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Honors American Literature

Grade 11

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Transcendentalism: A Call for Authenticity

Abstract

Two central themes in the American Literature curriculum are (1) our need for a sense of place and of belonging, and/or what happens to us when we misplace ourselves; and (2) the risks of non-conformity. The books we study connect strongly to these themes:

Ethan Frome, by Edith Wharton: Unable to follow his dream and move to Florida, Ethan Frome's soul shrivels in the frozen wastes of New England. He wants to do the unthinkable: leave his invalid wife and run away with her pretty young cousin.

Death of a Salesman, by Arthur Miller: Willy Loman loves nature and comes to life whenever he remembers his childhood traveling in the frontier in a wagon with his family. However, he believes that the world of business is the only place to find happiness, and is willing to kill himself to ensure that his son follows in his footsteps.

The Great Gatsby, by F. Scott Fitzgerald: Jay Gatsby abandons his home in North Dakota and moves to Long Island to be near the love of his life. But he doesn't belong there and is never accepted by his wealthy neighbors. Undaunted, he will not rest until Daisy leaves her husband for him.

The Scarlet Letter, by Nathaniel Hawthorne: Shunned by the townspeople of Boston, Hester Prynne can feel truly herself only in the forest. But she will not conform to other people's expectations of her and she raises her illegitimate daughter exactly as she pleases.

The Awakening, by Kate Chopin: Edna Montpelier feels she is being her true self on Grand Isle, near New Orleans. At home in the city, however, she feels caged and silenced by her husband's and society's expectations of her, but resolutely flies in the face of convention in an attempt to find herself.

The Crucible, by Arthur Miller: John Proctor knows there is no witchcraft in Salem, but much mischief instead. To prove it he must admit to his adultery with the chief instigator. The play is an allegory for the Second Red Scare when hundreds of Americans in the 1950s were tried and punished for being communist sympathizers and as a work of literature is a courageous attempt to expose the corruption in the HUAC.

My over-arching aim is gradually to bring the students to a deeper level of understanding of the world and of their place in it, first by reading the above works and then by seeing them through the eyes of the Transcendentalists, specifically Thoreau and Emerson. The culminating assignment will be an AP-standard essay which will draw all the strands of the semester together and show the value of non-conformity and authenticity.

Duration

Our school operates on the block system, with English classes held every day of the semester and each lasting in the region of 75 minutes. This unit consists of 9 lessons taking place over 15 days as the end of the school year approaches.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Examine the world they live in and takes notes to promote greater awareness
2. Reflect on their place in the world
3. Assess the relevance of Transcendentalism in today's world
4. Compare 19th Transcendental writings to those of today
5. Apply Transcendentalist philosophies to their own lives
6. Connect the Transcendental readings to the works of literature they have studied during the semester.

Outline

Lesson	Essential Questions	No. of lessons	Readings / Activities
Lesson 1: Understanding Transcendentalism	What is Transcendentalism and why is it important?	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. The story of the Mexican Fisherman 3. Responses from class 4. Lecture
Lesson 2: Paying attention	How much time do we spend outdoors? How observant are we really?	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. Excerpt from <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i>, by Annie Dillard, "Seeing" 3. Responses from class 4. Excerpt from <i>Nature</i>, by Emerson 5. Make connections 6. Discussion topics-small groups
Lesson 3: Going through the motions	What does Thoreau mean by living deliberately? Is it something we can do?	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. TED Talk on Nature 3. Response from class 4. Excerpts from "Walking," by Thoreau 5. Make connections 6. Discussion topics—small groups
Lesson 4: Marching to a different drum	What is the price of non-conformity?	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. "Hammer and a Nail"—sung by the Indigo Girls 3. Response from class 4. Excerpt from "Self-Reliance," by Emerson 5. Make connections 6. Discussion topics-small groups

Lesson 5: Taking action	What are the responsibilities of individuals within a society and why do those responsibilities exist?	2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. Extracts from "Civil Disobedience," by Thoreau 3. Responses from Class 4. Class debate on the topic "Does an individual have the power to change society?"
Lesson 6: Transcendentalism in poetry	How important is experience over knowledge?	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" 3. "The Tide Rises, The Tide Falls" 4. "The Grass," "Summer Shower" 5. Partner work using TPCASTT strategy for analyzing poetry
Lesson 7: Unpacking the ideas and lessons in <i>Walden</i>	<p>What new discovery can I make based on my reading? OR What new skill can I learn based on my reading? OR What can I teach the class, based on my reading?</p>	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. Student presentations on <i>Walden</i>, by Thoreau 3. Student-led discussion groups. 4. Summary/questions/connections to other readings/chapters
Lessons 8: Connecting to our world and the world of literature	What are our responsibilities to ourselves and the world we live in?	2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. <i>The Lorax</i>—the original 1972 cartoon 3. Responses from class 4. Break-down of essay prompt 5. Large discussion groups for brainstorming and outlining

Lesson 9: Getting it all together	How can I show the connections between the Transcendentalists and works of literature?	1	Students write their essay in class, using the notes and outline they created in their discussion groups
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Lesson Details

The unit is structured so that, while the first lessons are taking place, the students are interactively reading their assigned selections at home in the evening and preparing for the following week their presentation based on their insights and understanding of what they have read.

Lesson 1

1. Students will write a journal entry on the following topic: *What makes me happy? What makes me sad? What makes my life complicated?*
2. I will read The Story of the Mexican Fisherman aloud to the class and invite comments. My hope is that they will see the irony in the investment banker's ambitious desires for the fisherman who, in living simply, already has everything he needs.
3. I will spend a while talking to the class about Transcendentalism. The purpose of this initial lecture is to set Transcendentalism in its context, to show how it both responded to what was going on in the world at that time and how it in turn changed that world.
4. At the end of the class, I assign the section of *Walden* that each student is to read, plus the requirements, and the reflection sheet. The students all have at least 7 school nights to prepare their presentation (I draw lots for the order of the speakers; the lucky students have up to 4 days more—if they are willing to take that chance).
5. For homework the students must find an object in nature and bring it to school the next day.

Lesson 2

1. Students will write a journal entry on the following topic: *Take out the object from nature that you brought into school today. Examine it carefully from all angles. Write about it, in as much detail as you can. Really SEE the object. It's okay then if you want to go off on a tangent and allow the object to evoke feelings, memories, or insights.*
2. Oftentimes, students are very curious about what their classmates have brought in and about what they have written in their journal about it. As we transition to the next part of the lesson, I allow some casual conversation, joining in, too, where appropriate.

3. Next, we'll read an excerpt from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, by Annie Dillard, followed by an extract from Emerson's *Nature*. The purpose here is to help the students see the importance of being fully present, and of fully seeing the world around them, not only physically but also mentally. Their eyes and their minds must be wide open, not to mention their hearts and soul.
4. The class will form into small groups to answer the questions based on the readings. Collaboration is key.

Lesson 3

1. Students will write a journal entry on the following topic: *Describe your typical day. How much of it routine, stuff you do without giving it a thought. At what times do you feel most engaged and alive? How can you do more to increase those times?*
2. Today, the focus of the lesson is on living deliberately. It doesn't matter *what* one does with one's life, as long as one does it knowingly and wholeheartedly.
3. The class will watch a short TED Talk called "Nature, Beauty, Gratitude" Afterward, I will invite comments. It's a beautiful clip: simple and moving.
4. Then we will read excerpts from Thoreau's essay "Walking," making connections between the essay and the TED talk. At this juncture, I want to point out to the students that Thoreau wasn't arrogant or hypocritical, an egotist who pretended to be a hermit, while secretly popping over to his parents' house for home-cooked meals. I will explain Thoreau's purpose in life, his curiosity, his delight in all things, his love for people, animals, and nature.
5. The class will form into small groups to answer the questions based on the reading. The focus on this particular assignment is mostly on rhetoric and the devices that Thoreau uses to get his point across.

Lesson 4

1. Students will write a journal entry on the following topic: *Why is it important to teenagers to dress, act, and buy like their peers? Do you know others who aren't like you and your friends, who appear weird or different? How do you feel about them?*
2. Teenagers are terribly sensitive, insecure, uncertain—the list goes on. Belonging, moving with the herd—well within the herd—gives them a sense of security which many will hold on to for much of their lives.

Oftentimes, the troublesome students, the strange ones with the black clothes, tattoos and body piercings, are far more interesting. To the mainstream students who don't know what to do with such peers—who often despise them and sometimes fear them—I say that these people on the margins, marching to the sound of a different

drummer, these people are the ones who observe and reflect on us folk in the middle of the pack, and then hold a mirror up to us so that we can see ourselves in it. These are our future musicians, writers, poets, and artists. We can't be in the middle of the action and stand outside to observe it at the same time. These non-conformists do that for us, and we should be thankful to them. Others devote their lives—risk their lives—by going out on a limb to make our world a better place. We only revere them after they have succeeded or died.

3. The class will listen to the song “Hammer and a Nail,” by the Indigo Girls, while reading the lyrics. It's a strong, upbeat song, showing the importance of action instead of mere contemplation. Afterward, I will invite comments from the students.
4. Next we will read an excerpt from Emerson's essay “Self-Reliance.” The students need to understand that Emerson, in saying that we shouldn't be afraid to change our minds, isn't a flake. He is urging us to permit our mistakes, to learn, to change our minds, to grow.
5. The class will form into small groups to answer the questions based on the reading.
6. As additional homework, I hand out the motion for tomorrow's debate, so that students can begin thinking about it.

Lesson 5

1. Students will write a journal entry on the following topic: *Have you ever gone out on a limb to stick up for somebody, or to protest against a situation that you thought was unfair?*
2. From there we move to Thoreau's essay “Civil Disobedience,” where, after reading, we talk about the necessity/importance/foolhardiness of going up against the system. We will look for examples of current trends and put them on the board. We will talk about the price many people have to pay for their convictions, all the while realizing that the only way we have evolved as a society—step by bloody step—has been through the actions and the sacrifices of the few. Maybe. We must bear in mind the opinions and feelings of many students for whom safety is a far more viable option. Moreover, those students will be able to cite many examples of abortive attempts to go against the establishment. Which is why we have the debate...
3. The students will form two teams, Typically, I'd have the more mainstream students argue yes, and the more non-conformist students argue no. It's always good to see ideas from the opposite perspective. Two teams are appointed, a timekeeper, and a referee. The rest of the class are the judges and will score each speaker based on a rubric. The winning team gets to give their *Walden* presentations last.

Lesson 6

1. Students will write a journal entry on the following topic: *Write about something that you feel you're an expert on. It can be anything from changing an engine in a car to making French braids. Describe what it is you can do so well, and explain how you got to be so good.*
2. The focus of this lesson is to reflect on the importance of experience over knowledge: who knows more about oranges—the scientist who has written a tome about the orange, from its DNA to its cellular composition to its impact on the local environment, but who has never tasted one, or an unschooled farmer who owns an orange grove and eats an orange every day of his life? We will read some poems that celebrate experiential living as opposed to intellectualizing or philosophizing. Afterward, pairs of students will quickly analyze the poems using TPCASTT forms.

Lesson 7

1. Over the next five days, students will write a journal entry on the following topics:
 - (a) *Write about a time when you spotted something unexpected in nature that made you stop in your tracks. Describe the experience in detail and how you felt about it.*
 - (b) *What could you do today to begin to make your life less complicated? What holds you back? Is it hard to live simply?*
 - (c) *Why do you think there is such an emphasis on nature in most of the Transcendentalist writings? Do we have to commune with nature in order to be happy?*
 - (d) *The Transcendentalists all had a close relationship with God, even though at the time, it was very different from that of their neighbors. What are YOUR ideas about God, spirituality, and the reason we are here?*
 - (e) *Think about all the places you are loyal to: your home, neighborhood, school town, country. Write about what any or all of them mean to you. Why do you think you have such an attachment to these places?*
2. Today, and for the next four days, the students run the show. Some inevitably disappoint, both themselves and me, but I'm always blown away by the ideas that the other students come up with. I've had students tape the sounds of the birds, frogs, and insects from the lake near her home and give the class a lesson on what they're hearing; bring in beans, pots, and compost, for their classmates to plant their own beans; show the other students how to do leaf rubbings; build a miniature replica by hand of Thoreau's hut; do a documentary of a walk around Walden, and so on. Usually, there's enough time for five students to do their presentations, depending on class size.
3. The presenters take questions from the class.

4. I come in at the end then and look for connections between what the students have just heard in the presentations and their own readings & study.

Lesson 8

1. Over the next two days, students will write a journal entry on the following topics:
 - (a) *Think of a book or movie, other than those we have done in class, in which the protagonist goes against society. Summarize the book/movie, and provide some insights*
 - (b) The final topic is based on a guided meditation I will do with the class. Standing at the back of the room, so the students don't feel self-conscious, I will get them to close their eyes, focus on their breathing, etc. My purpose is to get them to slip out of their everyday worries and concerns, to help them find a quiet spot in their own hearts and, when there, to spend some time there, focussing totally on the present moment. Having discussed living simply, living deliberately, following their genius, and daring to be non-conformists, they now need to do so.
2. Students will watch the original 1972 cartoon on *The Lorax*, with script and songs all written by Dr. Seuss. One objective is to encourage the students to go back to their childhood and rediscover their innocence. Only when there can they truly realize the damage that's being done to our environment by people who live anything but simply or deliberately. It's good for students to see the underlying themes in what appears to be a movie for children, something which, as older people, they can now understand. There is always time to grow and room to grow. It is never too late.
3. Hand out the essay topic:

In his essay "Walking," Henry David Thoreau offers the following assessment of literature: "In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is but another name for tameness. It is the uncivilized free and wild thinking in Hamlet and The Iliad, in all scriptures and mythologies, not learned in schools, that delights us."

From the works that you have studied in school, choose a novel, play, or epic poem that you may initially have thought was conventional and tame but that you now value for its "uncivilized free and wild thinking." Write an essay in which you explain what constitutes its "uncivilized free and wild thinking" and how that thinking is central to the value of the work as a whole. Support your ideas with specific references to the work you choose.

Students will separate into groups of 4-5 for the purposes of breaking down the prompt, brainstorming, and working on an outline. Each student will most likely have his/her own ideas and work of literature he/she wants to use; the purpose of this forum is to get them talking about their ideas and listening to the opinions' of others. It has been proven that those on the "outside" can come up with some original insights, because they're looking

at things from a different angle, unlike those who are the “experts” and can no longer see the wood for the tree.

I will collect the journals at the end of the class period for grading.

Lesson 9

I have a tried and tested method for getting students to write, well-organized, well-developed, *finished* essays. After they have collaborated on their ideas, their structure, organization, and thesis, the students must now put pen to paper and actually write the essay. But it’s not that difficult:

- they are in a classroom environment
- everyone else is busily writing his/her own essay
- there can be no cheating, as each student already has his/her notes
- I am always available to answer questions or give advice when requested, like a coach on the sidelines
- There are no cell phones, no laptops, no TV’s, no friends calling around to distract the students
- The essays must be finished by the end of class, so the student stay focused.

List of Materials

Equipment: (a) SmartBoard or Screen for TED Talk and *The Lorax* movie

(b) Audio player for song “Hammer and a Nail”

Worksheets and Handouts , see below (the questions on the worksheets have been telescoped in to save space)

1. The Parable of the Fisherman and the Banker

An American investment banker was taking a much-needed vacation in a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. The boat had several large, fresh fish in it.

The investment banker was impressed by the quality of the fish and asked the fisherman how long it took to catch them. The fisherman replied, "Only a little while." The banker then asked why he didn't stay out longer and catch more fish?

The fisherman replied he had enough to support his family's immediate needs.

The American then asked "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The fisherman replied, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos: I have a full and busy life, señor."

The investment banker scoffed, "I am an Ivy League MBA, and I could help you. You could spend more time fishing and with the proceeds buy a bigger boat, and with the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats until eventually you would have a whole fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to the middleman you could sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You could control the product, processing and distribution."

Then he added, "Of course, you would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City where you would run your growing enterprise."

The fisherman asked, "But señor, how long will this all take?"

To which the American replied, "15-20 years."

"But what then?" asked the fisherman.

The American laughed and said, "That's the best part. When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich. You could make millions."

"Millions, señor? Then what?"

To which the investment banker replied, "Then you would retire and do whatever you please."

"But señor," the fisherman said, "that's what I'm doing right now."

(I have made a few slight changes, based on how the story was told to me.)

2. From "Nature" and "Pilgrim at Tinker Creek"

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer the following questions, using evidence from the texts to support your answers: (10 points each)

1. What does Emerson mean when he describes himself as a "transparent eyeball"?
2. Find evidence in this essay to support the Transcendentalist belief in the unity of the human spirit and the natural world.
3. How persuasive is Emerson? Explain why you do or do not accept his ideas about nature.?
4. How might Dillard advise someone to improve his or her ability to see? What is beyond our power to change?
5. Draw parallels between this excerpt and the work of Emerson that you have read.
6. How does this modern work qualify as Transcendentalist? Give reasons for your opinion.

3. From "Walking" by David Henry Thoreau

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer the following questions, supporting your answers with evidence from the text (10 points each):

1. What does Thoreau believe that observers and walkers can learn from nature?
2. Why is Thoreau's essay entitled "Walking"? Discuss several different ways that walking is a meaningful activity in this essay. Who or what is "walking"?
3. This is an essay. Find Thoreau's thesis.
4. How does Thoreau develop his theme or thesis?
5. Is there a turning point in his essay? If so, where is it, and how does it carry his argument forward?
6. How does Thoreau compare/contrast nature and human society?
7. How does Thoreau appeal to logic?
8. To emotion?
9. To ethos?
10. Who are his "authorities"? Who does he discount?

4. "Hammer and a Nail"

Clearing webs from the hovel
a blistered hand on the handle of a shovel
I've been digging too deep, I always do.
I see my face on the surface
I look a lot like narcissus
A dark abyss of an emptiness
Standing on the edge of a drowning blue.

I look behind my ears for the green
Even my sweat smells clean
Glare off the white hurts my eyes
Gotta get out of bed get a hammer and a nail
Learn how to use my hands, not just my head
I think myself into jail
Now I know a refuge never grows
From a chin in a hand in a thoughtful pose
Gotta tend the earth if you want a rose.

I had a lot of good intentions
Sit around for fifty years and then collect a pension,
Started seeing the road to hell and just where it starts.
But my life is more than a vision
The sweetest part is acting after making a decision
I started seeing the whole as a sum of its parts.

My life is part of the global life
I'd found myself becoming more immobile
When I'd think a little girl in the world can't do anything.
A distant nation my community
A street person my responsibility
If I have a care in the world I have a gift to bring.

5. TP-CASTT *Poetry*

Title	Read the title and write what you THINK it means before you read it.
Paraphrase	Rewrite the poem in your own words in the space below.
Connotation	Write the connotative or interpretive meaning of the poem. What's below the surface?
Attitude	How does the speaker/poet use words to express his or her attitude toward the subject (tone, diction, images, mood, etc.)
Shifts	Note shifts in speakers and in attitudes (are there any changes?)
Title	Now look at the title again and discuss the meaning on an interpretive level.

Theme	What is the main idea behind the poem? What is the poet saying?

7. *Walden*—Assignment

On Monday, May __, 20__, you will talk to the class about something you learned from *Walden*.

The assignment is broken down as follows:

1. Interactively read your section.
2. Reflect (in the form of notes) on Thoreau's ideas and opinions.
3. (a) Learn how to do something new connected to your section and talk to us about it—the process, what led you to it, how it connects to *Walden*, etc.

OR

(b) Teach us something that is connected to the section. Make sure we understand the connection between the two.

4. Make sure you have audio-visual aids to support your talk and to keep your audience interested.
5. Your talk should last ten minutes. Too short or too long, marks will be deducted.
6. Complete with depth and insight the reflection sheet for the assignment.
7. Afterward, you will hand in the following:
 - (a) Evidence of your interactive reading
 - (b) The notes and supplementary materials from your presentation
 - (c) Your reflection

8. *Walden*—Reflection Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reflect on and answer the following questions:

1. How was the reading of your assigned section for you?
2. How did you come up with the idea for your presentation?
3. What part of your presentation were you most pleased with?
4. What didn't go so well for you?
5. What would you do differently, if you had to start all over again?
6. Any other comments or thoughts?

Grading System: Culminating essay 30%

Student presentations, reflections and interactive readings 30%

Debate 10%

Class work 10%

Journals 20%

Journal Rubric

	3	2	1	0
<i>Conventions of Journal Writing - Includes date, references to text or data, and personal thoughts and opinions.</i>	Writer follows the conventions.	Writer follows most of the conventions.	Writer follows the some of the conventions.	Writer does not follow any conventions.
<i>Capitalization & Punctuation</i>	Writer makes no mistakes.	Writer makes 1-2 mistakes.	Writer makes 3-4 mistakes.	Writer makes more than 4 mistakes.
<i>Effective Written Communication</i>	Writer communicates thoughts in a clear and organized manner.	Writer communicates thoughts in a understandable manner, but organization could have been better.	Writer communicates in a somewhat organized manner, but ideas were not very clear.	Writer's communicates showed no organization or consideration.
<i>Reflection and thoughts.</i>	Writer demonstrates deep understanding of the topic.	Writer demonstrates some understanding of the topic.	Writer demonstrates minimal understanding of the topic.	Writer demonstrates no understanding of the topic.

Writing Rubric

Content- Overall Quality 10%	Sources- Overall Quality 10%	Organization 10%	Voice/ Audience 8%	Language 7%
<p>10 This paper takes a clear position supported logically by extensive, concrete detail and critical interaction with source material. All key points are thoroughly addressed. Material is clear, relevant, accurate, and concise.</p>	<p>10 Sources are clearly integrated into and advance the argument through accurate use of summary, paraphrase, and quotation. The paper consistently and accurately uses appropriate documentation style. Source material fits smoothly into the writer's own text.</p>	<p>10 The organization is logical; paragraphs are unified, exceptionally coherent, and contain effective topic sentences; transitions are effective. There is a clear and easy-to-follow sequence of ideas. There is no unnecessary duplication of ideas or information.</p>	<p>8 Expresses an opinion from the appropriate viewpoint, makes a clear distinction between opinion and fact, and clearly identifies the sources of ideas presented. The author is clearly attentive to the values of the intended audience, and defends beliefs not shared by other policymakers/representatives. The author handles counter-arguments with respect.</p>	<p>7 Sentences are mature, varied and coherent. Accurate vocabulary and consistent use of standard grammar and mechanics demonstrate outstanding communication mastery. The language used enhances the readability of the paper.</p>
<p>9 This paper takes a clear position supported by moderate but logical detail and critical interaction with source material. All key points are addressed. Material is clear, relevant, and accurate, but may be lacking conciseness.</p>	<p>9 Sources are clearly related to and advance the argument through accurate and appropriate use of summary, paraphrase, and quotation. There is accurate use of appropriate documentation style. Source material fits smoothly into the writer's own text.</p>	<p>9 The organization is logical; paragraphs are unified, coherent, and contain topic sentences; transitions are effective. There is an easy-to-follow sequence of ideas. There is little unnecessary duplication of ideas or information.</p>	<p>7 Expresses an opinion from the appropriate viewpoint, makes a reasonable distinction between opinion and fact, and identifies the sources of most ideas presented. The paper contains words and examples that are likely to appeal to a specific audience, but could benefit from acknowledging underlying assumptions or more effective handling of counter-arguments.</p>	<p>6 Sentences are varied and coherent. Accurate vocabulary, standard grammar and mechanics demonstrate a command of the language. Minor errors may be present, but they do not detract from the readability of the paper.</p>
<p>8 This paper takes an apparent position supported by adequate detail and source material, some vagueness in example or relationship of sources to the argument or lapses in logic may be present. Material is appropriate, but may lack a clear connection to the purpose. There may be some irrelevant information.</p>	<p>8 Source material may be used non-critically, may lack variety, or is mostly limited to quotation. There are occasional lapses in accurate documentation style but they do not interfere with the reader's ability to check sources.</p>	<p>8 The organization is generally clear; transitions are clear but mechanical. The sequence of ideas may be somewhat difficult to follow. Some unnecessary duplication of ideas or information may be present.</p>	<p>6 Appropriate viewpoint is not always evident in the materials presented. There is some difficulty in distinguishing the student's own ideas from the ideas based on information from sources. The paper shows some awareness of an audience, but relies on beliefs that the audience may not share or fails to convincingly address counter-arguments the audience might propose.</p>	<p>5 Sentences are correctly constructed but with little variety; they may contain stiff and stilted syntax. Use of source material may fit awkwardly into the writer's own text. Some evidence of correct writing. Occasional lapses in grammar and mechanics limit the paper's readability, but not seriously.</p>
<p>0-7 In this paper, the position is confused, vague, or uses illogical supporting details. Little evidence of appropriate content.</p>	<p>0-7 Source material is misquoted, used out of context, poorly paraphrased, used non-critically, or has an unclear relationship to the argument. Variety of sources is extremely limited and relies heavily on quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Inaccurate use of documentation style interferes with the reader's ability to check sources.</p>	<p>0-7 The organization is unclear; paragraphs are incoherent or underdeveloped, transitions are unclear or missing. The sequence of ideas is difficult to follow. Discussion branches off into topics that are not clearly related to the central question.</p>	<p>0-5 Appropriate viewpoint is not evident in the materials presented. It is unclear which ideas are the student's own, and which are based on information from sources. A personal opinion may merely be stated, without being tied into the discussion. The paper does not appear to have a specific audience in mind or is disrespectful to its intended audience either by failing to seriously address counter-arguments or by engaging in an offensive tone.</p>	<p>0-4 Sentences lack variety, with some fragments and run-ons present. Inadequate vocabulary or a surplus of grammatical and mechanical errors interfere with understanding of the writer's ideas. Little or no evidence of correct writing. Poor conventions seriously limit the paper's readability.</p>

Presentation Rubric

Category	A	B	C	D
Analysis 40%	Student effectively addresses the topic. He/she offers insightful, relevant support that is fully developed.	Student effectively addresses the topic. He/she offers developed, relevant support that is well developed	Student addresses the topic and offers sufficient support. The information is adequately developed, but could be more thorough.	Student addresses topic and offers some support, but needs more development.
Teaching Opportunity/activity 30%	Highly original idea, extremely relevant to the text. Very clear directions. The class is fully engaged in the activity. Learning opportunity/discovery strongly evident.	Original idea. Relevance to the text is evident if not strong. Clear directions. The class shows interest in the activity. Learning opportunity/discovery is evident.	Activity lacks originality, although some effort is evident Directions lack clarity; class is uncertain of what is expected of them. Some learning/discovery is evident, although not enough to justify the time spent on the activity.	No attempt at originality. Of little or no relevance to the text. No effort to involve the class in the activity/lesson. Class is uninterested in the lesson/activity. No learning/discovery evident.
Presentation 30%	Speaker speaks confidently, clearly, and loudly with commitment to the topic. Speaker shows clear understanding of the topic and has good eye contact, enunciation, and pronunciation.	Speaker speaks clearly and loudly with commitment to the topic. Speaker shows clear understanding of the topic and has mostly good eye contact, enunciation, and pronunciation. Minor errors in the aforementioned do not inhibit the audience's understanding of the presentation.	Speaker often speaks clearly and loudly with commitment to the topic. Speaker shows clear understanding of the topic and has some eye contact. He/she enunciates and pronounces most everything correctly. Minor errors in the aforementioned mostly do not inhibit the audience's understanding of the presentation.	Speaker does not speak loudly or clearly, so the audience may doubt the person's commitment to the presentation. Speaker shows some understanding of the topic, but lacks good eye contact, pronunciation, and/or proper enunciation.

Debate Rubric

	Levels of Performance			
Criteria	1	2	3	4
<p>1. Organization and Clarity:</p> <p>viewpoints and responses are outlined both clearly and orderly.</p>	Unclear in most parts	Clear in some parts but not over all	Most clear and orderly in all parts	Completely clear and orderly presentation
<p>2. Use of Arguments:</p> <p>reasons are given to support viewpoint.</p>	Few or no relevant reasons given	Some relevant reasons given	Most reasons given: most relevant	Most relevant reasons given in support
<p>3. Use of Examples and Facts:</p> <p>examples and facts are given to support reasons.</p>	Few or no relevant supporting examples/facts	Some relevant examples/facts given	Many examples/facts given: most relevant	Many relevant supporting examples and facts given
<p>4. Use of Rebuttal:</p> <p>arguments made by the other teams are responded to and dealt with effectively.</p>	No effective counter-arguments made	Few effective counter-arguments made	Some effective counter-arguments made	Many effective counter-arguments made
<p>5. Presentation Style:</p> <p>tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm are convincing to audience.</p>	Few style features were used; not convincingly	Few style features were used convincingly	All style features were used, most convincingly	All style features were used convincingly

ELA Curriculum Framework Standards

Language

Standard #2: Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.

2.5: Summarize in a coherent and organized way information and ideas learned from a focused discussion.

Reading and Literature

Standard #13: Students will identify, analyze and apply knowledge of the purpose, structure, and elements of nonfiction or informational materials and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

13.24: Analyze the logic and use of evidence in an author's argument

13.25: Analyze and explain the structure and elements of nonfiction works.

Standard #15: Students will identify and analyze how an author's words appeal to the senses, create imagery, suggest mood, and set tone and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

15.7: Evaluate how an author's choice of words advances the theme or purpose of a work.

15.8: Identify and describe the importance of sentence variety in the overall effectiveness of an imaginary/literary or informational/expository work.

15.10: Analyze and compare style and language across significant cross-cultural literary works.

Composition

Standard #19: Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.

19.26: Write well-organized essays that have a clear focus, logical development, effective use of detail, and variety in sentence structure.

Standard #20: Students will write for different audiences and purposes.

20.5: Use different levels of formality, style, and tone when composing for different audiences.

Standard #21: Students will develop and strengthen writing as needed by revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

21.8: Revise writing by attending to topic/idea development, organization, level of detail, language/style, sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics.

Standard #24: Students will gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.

24.5: Formulate open-ended research questions and apply steps for obtaining and evaluation information from a variety of sources, organizing information, documenting sources in a consistent and standard format, and presenting research

Bibliography

1. The excerpts and poems, including the lyrics for "Hammer and a Nail," can all be found in *Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Places*, The American Experience, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 1999
2. The TED Talk on Nature can be found at https://www.ted.com/talks/louie_schwartzberg_nature_beauty_gratitude
3. The performance of "Hammer and a Nail" can be found on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTI2GGNFR_U
4. The original 1972 cartoon *The Lorax* can be found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8V06ZOQuo0k>

Walden!
Emerson & Thoreau

