details later. If you don't wish to sketch while you are there, taking digital photos to draw from later is a good technique. You may also wish take a small object like a leaf, a feather, an acorn, etc. home to sketch later.
- A 10 minute free-write based on the experience
 - The writing should be a solid 10 minutes worth of pen on paper – just keep writing, trying to use the observations/questions from the walk as a springboard. This can be done in the field, or immediately after you return(maybe when you get back to the car, for instance). NOTE- be sure to allow significant time for good observation before burying your head in the writing process

Guidelines:

- Keep an open mind – be ALERT to what you see/hear/smell...
- Allow yourself the time (again, plan on an hour) to just explore and observe for a while.
- **Seek solitude**– find a place that is actually quiet/removed from human activity – and use this as an opportunity to EXPLORE something new.
- Don't sketch and/or describe based on your prior ideas – notice the details of your subjects, and do your best to capture them as they strike you.
- The free-write is 10 minutes of uninterrupted pen on paper– do not stop!

ASSESSMENT LIST:

Criteria	Possible Points
All entries include basic information under first “Requirements” bullet above, and give a vivid quick written snapshot of the setting and specific observable details of this particular time/place.	15
Sketches go beyond first impressions and show attention to the detail of the subjects. This is not so much about the artistry as it is about careful, accurate observation.	15
All free-writes demonstrate 10 solid minutes of uninterrupted writing – exploring the associations and thoughts that this walk and your observations generated for you.	20
Journal entries as a whole are observant, thoughtful and personalized. Entries (esp. over time) demonstrate a developing awareness, understanding and appreciation of the value of this place, and of time observing nature, over-all.	50
Total	100

Some Suggested Places (See Map and “Walking Fairfield’s Open Spaces” book for more)–

Fairfield:

Burr St Audubon
Hoyden’s Hill Open Space
Pine Creek Marsh
Brett Woods
Springer Glen
Penfield Mills Open Space
Mill Hollow Park and Open Space
Duck Farm Open Space

Birdcraft Sanctuary
Grace Richardson Conservation Area
Lake Mohegan Open Space
Mountain Laurel Open Space
Samp Mortar Rock
Riverfield Open Space
Perry’s Mill Ponds Open Space

Easton:

Trout Brook Valley offers several areas (aspetucklandtrust.org)

Milford:

Milford Audubon Coastal Center

Stratford:

Roosevelt Forest Park

Trumbull:

Indian Ledge State Park

Weston:

Devil's Den – Nature Conservancy (<http://www.nature.org>)

Westport:

Sherwood Island State Park

Comments on Keeping a Field Journal:

The naturalist wanders with an inquiring eye, pauses, ponders, notes the bloom of a prairie pasqueflower. It is a tradition that goes back to Aristotle and earlier: observing and identifying earth's myriad life-forms, and discovering the connections that bind them. For those with such interests, said British naturalist Miriam Rothschild, "life can never be long enough."

-John Hay

It seems only natural that we should value most what we are in contact with every day – local and familiar places, commonplace birds and animals – yet the reverse is often true. We appear to place a higher value on rare animals and plants and spectacular views and far-flung places. Of course both are important because they fulfill different needs. But the everyday places desperately need our attention – partly because they are changing so fast, and not always for the better, and also because tremendous benefit is to be gained from a personal involvement with your own locality.

-The Parish Maps Project, London England 1987

A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood.

-Rachel Carson

Passage from “Spring,” a chapter in *Walden*, by Henry David Thoreau (FOR LESSON 7 ABOVE)

On the 29th of April, as I was fishing from the bank of the river near the Nine-Acre-Corner bridge, standing on the quaking grass and willow roots, where the muskrats lurk, I heard a singular rattling sound, somewhat like that of the sticks which boys play with their fingers, when, looking up, I observed a very slight and graceful hawk, like a nighthawk, alternately soaring like a ripple and tumbling a rod or two over and over, showing the under side of its wings, which gleamed like a satin ribbon in the sun, or like the pearly inside of a shell. This sight reminded me of falconry and what nobleness and poetry are associated with that sport. The merlin it seemed to me it might be called: but I care not for its name. It was the most ethereal flight I had ever witnessed. It did not simply flutter like a butterfly, nor soar like the larger hawks, but it sported with proud reliance in the fields of air; mounting again and again with its strange chuckle, it repeated its free and beautiful fall, turning over and over like a kite, and then recovering from its lofty tumbling, as if it had never set its foot on *terra firma*. It appeared to have no companion in the universe, -- sporting there alone, -- and to need none but the morning and the ether with which it played. It was not lonely, but made all the earth lonely beneath it. Where was the parent which hatched it, its kindred, and its father in the heavens? The tenant of the air, it seemed related to the earth but by an egg hatched some time in the crevice of a crag; -- or was its native nest made in the angle of a cloud, woven of the rainbow's trimmings and the sunset sky, and lined with some soft midsummer haze caught up from earth? Its eyry now some clifffy cloud.

Beside this I got a rare mess of golden and silver and bright cupreous fishes, which looked like a string of jewels. Ah! I have penetrated to those meadows on the morning of many a first spring day, jumping from hummock to hummock, from willow root to willow root, when the wild river valley and the woods were bathed in so pure and bright a light as would have waked the dead, if they had been slumbering in their graves, as some suppose. There needs no stronger proof of immortality. All things must live in such a light. O Death, where was thy sting? O Grave, where was thy victory, then?

Our village life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it. We need the tonic of wildness, -- to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of Nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees, the thunder-cloud, and the rain which lasts three weeks and produces freshets. We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander. We are cheered when we observe the vulture feeding on the carriion which disgusts and disheartens us, and deriving health and strength from the repast. There was a dead horse in the hollow by the path to my house, which compelled me sometimes to go out of my way, especially in the night when the air was heavy, but the assurance it gave me of the strong appetite and inviolable health of Nature was my compensation for this. I love to see that Nature is so rife with life that myriads can be afforded to be sacrificed and suffered to prey on one another; that tender organizations can be so serenely squashed out of existence like pulp, -- tadpoles which herons gobble up, and tortoises and toads run over in the road; and that sometimes it has rained flesh and blood! With the liability to accident, we must see how little account is to be made of it. The impression made on a wise man is that of universal innocence. Poison is not poisonous after all, nor are any wounds fatal. Compassion is a very untenable ground. It must be expeditious. Its pleadings will not bear to be stereotyped.

Call of the Wild **Listening Point Essay (FOR LESSON 8-9 ABOVE)**

- 2-3 pgs typed and double spaced
- Complete draft due
- Final Copy Due

General Purpose: In a formal descriptive piece, tell the condensed story of your visits to your listening point, and communicate why it is a special place to you.

Overview:

Review your Field Journal entries from all your visits to your Listening Point. Look for key moments, key elements of the place, key reflections... Look to find some of the most essential elements of your relationship with this place. Using detail from your journal entries, begin drafting a two page general description of your listening point which guides the reader from a big picture through a few specific details which are particularly inspiring or interesting to you. You must also offer some reflection/commentary on why you are drawn to this spot and its particular nuances.

Outline for Essay:

1. Walk the reader in- like a pan shot at the beginning of a movie
2. Give a general orientation to the main features
3. Discuss one or two of the most beautiful or interesting things you've witnessed – you are encouraged to **delve** here. Use your imagination by sketching, using a field guide or follow-up source, photography, haiku, watercolor. The best focal points are discovered and explored with patience, time, luck, and most of all--- an inquisitive mind
4. Create a sense of closure, which incorporates a general commentary about this place, these specific objects of fascination, or the season as they pertain to YOU

Possible Questions:

- a. Why are you compelled to describe these things? Do they offer personal significance?
- b. How have your observations at LP given you a new perspective on local land features, plants or animals?
- c. What was challenging or frustrating about this activity? Why?
- d. Did the place change over the course of your visits? How so?
What do you anticipate seeing on future visits?

Assessment Criteria: The first thing you must do well is create a representative depiction of your unique relationship with this place. Then comes the quality writing necessary to communicate this relationship to the reader. The following should serve as a good set of general guidelines. When you submit your draft, you will also submit a self-evaluation form based on these guidelines, which will provide the focus for our writing conference.

CALL OF THE WILD--

Listening Point Evaluation Form

Name: _____

A great listening point essay, like all great nature writing...

1. ____ (20) Uses vivid and appropriate imagery to give a complete picture of your listening point.
2. ____ (20) Explores one or two engaging focal points with detailed and empathetic description.
3. ____ (20) Develops insightful reflection on the nature of your relationship to this place.
4. ____ (15) Is efficient and powerful in diction and phrasing.

5. ____ (10) Has an inviting and pleasing progression, which draws the reader along like a path through the woods.
6. ____ (5) Avoids verb tense inconsistency.
7. ____ (5) Avoids fragments and run-ons.
8. ____ (5) Avoids spelling and other typographical errors.

_____: (100) TOTAL POINTS

Listening Point Essay Excerpts From Former Students
(NOTE - THESE WERE WRITTEN AFTER JUST A FEW VISITS TO A LISTENING POINT. THIS YEAR'S STUDENTS WILL BE VISITING THEIR LISTENING POINTS FOR MOST OF A SEMESTER BEFORE DOING THEIR ESSAYS):

...I let my mind go. I stop thinking about what college is going to accept me or what friend is mad at whom, or if my parents are upset with me for something I did. I keep walking, listening to the leaves making a soft crumbling noise... I walk deeper into the woods. When looking back I can only see trees and the path I have followed. I can't see my car. I can't hear the noise of cars or people. It is me in the woods by myself...

Laura Martinez

At my back was a gnarled bush; it bore no leaves or berries, but its tangled tentacles served as a partition between my spot and the trail. My boots sank into the muck that made up the banks; it seemed to be a mix of mud, sand, clay and last fall's harvest of leaves. Above me, silver branches reached for the ashen sky, trying to hold onto their motley leaves for as long as possible. Mysterious birds cried and then answered each other, each with a distinct note. Across the bank, the stream plummeted down a barren hill, pock-marked with small clusters of decaying foliage.

Peter Harman

Then I noticed the surface of the water. The images of the overhanging leaves danced on the uneven floor. Reflection adds a different light to everything the way it distorts and mirrors images back to you. It's mysterious the way it doesn't really have its own color; it steals color from its surroundings.

Trevor Grauer

Ferns make their cycle each year, re-growing after the long winter. They may grow back in an area where they will get more light or nutrients. People have a similar experience with this season. Spring is a time for people to explore, physical space and mental space. Each year we are able to find out something new when we take the time to listen.

Elizabeth Kidd

The ground, except for an anomalous patch of grass, was mainly a cover of dead leaves of different kinds of brown, like an old faded blanket you find tucked away in the corner of your attic. The height and breadth of the trees combined with their thinning canopies to create the sense of pillars inside an old gothic cathedral.

Jack Lindsay

My life often seems like a constant race against the clock. Between school , cross country, and other activities there is not much time to spare. As I stepped out of my car I thought about timing my visit on my watch. I had already lost track of the purpose of this trip. It was about forgetting what time it was. It didn't matter anymore.

Taylor Snook

A lone duck quietly breaks the still water, leaving ripples in his path and makes his call anticipating the new day. A silver blanket gleams over the water, highlighted by a pink aura. The cold salt breeze gently blows my hair, and I become even more awakened. The colors are magical as if their radiance isn't even real. To my right darkness graces the still grasses, patiently awaiting the light's arrival.

Christy Abraham

I passed ferns whose fractal leaves sprouted forth in perfect symmetry... To my left was a mélange of bushes, branches, and vines, all assembling in a tangled yet harmonious mess...Two groups of bugs sang a three-word aria to each other, each responding to the other in the same way...

Gavin Sidebottom

The canopy rises and fractured light puts a soft glaze on the damp leaves. The grays and light browns seem to intertwine as if da Vinci had painted them.

Doug Farquhar

Call of the Wild
Interpretive Guide (See Lesson 10 Above)

NOTE: THIS IS AN ENTIRELY NEW PROJECT FOR “CALL OF THE WILD” TO FURTHER EMPHASIZE SENSE OF PLACE FOR STUDENTS AT THEIR LISTENING POINTS

Background:

You have been visiting and observing your “Listening Point” at a local open space over the course of the whole semester, so far. This part of the process asks you to do a little research to about the ecology and the history of your place, using such sources as field guides, news articles, documents from the historical society, interviews, textbooks, etc.

Process:

- Consider what you have learned from your observations so far, and in particular, what questions you have about your place. Maybe you aren’t sure about the species of tree that you often lean against, or would like to know more about who built the stone walls there, or what species of birds you are hearing... Write down any things you would like to know about your Listening Point that have come up on your observations or free-writes so far. Also consider the questions listed below, and highlight those that are most interesting to you, and seem to be most relevant to your Listening Point. Select a variety of questions (at least 5) which will guide your research.
- Go out and attempt to find answers to several of the questions you choose. Take notes as you research, noting the sources and what they provide for you. You will be asked to submit an **annotated bibliography**. You may not be able to answer all the questions you have, and may end up with more questions once you start. This is OK, but be sure to keep good notes about what you are learning. Possible sources for your research may include:
 - Web searches – be critical of your sources
 - *Walking Through Fairfield’s Open Spaces*, a book by Dr. Frank Rice
 - Fairfield Museum and Historical Center Library
 - Interviews with staff who manage the space, or with living relatives of land donors, or any people who know stories behind your open space
 - Field guides (see my bookshelves) of trees, flowers, birds, stone walls, animals, animal tracks, grasses, mushrooms, etc.
 - *Connecticut Wildlife*, a book by Dr. Geoffrey Hammerson
- Create an **annotated bibliography** to document each helpful source. See handout on “What is an Annotated Bibliography?” for more information.
- Create a brief “Interpretive Guide” to the open space which has served as your Listening Point, which could be used by future Call of the Wild students to help orient them to the place, or by other community members interested in this place. This guide will highlight some of the most interesting and relevant things you have learned about the place in the time you have spent there and in the research you have done. This guide could be in the form of
 - a folding 6-12 panel pamphlet

- a web-page
 - a PDF file that could be uploaded to the course website
 - a bound “booklet”
 - other ideas?
- Required elements of interpretive guide:
 - A hand-drawn, creative map of part of your open space
 - A brief description of the landscape of this place, including mention of some the major species of plants and animals encountered there
 - A brief overview of what you learned about the history of the property
 - An explanation of what you find most interesting or appealing about spending time there
 - Some visuals (representative photos or sketches from the place, pictures of key people associated with this place, etc.)
 - Some “insider tips” for anyone hoping to catch the best that this place has to offer
 - A list of works cited in your guide

Objectives: Document your learning about this place in a creative and succinct way that will help others discover its value. Create a high quality, unique document that is useful and enduring.

Assessment List For Interpretive Guide:

Criteria	Possible Points
Your annotated bibliography is properly formatted, and clearly documents your research. Your research shows depth of thought and persistence.	20
Your map is creative and unique, but also useful and accurate. You don't need to show the entire place, but may just focus on your favorite parts.	20
Your over-all description of the place is accurate and succinct, reflecting your understanding of this place.	10
The stories you tell about the history of the place are interesting and well explained, and accurate.	20
Your interpretive guide is well designed, and shows a quality effort.	20
Your interpretive guide is well edited for mechanical errors, and uses language and visuals to communicate effectively.	10
Total	100

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Link to Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts:

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards>

Note: We have not yet built specific links from our curriculum documents to numbers in the new Common Core Standards, but this process will be happening over the next couple of years.