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Grade 9
English Language Arts with Science and Social Studies
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Title and Short Abstract:

Watch! Notice! Observe! Designing a Schoolyard Field Guide in conjunction with *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*

This unit is grounded in the essential question, “How can an individual’s sense of place influence identity and the decisions he/she makes?” A part of our ninth grade literature curriculum theme: Celebration of the Individual, this project aims to increase student achievement by integrating nature journaling enhanced by iPod Touch mobile devices and field guide applications, class collaboration on a schoolyard field guide, reading and physicalizing Lawrence and Lee’s *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* and various passages/excerpts from Thoreau’s *Walden*. Lessons will primarily focus on Portsmouth’s English Language Arts Curriculum and touch upon aspects of the Earth Science and American History Curriculum to foster development of high order thinking and problem solving skills.

Duration and Objectives:

According to the Grade 9 English Curriculum at Portsmouth High School, “The freshman program, which explores the theme of ‘Celebration of the Individual,’ emphasizes literary genres and a varied writing agenda, the center of which is the writing process.” One of the works of literature studied in this curriculum is Lawrence and Lee’s play *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, which explores Thoreau’s protests of America’s involvement in the U.S.-Mexican War and his protests against slavery. Students discover how this influential historical figure remained true to his individual values and beliefs, which are clearly shaped through his strong sense of place and the natural world around him. Throughout the unit, students will “evaluate how [Thoreau] developed ideas that have profoundly affected America [and the world]” (SS:HI:12:3.1). Students will analyze how Thoreau’s beliefs about social reform are connected to his philosophy of nature.

This unit plan consists of two parts. The first part is an extended pre-reading exercise that incorporates nature observation, nature journaling and the composition of a schoolyard field guide, which will allow students to identify with Thoreau’s intense relationship to Walden Woods. Part one will consist of five – 40 minute blocks of time in the early fall or late spring. (Portsmouth High School is on a 90-minute block schedule. I will have two separate groups of freshmen – September through January and February through June. I will arrange for the nature observation and journaling to coincide with the seasons where students have the best opportunity to observe natural activity.)

The second part of this unit consists of reading/physicalizing and analyzing Lawrence and Lee’s *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, while interpreting how Thoreau’s connection and relationship with place influence his social reform philosophies. Students will then have the opportunity to articulate

through a modified National Public Radio “This I Believe” Essay how their own sense of place/nature influences their philosophical beliefs. Part two of this unit plan

- Students will watch, notice, and observe the natural world of their schoolyard and then record their findings in their nature journals.
- Students will use iPod Touch technology and field guide applications to aid in accurately recording the nature data they collect through close observation.
- Use excerpts/passages from *Walden* to examine the relationships between people, place, community and nature.
- Students will create and publish a Portsmouth Schoolyard Field Guide using wikispaces.com.
- Students will reflect upon their own philosophical ideals with regards to nature and sense of place and use that reflection to create a personal credo. After reading *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, students will compare their credo to Thoreau’s as they interpret it through the play.

Outline/Lesson Details:

Part I of Unit – Pre-Reading Nature Journaling and Schoolyard Field Guide

Day 1: Introduce nature journaling to students and explain the end goal of a Portsmouth Schoolyard Field Guide created through detailed data collection and collaboration

- The first day of observation will concentrate on bird watching. Students will have 20-30 minutes in the schoolyard to observe and collect data about the birds they encounter. Students can use the iPod Touch Application: *Peterson’s Backyard Bird Guide* to check the accuracy of their observations.
- Students will be given a Bird Observation Notes Form created by Jane Kirkland, which can be downloaded at <http://www.takeawalk.com/classroom-downloads/pages-from-take-a-backyard-bird-walk/>.
- **Prompt for day:** *In The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, Henry grows frustrated with Bailey when Bailey can’t seem to hear, let alone appreciate, the song of a bird. Henry proclaims, “Can you make a cry like that? Or feed on flowers? Or carry the sky on your wings? Friend, you and I can’t even fly.” Do you typically take the time to notice and appreciate the birds around you? Is it important to do so? What do the birds you took notes about today tell us about our schoolyard environment? The Portsmouth environment? Have the birds made you realize anything about yourself or your connection/relationship (or lack of connection) to nature and your immediate surroundings?
- **Homework:** Students will add bird notes to class wiki under bird tab. They may upload a picture they took or an illustration they drew to accompany their notes. If students prefer, they may obtain their picture from CreativeCommons.

Day 2: The second day of observation will concentrate on tree observation.

- Using the iTouch application, *Botany Buddy* students will “accurately identify [tress] according to binomial nomenclature” (S:LS1:11:1.3). To easily implement the features of this app, the science teacher will conduct a tree walk with students,

pointing out the family name of tree located right outside of the school. Students search for the botanical nomenclature of the tree using “Botany Buddy’s” search feature and make conclusions based on comparing the tree they are observing to the result pictures on the app.

- Students will be given a Tree Observation Notes Form created by Jane Kirkland, which can be downloaded at <http://www.takeawalk.com/classroom-downloads/pages-from-take-a-tree-walk/>
- **Prompt for the day:** In *The Maine Woods*, Thoreau writes, “Every creature is better alive than dead, men and moose and pine trees, and he who understands it aright will rather preserve its life than destroy it.” Reflect upon Thoreau’s quotation. Do you agree or disagree? Why? How has today’s nature observation influenced how you understand Thoreau’s quotation? What have you learned about yourself through today’s tree observation activity? How do trees impact your daily life? Are they important to you? How do they help to create our schoolyard’s environment?
- **Homework:** Students will add tree notes to class wiki under tree tab. They may upload a picture they took or an illustration they drew to accompany their notes. If students prefer, they may obtain their picture from CreativeCommons.

Day 3: The third day of observation will concentrate on butterfly/insect observation.

- Using the iTouch applications, *Audubon Butterflies: A Field Guide to North American Butterflies* and *Audubon Insects and Spiders – A Field Guide to North American Insects and Spiders* students will “accurately identify [butterflies and insects] according to binomial nomenclature” (S:LS1:11:1.3).
- Students will be given a Butterfly Observation Notes Form created by Jane Kirkland, which can be downloaded at <http://www.takeawalk.com/classroom-downloads/pages-from-take-a-walk-with-butterflies-and-dragonflies/>
- **Prompt for the day:** In *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, Henry begins his own school outdoors and shouts with joy to his students, “The universe can be our schoolroom...Students! Watch! Notice! Observe! See what is happening around you. Did you ever have any IDEA so much was going on in [Portsmouth Schoolyard]?” (28). Well, did you? What did you find crawling around on the ground or on leave? Did you spot any butterflies? If so, what kind? Before today’s observation, have you ever thought about all of the life that surrounds you everyday? How does the existence of all of this life make you feel? Is it important to share our space with these tiny creatures? Why or why not? How is your sense of place growing or changing? Do you feel any more connected to the outside world in our schoolyard than you did before we started our nature observations?
- **Homework:** Students will add butterfly and insect notes to class wiki under butterfly/insect tab. They may upload a picture they took or an illustration they drew to accompany their notes. If students prefer, they may obtain their picture from CreativeCommons.

Day 4: The fourth day of observation will concentrate on wildflower observation.

- Using the iTouch application, *Audubon Wildflowers – A Field Guide to North American Wildflowers* students will “accurately identify [wildflowers] according to binomial nomenclature” (S:LS1:11:1.3).
- Students will be given a Wildflower Observation Notes Form that asks them to include the following information:

- Type of symmetry
- Family
- Common Name
- Scientific Name
- Quick illustration
- **Prompt for the day:** Thoreau wrote, “In wilderness is the preservation of the world.” How has today’s experience with wildflowers confirmed or challenged this concept for you? Must we preserve our sense of place and if so, to what ends?
- **Homework:** Students will add wildflower notes to class wiki under wildflower tab. They may upload a picture they took or an illustration they drew to accompany their notes. If students prefer, they may obtain their picture from CreativeCommons.

Part II of Unit – *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* and “This I Believe” Essay/Podcast

Days 1-5: Reading/Physicalizing *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* (5 days)

- Students are assessed daily using the “eClicker Student Response System” app.

Day 2: Newspaper Activity

- Students are assigned to groups and given 3-4 pages of the play that they will perform or physicalize for the class.
- Students read through their parts, deciding on blocking and props. Next they “rehearse” several times, feeling comfortable with their lines and making sure they understand what is happening so they can communicate character motivations through their interpretation of the scene.
- Students create costumes using several newspapers, a roll of masking tape and a pair of scissors. Students are required to have a bit of costume (wig, bow tie, beard, etc.) or a prop (pipe, notebook, walking stick, etc.) made out of newspaper to wear or use during their group presentation.

Day 3: Creating a Class Library of Transcendental Songs

- After completing the readings on Day 2 (specifically the conversation between Ellen Sewell and David Henry’s characters), students discover the values and beliefs reflected in Transcendentalism.
- Teacher then shares Ralph Waldo Emerson’s quotation, “We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds...A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men” to further illustrate the philosophy.
- Students’ homework assignment is to research and select songs with lyrics that represent the ideals of Transcendentalism. Once students submit their song suggestion and a paragraph that “provides relevant details to support the connections made” (R:LT:10:4.2), a class library of the songs is created in iTunes and synced to the “Music” section of the iPod Touch under the playlist “Transcendentalist Songs.” The library will allow the class to share their selections, which will be played at the beginning of class throughout the rest of

the unit to increase student engagement and reinforce the ideals of Transcendentalism.

Day 4: Historical Context Research

- Students research the U.S. –Mexican War since Thoreau refused to pay his poll taxes because he didn't believe America had the right to invade Mexico.
- Students then “determine the extent to which Manifest Destiny has been a driving force behind American ideology” (SS:HI:12:2.4) more specifically how Manifest Destiny was used to justify the U.S.-Mexican War.
- Students use the iPod Touch to access credible documents on the Web to do their research. For homework, students will use a Moodle forum to respond to the following question: “Given what you know about Manifest Destiny, was Thoreau justified in not paying his taxes? Use information from your research to support your opinion. Remember to cite all research.”

Day 5: Illuminating Thoreau's quotations to further discover his personal beliefs about nature, government, and civil disobedience

- The app “Henry David Thoreau Quick Quotes” is a searchable dictionary of Thoreau's quotations. Students browse and search the dictionary for quotations that inspire them, that they agree with, or that they believe speak directly to the heart of Transcendentalism.
- Once students choose their quotations, our high school's technology integrator, Terra Merry, shows students how to use Adobe Illustrator to illuminate their quotation, which is aligned with visual arts curriculum standard 2: “Identify and apply the elements of visual art and principles of design to create works that use the principles of design to communicate and express ideas.”
- The final project is added to students' digital portfolios as well as published on our class wiki so the work can be shared. This segment of the project teaches students how to communicate visually.

Days 6-9: Developing individual credos in conjunction with NPR's *This I Believe* Essay and Podcasts

- After studying Thoreau's individual beliefs, it's time for students to reflect and then write about their own.
- *This I Believe* podcasts and the *This I Believe* app provide students with models that illustrate the transition of the essence of daily life philosophy with the shaping of personal beliefs. (See Rubrics – Appendices B & D.)
- After students create and revise (see revision checklist Appendix C) their own essays, they use cap mics and the “Voice Memos” app to record their own podcasts, which will be published on our class Moodle site that can be accessed by both parents and students.
- Just as Thoreau documented his philosophy of living, so do the students.

Day 10: (Optional) Reading and Summarizing *Walden* (Differentiation option for the honors classes)

- Students read selections from *Walden* via the iTouch book app, which is divided into 17 chapters.

- Each student will be assigned a chapter to read and create a bullet list of main ideas, meeting Reading standard R:LT:10:1.2: “Paraphrasing or summarizing key ideas/plot, with major events sequenced, as appropriate to text.”

End of Unit: **Field Trip to Walden Pond**

- Students and teachers travel to Walden Pond. Park interpreters take groups on tours to view the area, a replica of Thoreau’s cabin and the original site of Thoreau’s cabin. The interpreters also share stories about Thoreau, his life and Transcendentalism.
- Teachers will lead students on a hike where they have the opportunity to add to their nature journals – only this time observing the same woods Thoreau “went to...because [he] wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if [he] could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when [he] came to die, discover that [he] had not lived.”
- Students will also have access to digital camera to capture nature images.
- Teachers will replicate another tree walk while students use “Botany Buddy” to specifically identify trees. If time permits, students can also use the “Peterson’s Field Guide to Backyard Birds” app to identify birds.
- Students use their notes to compose Haiku Poems. (See Handout: “Haiku by Walden” Appendix A)
- After trip, students record their poems and add them to the class wiki site. Students will also be given time to illuminate their poems using their original digital images and Adobe Illustrator or Photoshop.

List of Materials:

Bretford PowerSync Cart™

22 iPod Touch Mobile Devices

Teacher laptop (Apple MacBook)

6 Chill Pill Rap Cap Microphones

Moodle Site

Wiki Site

Podcasts

This I Believe

Description: People from all walks of life describe their personal philosophies in a brief essay.

Category: Philosophy

Cost: Subscribe Free

Apps

Audubon Butterflies: A Field Guide to North American Butterflies

Description: Searchable database employing various sorting methods, including shape of the body and general appearance, taxonomic family, and common name.

Category: Reference

Seller: Green Mountain Digital LLC

Cost: \$14.99

Audubon Insects and Spiders – A Field Guide to North American Insects and Spiders

Description: Searchable database of 299 species of insects and spiders found in North America with in-depth information on each species, including habitat, range and size. Include high-quality, professional photographs.

Category: Reference

Seller: Green Mountain Digital LLC

Cost: \$9.99

Audubon Wildflowers – A Field Guide to North American Wildflowers

Description: Searchable database of more than 1,800 wildflowers with thousands of professional color photographs, range maps, and in-depth information from the National Audubon Society's Field Guide to Wildflowers.

Category: Reference

Seller: Green Mountain Digital LLC

Cost: \$9.99

Botany Buddy

Description: Searchable database for trees and shrubs. This app works best if teacher can help students identify the common name. I was also able to create a collection (native New Hampshire trees) and share that with the students on each iPod Touch device. App contains clear pictures of the whole tree/shrub and up-close shots of leaves, blossoms, barks, etc., which can all be enlarged.

Category: Reference

Seller: AVAI

Cost: \$9.99

eClicker Host

Description: Personal response system that allows teachers to poll their class during a lesson. It provides real time feedback. The biggest benefit of this student response system is the price – it's a one-time minimal fee (the cost of the app) unlike many of the other student response systems that are compatible with iPhones and iPod Touch mobile devices, which are either much more expensive, charge per user or annually.

Category: Education

Seller: Big Nerd Ranch, Inc.

Cost: \$24.99

eClicker

Description: Needed for student to connect to teacher's eClicker Host. (Students can download on their own iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad for FREE!)

Category: Education

Seller: Big Nerd Ranch, Inc.

Cost: Free

Cost: \$5.99 (reduced from \$9.99 earlier this year)

Henry David Thoreau Quick Quotes

Description: Searchable collection of more than 160 quotations by Henry David Thoreau.

Category: Books

Seller: Tan Teck Hean

Cost: \$0.99

Peterson Field Guide to Backyard Birds

Description: Searchable database of 180 birds. Search by name or family or by region. Kids love the bird songs – just a hint – have them wear headphones when trying to

match songs on the app to songs of real birds because with 20 kids using the app, no one can distinguish the real bird from the app!

Category: Reference

Seller: Wildsight Production, Inc.

Cost: \$2.99 (reduced from \$14.99 when I purchased it back in October)

This I Believe

Description: NPR's collection of *This I Believe* essays. This app contains a listing of beliefs, featured essay, classic essay from the 1950s, essays by theme, and essays by age group. Users can search the library of beliefs, and they can save individual beliefs as favorites to read without a network connection.

Category: Books

Seller: This I Believe, Inc.

Cost: \$0.99

Voice Memos

Description: Allows users to record personal audio messages. In our case, this is the app we used in conjunction with the cap mics to record students' *This I Believe* essays.

Students can rename recording with ease, and memos automatically upload to iTunes library. Memos can also be emailed. The file format is m4a, but iTunes can easily export memos as .wav files, which can then easily be edited in Audacity.

Category: Productivity

Seller: Phillip Goldenburg

Cost: \$0.99

Walden

Description: Henry David Thoreau's book *Walden (Life in the Woods)*. This app allows readers to click on a chapter and begin reading.

Category: Books

Seller: Stanley Huang

Cost: \$0.99

Worksheets:

See Appendix A – Haiku Worksheet

Rubric:

See Appendix B – “This I Believe” About Nature/Sense of Place Essay Rubric

See Appendix C – “This I Believe” Revision Checklist

See Appendix D – “This I Believe” About Nature/Sense of Place Podcast Rubric

Other:

Links to New Hampshire State Standards:

K-12 Reading New Hampshire Curriculum Framework:

http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/english_lang/documents/reading_frame.pdf

K-12 Written and Oral Communication New Hampshire Curriculum Framework:

http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/english_lang/documents/writing_frame.pdf

K-12 Science Literacy New Hampshire Curriculum Framework:

<http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/science/documents/framework.pdf>

References

Kirkland, J. (2007). *No Student Left Indoors: Creating a Field Guide to Your Schoolyard (Take a Walk series)* (Spi ed.). Lionville: Stillwater Publishing.

Lawrence, J., & Lee, R. E. (2001). *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail: A Play* (1 ed.). New York: Hill And Wang.

Sobel, D. (2004). *Place-based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities, With Index* (3 ed.). unknown: The Orion Society.

This I Believe in the Classroom | This I Believe. (n.d.). *This I Believe | A public dialogue about belief — one essay at a time*. Retrieved August 16, 2010, from <http://thisibelieve.org/educators/>

Thoreau, H. D. (1983). *Walden and Civil Disobedience (Penguin American Library)*. London: Penguin Classics.

Name _____ Date _____

Haiku

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry. It often centers around nature.

Haiku poems don't rhyme; they follow a pattern. The pattern for Haiku generally follows this structure:

Line 1: 5 syllables

Line 2: 7 syllables

Line 3: 5 syllables

A word of wisdom: Because Haiku poems originated in the Japanese language, it's difficult to strictly follow the 5-7-5 rule in English. Like other writing "rules," it can be broken. Don't sacrifice your poem because it doesn't have 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second and five again in the last. (See examples on the back of this handout.)

How to write your haiku.

1. Brainstorm words that describe the nature you're observing:
For example: sunshine, clouds, soft breezes. You should also use your notes from the tree walk with Ms. Merry and "Botany Buddy," which will provide specific, accurate and vivid details including botanical nomenclature.
2. Choose the words that you like from this list.
3. Put them together using the general pattern.
5. Draw a picture (or take a digital image with your camera) to go with your haiku.

Walden by Haiku Excerpts

Penn State/Altoona Professor Ian Marshall took Thoreau's prose from *Walden* and rewrote it into a series of haikus. He assembled them in a book entitled, *Walden by Haiku*.

Here's a sample of a *Walden* haiku:

The first sparrow
Faint silvery warblings
Over bare fields.

Marshall extracted this haiku from the "Economy" section of *Walden*, which describes Thoreau's simplified life in his cabin and the solitude he enjoyed:

No curtains
No gazers to shut out
But the sun and the moon.

Curwood, Steve. "Walden by Haiku." *Living On Earth*. Minneapolis, MN, 24 Jan. 2010. *PRI Public Radio International*. 24 Jan. 2010. Web. 18 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.pri.org/arts-entertainment/books/walden-by-haiku1845.html>>.

“This I Believe” About Nature/Sense of Place Essay Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Thesis	Belief statement is not evident.	Multiple beliefs are listed with little development.	Core belief about nature or sense of place is clearly stated with evidence of development.	One core belief about nature or sense of place is explicit and developed throughout essay.
Purpose	Contains statements that are contrary or negative beliefs rather than positive belief statements.	Contains statements about religious beliefs instead of philosophical beliefs about nature/sense of place.	Tells a story that is connected to your belief about nature/sense of place.	Tells a story that is grounded in your nature observations; links to the essence of daily life philosophy and to the shaping of personal beliefs about the importance of sense of place.
Organization/ Transition	Demonstrates limited or no organization; does not stay on topic; limited or no transitional devices.	Demonstrates ineffective organization; attempts to refer to a single topic; transitional devices are limited.	Demonstrates organization; maintains focus throughout; uses a variety of transitional devices.	Demonstrates unique or effective organization; maintains focus throughout; uses a variety of transitional devices uniquely/effectively.
Details/ Elaboration	Lacks details for the belief or details do not enhance the belief.	Limited use of details; details tell rather than show.	Effective use of relevant details support the belief; details mostly show rather than tell	Unique, rich, insightful, and effective use of details to support belief; details effectively show rather than tell.
Point of View	Uses second person (you) point of view.	Inconsistent use of first-person point of view.	Mostly consistent use of first-person point of view.	Consistent use of first-person point of view.
Writer’s Craft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary • Voice • Tone • Style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak vocabulary; word choice interferes with meaning. • Lacks writer's voice. • Tone is unclear or negative. • Limited or no use of sentence variety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic or limited vocabulary; some incorrect word choice. • Emerging sense of voice. • Tone preaches or judges. • Ineffective use of sentence variety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently varied and effective use of vocabulary; clear and appropriate word choice. • Strong sense of voice. • Tone is mostly personal and positive. • Effective use of sentence variety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich vocabulary, vivid language; sophisticated word choice. • Powerful sense of voice throughout piece, appropriate for purpose. • Tone is consistently personal and positive. • Effective use of sentence variety to enhance voice and meaning.
Mechanics	Errors seriously interfere with meaning.	Some errors that do not seriously interfere with meaning.	Few errors that do not interfere with meaning.	No errors.

Parts of this rubric have been adapted from NPR’s “This I Believe” Essay Tips and the Portsmouth Holistic Writing Rubric

Name: _____

"This I Believe" Revisions

- _____ 1. I have my belief statement about nature/sense of place in my intro paragraph and in my conclusion. If I've repeated my belief statement throughout my paper, it is necessary and not redundant.
- _____ 2. My essay tells a story. A story has a plot, which includes exposition, rising action, a climax, falling action and a resolution. My story is clearly tied to my belief.
- _____ 3. I've included vivid details in my essay that show rather than tell.
- _____ 4. I do not have one single "got" or any form of "got" in my essay.
- _____ 5. I've highlighted all of my verbs and at least 75 percent of my verbs are action verbs. I've done my best to eliminate "is," "was," and "were."
- _____ 6. All of my verbs are in the same tense -- past or present.
- _____ 7. None of my sentences begin with "This," "There," "These," "That," or "It."
- _____ 8. I do not have one single "you" or any form of "you" in my essay.
- _____ 9. I've eliminated all redundancy.
- _____ 10. I've varied my sentence structure and my sentence beginnings.

“This I Believe” About Nature/Sense of Place Podcast Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Expression, Volume and Pace	Reads in a quiet voice. Reading is not conversational; pace laboriously slow.	Reads in a quiet voice. Reading sounds natural in part of the text, but is not always conversational; pace is moderately slow.	Reads with volume and expression. However, reading occasionally slips into non-conversational tone. Pace fluctuates between fast and slow throughout reading.	Reads with varied volume and expression. Reading is conversational and expression matches essay’s belief/ tone.
Phrasing	Reads word-by-word; monotone voice.	Reads in three-to- four word phrases; disregards punctuation, stress, and intonation.	Reads with a mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness. There is reasonable stress and intonation.	Reads with attention to punctuation, stress, and intonation.
Smoothness and Articulation	Frequently hesitates, sounds-out, or mispronounces words.	Reads with extended pauses or hesitations; slows down on polysyllabic words, perhaps incorrectly placing stresses.	Reads with occasional breaks in rhythm; struggles with specific words and/or sentence structures.	Reads smoothly with appropriate pauses; pronounces words correctly with clear articulation.
Using a Microphone / Recording Sound	Microphone is placed too close or too far away from mouth, resulting in poor sound quality. Recording contains unnecessary or inappropriate background noises, nervous giggling/laughing, and/or mic interference.	Microphone placement and/or sound sources create distracting volume fluctuations. Mic pops are harsh and distracting. Recording may contain some nervous giggling or laughing.	Microphone is properly placed, but recording contains some distracting background noises or mic interferences. Occasional mic pops.	Microphone is placed about seven inches from mouth. Essay is re-recorded until all background noises and mic interferences are eliminated. Recording is relatively free of mic pops occurring from words or syllables beginning with “p,” “t,” or “b.”
Title for Podcast (used to label your Voice Memo recorded on the iPod Touch and your Podcast on our Moodle site)	Not present.	Uses generic words that mislead the reader about the content of the essay OR simply reads “This I Believe...”	Uses active verbs that express something about the belief. Title may lack specificity or be somewhat general/vague.	Uses strong, active verbs that express a complete thought about the belief. (Capitalize only the first word and proper nouns and adjectives.)

Parts of this rubric have been adapted from Tim Rasinski – Creating Fluent Readers