

*...carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.*

Title: From Horace to Thoreau: Incorporating Thoreau's Writings in a Latin II Classroom  
 Duration of Unit--16 days  
 School--Harwich High School  
 School City and State--Harwich, MA  
 Number of Lessons in the Unit--8  
 Subject--Latin  
 Grade level--10  
 July 26, 2010

### **Short abstract of Curriculum Unit:**

Henry David Thoreau said in *Walden* that he went to the woods “because he wished to live deliberately.” The Roman poet Horace, over two thousand years ago, said in his "Ode to Leuconoe," “seize the day, trusting as little as possible in tomorrow.” One could certainly suggest that these two ideas are related and that Thoreau in his experiment seized the day not only to conduct his experiment but to put the phrase into practice throughout his life. It is almost as if the poem were written to Henry and not to Leuconoe. Throughout many of his writings, one clearly discerns this sense of urgency to wake up and take advantage of what life has to offer us. Many students respond favorably to this message and see these two ideas, "carpe diem" and "to live deliberately," as closely connected. Part one of this unit allows students to develop their own definition for seizing the day by translating Horace's "Ode to Leuconoe," by reading selections from *Walden*, and by interpreting a movie, *Dead Poets' Society*, which makes extensive use of both authors. Part two strives to create a sense of place by taking students on a walk around their campus to identify local trees by their common and Latin names. Part three explores the ways in which Thoreau incorporates stoical ideas in selections from *Walden*.

### **List of Reading Materials**

“Ode to Leuconoe” by Horace

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

“Conclusion” from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau

*Dead Poets' Society, Steven Haft, 1989*

**List of Equipment (i.e. technology, scientific measurement tools, etc.)**

DVD player and TV

*“...carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.”*

Name--Robert Smeltzer

Unit Title—From Horace to Thoreau: Incorporating Thoreau’s Writings in a Latin II Classroom

**Lesson # 1**

Lesson Title – Carpe Diem and Learning to Live Deliberately

Lesson Duration--One class period (55 minutes)

**Abstract (2-5 sentences):**

This lesson is designed to give students the opportunity to figure out for themselves what the phrase “seize the day” means and how to apply it to their own lives.

**Goals/objectives:**

1. Students will partner up with one or two other students to discuss what they think "seize the day" means.
2. Students will write on their own for fifteen minutes explaining what the phrase "seize the day" means and to give three examples which help illustrate it.
3. The class will discuss their varying viewpoints and examples.
4. Condense main points of "seize the day" and write them on the board for students to copy.

**Timeline:**

One class period

**Topics Covered:**

Defining the phrase "carpe diem"

**Specific Readings:**

"Ode to Leuconoe" by Horace

**Link to State Standards:**

Foreign Language Standards 2.8, 2.10

**Procedure/Activities/Homework:**

Students will pair up with another student and will discuss what they think the phrase "seize the day" means in their own words.

Students will then have fifteen minutes to explain what seize the day means to them and to give three examples of it.

A collection of definitions and examples that illustrate the phrase will be written on the board. Students will copy these into their notebooks.

**Assessment:**

Assessment of the class discussion will be by teacher observation.

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**Lesson #2:**

Lesson title: Translating Horace from Latin to English

Lesson duration: Two class periods

**Abstract:** This lesson is designed to help students understand where the phrase "carpe diem" comes from as well as to build upon their translating abilities.

**Goals/Objectives:**

1. Students will translate Horace's poem, "Ode to Leuconoe".
2. Students will paraphrase what the poem means in a paragraph.
3. Students will analyze how the speaker's tone, diction, and images help convey the meaning of the poem in a one page essay.
4. Review poetry analysis.

**Procedure/lesson plan:**

Students will be paired up and given a dictionary to help with their translating of Horace's poem. The teacher will circle the room to help those having difficulty. When everyone is finished, the teacher will ask individual groups for their best translation and provide correct answers.

**Timeline:**

Two class periods

**Topics Covered:**

Translating and poetry analysis

**Specific Readings:**

Horace's "Ode to Leuconoe"

**Link to State Standards:**

Foreign Language Standards 2.7, 2.8, 2.10, 7.1, 7.3.

**Activities/Homework:**

Students will write a one page essay explaining how the speaker's tone, diction and images help convey the meaning of the poem.

**Assessment:**

Assessment will be done by attached rubric.

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**Lesson # 3**

Lesson title: Reading Excerpts from *Walden*

Lesson duration: Two class periods

**Abstract:** This lesson is designed to introduce students to excerpts from Thoreau's *Walden*. Students will examine how Thoreau incorporates Horace's "carpe diem" into his own life.

**Goals/Objectives:**

1. Students will read excerpts from Thoreau's *Walden*, specifically from "Where I lived and what I lived For," and "Conclusion."
2. Students will discuss key quotes from these two chapters with a partner and provide their own interpretations.
3. Class will discuss the quotes and get feedback from students.

**Procedure/lesson plan:**

Partners will be assigned and each group will be given a series of quotes from the readings. Each group will discuss the quotes and then write their responses to them in the space given. The class will have 25-30 minutes to complete the exercise. Conduct a class discussion of the quotes to get varying viewpoints. The class discussion will both help students have a better understanding of Thoreau's writings and help them in their essays at the end of the unit.

See attached worksheet with Thoreau quotes.

**Timeline:**

Two class periods.

**Topic Covered:**

Thoreau quotes

**Specific Readings:**

“Where I lived and What I lived for” and “Conclusion” from *Walden*.

**Link to State Standards:**

Foreign Language Standards 2.7, 2.8, 2.10

**Activities/Homework:**

Students will read excerpts of "Where I lived and What I Lived for" from *Walden* during class. Open class with a question: What does it mean to live deliberately? Discussion will involve trying to understand why Thoreau wanted to conduct his experiment.

**Assessment/Rubric:**

Assessment will be done by teacher observation of the breadth and depth of the discussion.

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**Lesson #4**

Lesson title: Examine themes in *Dead Poets' Society*

Lesson duration: Two to three class periods

**Abstract:** This lesson is designed to introduce students to a story that presents a teacher trying to get his students to "seize the day," "to live deliberately," and to create their own individual lives.

**Goals/Objectives:**

1. Students will watch *Dead Poets' Society* to examine how the screenwriter uses both Horace's "carpe diem" phrase and Thoreau's quotes to build a moving story about seizing the day and living life deliberately.
2. Students will take notes on certain scenes in the movie which illustrate these points.
3. Students will use these scenes as the basis for their essays.

**Procedure/lesson plan-**

Students will watch the movie and take notes on key scenes that help develop the story, especially those that relate to Horace's and Thoreau's ideas.

**Timeline:**

2-3 days

**Topics Covered:**

The ideas of Thoreau and Horace

**Specific Readings:**

*Dead Poets' Society*

**Link to State Standards:**

Foreign Language Standards 2.22, 2.23, 2.24, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3

**Activities/Homework:**

Students will watch movie and take notes on key scenes that help develop the story and relate to themes in Horace and Thoreau.

**Assessment/rubric:**

Students will supply notes taken during movie.

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**Lesson#5**

Lesson title: Essay on *Dead Poets' Society*

Lesson duration: Three days

**Abstract:**

Students will interpret the story, focusing on the way in which the ideas of Horace and Thoreau are used to develop its central themes.

**Goals/objective:**

Students will write a five paragraph essay explaining how the ideas of Horace and Thoreau are used to develop the story's themes. Students will analyze scenes in the movie that help convey these points.

**Procedure/lesson plan:**

Provide a review of the standard expository essay that is used in English classes. Use handout and projector to review.

**Timeline:**

Three days to complete.

**Topics Covered:**

Interpret story and write an expository essay.

**Specific Readings:**

Review expository essay components.

**Link to State Standards:**

Foreign Language Standards 7.1, 7.2

**Activities/Homework:**

Review and explain the components of an expository essay.

**Assessment/Rubric:**

<http://www.amityregion5.org/hsgradreq/Assets/English%20Department%20Rubric%209-12.pdf>

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Lesson #6

Lesson title: Personally Applying Horace and Thoreau

Lesson duration: One class period

**Abstract:**

This activity is designed to give students a chance to apply the ideas presented from Horace, Thoreau, and *Dead Poets' Society* to their own lives.

**Goals/Objectives:**

Students will write a one page essay explaining how they could incorporate the ideas of Horace and Thoreau into their own lives.

**Procedure/lesson plan:**

Discuss with students the ways in which Horace and Thoreau's writings can be used in their own lives. Teacher will tell his own story of how these writings affected him in a personal way. What are the pros and cons of adapting these ideas to their own lives? How can these ideas help us to live more productive and engaging lives? Are there any negative aspects to these ideas?

**Timeline:**

One class period

**Topics covered:**

Personal connection to ideas

**Specific Readings:**

Horace, Thoreau, *Dead Poets' Society*

**Link to state standards:**

Foreign Language Standards 7.1, 7.2

**Activities/Homework:**

Typed one page paper is due in two days.

**Assessment/Rubric:**

<http://www.amityregion5.org/hsgradreq/Assets/English%20Department%20Rubric%209-12.pdf>

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Lesson #7

Lesson Title: Discovering the Flora Around Your School

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

**Abstract:**

Latin is everywhere. By learning the common name and Latin names of trees in their environment, students will have a better appreciation of Latin and of their sense of place.

**Goals/Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to identify the genus/species of basic trees on the school campus. They will learn the common name and the Latin binomial name.
2. Students will review the scientific labeling of trees, which is called binomial classification.
3. Students will create a card with one of the leaves from their walk. The Latin binomial name will be at the top and the common name at the bottom. A colored picture of the leaf will be on the cover.
4. Students will read excerpts from Thoreau's essay "Walking."
5. Students will respond in writing to selected quotes from "Walking" with a partner.

**Procedure/lesson plan**

Guided walk around campus for tree/leaf identification. Students will identify specific trees and bring back a leaf of each tree.

**Timeline:**

Two class periods

**Topics Covered:**

Tree and leaf identification

**Specific readings:**

Excerpts from Thoreau's essay "Walking"

**Link to State Standards:** Foreign Language Standards 7.2, 7.3

**Activities/Homework:** Students will review terms related to binomial nomenclature. Students will walk around the school campus to identify and collect leaves. When they return, they will design a card with a leaf on the front with the Latin binomial name. Inside the card, students will select two quotes from Thoreau's "Walking" essay and explain why they chose them.

**Assessment/Rubric:**

25 points based upon effort and creativity

50 point quiz on tree identification and binomial nomenclature

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Lesson# 8

Lesson title: Finding the Stoic in Thoreau

Duration: Two class periods

**Abstract:**

Not only does Thoreau incorporate the Horatian idea of "carpe diem" to his daily living, he also employs the basic ideas of Roman stoicism to his life and writings. This unit focuses on examining the connections between Roman stoical beliefs and Thoreau's writings.

**Goals/Objectives:**

1. Students will read excerpts from "Where I Live and What I Lived For," and "Conclusion" from *Walden*.
2. Students will select quotes from these two chapters which they can identify as having a stoical bent.
3. Students will meet in a group to discuss these findings and to explain how they relate to Roman stoical beliefs.
4. Students will write a five paragraph persuasive essay discussing how Thoreau incorporates stoical principles in his writings and life.

**Procedure/lesson plan:**

Class discussion of the many connections of stoical ideas which can be found in Thoreau's life and writings. Students will review characteristics of a persuasive essay via smart board/projector.

**Timeline:**

2 class periods

**Topic Covered:**

Stoicism in Thoreau's writings

**Specific Readings:**

“Where I lived and What I lived For,” and “Conclusion”

**Link to State Standards:**

Foreign Language Standards 2.22, 2.23, 2.24, 7.1, 7.2,

**Activities/Homework:**

Students will review basic stoical ideas from Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius and look for connections in Thoreau's writings.

**Assessment/Rubric**

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ELA-ACT\\_Persuasive\\_Essay\\_Analytic\\_Rubric\\_173095\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ELA-ACT_Persuasive_Essay_Analytic_Rubric_173095_7.pdf)