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“If I am not I, who will be?”

Class: AP English Language & Composition (Juniors)

Duration: approximately 4-6 weeks (14 lessons interspersed with other beginning of year lessons & required activities or events)

Abstract:

Using the students’ summer work with Krakauer’s *Into the Wild* and Thoreau’s *Walden Pond* and the guided journal entries they completed with the latter reading, this year-opening unit serves as a platform for establishing routines, expectations, and skill requirements for the AP English Language & Composition course. Additionally, it will help students look critically at an author’s body of work, recognize his distinct voice, and understand the impact of the environment around him (historically, culturally, and environmentally) in shaping his life & writing.

Objectives:

- By the end of this unit, you will be able to...
 1. Explain Transcendentalism and apply its values to your own life.
 2. Analyze passages of nonfiction for meaning, style, structure & themes.
 3. Recognize an author’s distinct Voice and progress toward developing your own Voice as a writer.

Standards:

While many standards may be touched on during this unit, it centers on the following Common Core/Massachusetts State Frameworks.

- MA.8.A: Analyze the meaning of literary texts by drawing on knowledge of literary concepts and genres.
- RI.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.
- RI.3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
- RI.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

- RI.5: Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
- RI.6: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

Unit:

1. Thoreau: Man, Myth, & the Misnomers

- Objectives:
 - Address questions, concerns, and confusions related to Thoreau & Transcendentalism.
 - Review the basics of the Transcendentalist movement.
 - Gain a deeper understanding of who Henry David Thoreau was.
- Agenda:
 - Opener: sticky note (Padlet) feedback
 1. Describe Thoreau in 1 word
 2. Transcendentalists believe...
 - Transcendentalism review
 - Excerpt from *Nature*
 - Preface to *Walden*
- Materials:
 - Padlet on the iPads
 - Prentice Hall Literature: *The American Experience*
 - Cramer, Jeffrey S., ed. *The Portable Thoreau*. NY: Penguin, 2012. Print.

2. Thoreau & Living Deliberately: *Walden Pond*

- Objectives:
 - Evaluate Thoreau’s objectives in moving to Walden Pond & the meaning behind “living deliberately.”
 - Apply Thoreau’s ideas to our own lives.
- Agenda:
 - Review and discuss passages of *Walden*, including
 1. p. 271 “I went to the woods...”
 2. p. 203 “The mass of men...”
 3. p. 266 “I do not propose to write an ode...”
 4. p. 254 “I would not have anyone adopt...”
 5. p. 238 “They should not play life...”
 6. p. 221 “The cost of life...”
 7. p. 459 “I left the woods...”
- Materials:
 - Cramer, Jeffrey S., ed. *The Portable Thoreau*. NY: Penguin, 2012. Print.

3. Thoreau & Living Deliberately: "Walking"

- Objectives:
 - Identify the author's main ideas and apply them to your own life.
 - Identify the author's voice and track changes in his voice across time/several works.
- Agenda:
 - Review "transparent eyeball" image from *Nature*
 - Students will have read & annotated "Walking" ahead of time. Spend the period discussing key passages from the essay, focusing on these questions:
 1. What are Thoreau's main ideas? How does he develop them?
 2. What lessons about Living Deliberately can we pull from Thoreau's reflections here?
 3. What do you notice about this essay that is characteristic of Thoreau's voice? In what ways is the voice and/or tone of this essay different than *Walden*? (published approximately 10 years after)
- Materials:
 - Cramer, Jeffrey S., ed. *The Portable Thoreau*. NY: Penguin, 2012. Print.

4. Thoreau & Conservation: *Walden Pond*

- Objectives:
 - Explore Thoreau's relationship with nature and respond
- Agenda:
 - Go back to *Walden* journal entry #4-6, 9 in small groups.
 - Come together as a class to share out, summarize, and then apply with final written reflection.
- Materials:
 - Cramer, Jeffrey S., ed. *The Portable Thoreau*. NY: Penguin, 2012. Print.

5. Thoreau & Conservation: Locavores, Part 1

- Objectives:
 - View a real-world problem from multiple angles
 - Become familiar with the AP synthesis essay
- Agenda:
 - Spend 10 min. reading the sources
 - Discuss the prompt, the sources, and essay organizational strategies
 - Small group brainstorming
 - Whole class discussion
- Materials:
 - 2011 AP Question 1 and the CollegeBoard sample responses

6. Thoreau & Conservation: Locavores, Part 2

- Objectives:
 - Analyze strategies for an AP synthesis essay.
 - Evaluate exemplars to this essay prompt.
- Agenda:
 - Review Locavore essay prompt & strategies discussed in last lesson
 - Analyze past responses to the essay, evaluating what these students have done well & what could be improved upon.
 - Complete 10 min. reading period for tomorrow's synthesis practice.
- Materials:
 - 2011 AP Question 1 and the CollegeBoard sample responses

7. Thoreau & Conservation: Plastic Bags

- Objectives:
 - Complete a practice AP synthesis essay
- Agenda:
 - Students will complete a timed AP Synthesis practice essay in class (45 min. left in allotted time).
- Materials:
 - Self-created AP synthesis question on the pros & cons of banning plastic bags

8. Thoreau & Taking a Stand: *Walden Pond*

- Objectives:
 - Understand the historical context for political unrest in Thoreau's lifetime.
 - Analyze Thoreau's stance on political involvement.
- Agenda:
 - History Review for homework in preparation for the lesson:
 1. Crash Course US History #17 on YouTube
 2. John Brown summary on History.com
 - Discussion of the historical context (Manifest Destiny, Mexican War, John Brown, pre-Civil War America)
 - The Story behind "Civil Disobedience": p. 338-339 in *Walden*
 - Begin "Civil Disobedience" together
- Materials:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkdF8pOFUfi&index=17&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMwmepBjTSG593eG7ObzO7s>
 - <http://www.history.com/topics/john-brown>
 - Cramer, Jeffrey S., ed. *The Portable Thoreau*. NY: Penguin, 2012. Print.

9. Thoreau & Taking a Stand: "Civil Disobedience"

- Objectives:
 - Analyze Thoreau’s stance on political involvement.
 - Apply Thoreau’s views to modern issues, and evaluate their merit in America today.
- Agenda:
 - Conclude discussion of “Civil Disobedience” (finished reading for homework)
 - Discuss similar “hot topic” current event issues, such as the legalization of gay marriage or police shootings, such as in Ferguson, MO. How can we productively speak out or react to encourage positive change? Can Thoreau’s opinions or actions help guide us?
- Materials:
 - Cramer, Jeffrey S., ed. *The Portable Thoreau*. NY: Penguin, 2012. Print.

10. Legacy: The Impact of Thoreau’s Works

- Objectives:
 - Start to wrestle with the question, “Why do we study Thoreau?”.
 - Understand how authors influence literary, political or philosophical movements as well as other authors or leaders in different time periods.
- Agenda:
 - Read background links, either before class or in the beginning.
 - Discuss the concept of “civil disobedience” in light of Ghandi & MLK.
 - Discuss Thoreau’s influence on conservation efforts and leaders such as John Muir.
 - Discuss McCandless and *Into the Wild*. Has McCandless interpreted Thoreau correctly? What did you think of McCandless’ decisions, philosophy, and outcome?
- Materials:
 - <http://thoreau.eserver.org/mjf/MJF1.html>
 - <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ngier/civil.htm>
 - <https://www.walden.org/documents/file/Library/About%20Thoreau/F/RichardFleck/ThoreauMuirIndians.pdf> (ch. 2)
 - Krakauer, Jon. *Into the Wild*. NY: Random House, 1996. Print.

11. Thoreau & Taking a Stand: “I Have a Dream”, Part 1

- Objectives:
 - Analyze MLK’s “I Have a Dream” speech for rhetorical devices & message.
 - Compare & contrast this speech with Thoreau’s ideas & voice in “Civil Disobedience.”
 - Become familiar with the AP Rhetorical Analysis essay
- Agenda:
 - Students will complete a reading & annotation the night before

- Listen to the speech via AmericanRhetoric.com
- Small group discussions
- Whole class discussion
- Materials:
 - MLK’s “I Have a Dream” speech transcript & audio on www.americanrhetoric.com
 - Cramer, Jeffrey S., ed. *The Portable Thoreau*. NY: Penguin, 2012. Print.

12. Thoreau & Taking a Stand: “I Have a Dream”, Part 2

- Objectives:
 - Analyze strategies for an AP rhetorical analysis essay.
 - Evaluate exemplars to this essay prompt.
- Agenda:
 - Analyze a sample AP Rhetorical Analysis essay prompt (2013 Question 2).
 - Analyze past responses to the essay, evaluating what these students have done well & what could be improved upon.
 - Discuss how to turn our ideas from the previous lesson into an AP essay.
- Materials:
 - 2013 AP Question 2 and the CollegeBoard sample responses
 - MLK’s “I Have a Dream” speech transcript & audio on www.americanrhetoric.com

13. Thoreau & Taking a Stand: Banneker’s “Letter”

- Objectives:
 - Analyze Benjamin Banneker’s letter to Thomas Jefferson (old AP prompt) for rhetorical devices and message.
- Agenda:
 - Students will complete a timed (40 min.) AP Rhetorical Analysis practice essay in class.
 - At a later date, we will discuss the letter, their essays, and make connections between the letter & “Civil Disobedience.”
- Materials:
 - 2010 AP Question 2 and the CollegeBoard sample responses

14. Field Study: Walden Pond & the Thoreau Institute

- Objectives:
 - Connect with the environment of Thoreau’s life.
 - Apply knowledge to hands-on activities and exploration.
- Agenda:
 - TBD. A variety of discussions and activities throughout the day-long field study to allow students to take their learning of Thoreau, Transcendentalism, civil

disobedience, and conservation to the next level as well as take some time to embrace Thoreau's views on simplicity and reflection in a natural environment.

- Materials:
 - Transcendentalist portfolio assignment

Assessments:

- Formative (20% of quarter average)
 - Reading annotation checks
 - Discussion participation
- Summative (40% of quarter average)
 - *Walden* Journal (objectives 1-3)
 - Synthesis essay (objectives 1 & 3)
 - Rhetorical analysis essay (objective 2)
 - Transcendentalist portfolio (objectives 1 & 3)

Rubrics:

- Homework rubric
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/16-KZ6KP0TfJeCyrL21_QPgw13OourpjTph1CaYY3y-A/edit?usp=sharing
- Class participation rubric
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c_34R0gjYCILOQvb7vWQhf0jPhkzFfI5-2MmsOmbwG4/edit?usp=sharing
- AP Synthesis rubric (Question 1)
 - http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap12_english_language_scoring_guidelines.pdf
- AP Rhetorical Analysis rubric (Question 2)
 - http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap10_english_language_scoring_guidelines.pdf
- Portfolio assignment & rubric
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rTqcwlbTda4dwC2DagsmAguvoXvFcVD_kGrd0S9GFpM/edit?usp=sharing

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