

# Thoreau – A Model for Today?

Title of Unit – <b>Thoreau – A Model for Today?</b>
Name – <b>Caroline Yunta</b>
Duration of Unit – Approximately five days
School – <b>Lowell High School</b>
School City and State – Lowell, MA
Number of Lessons in Unit - <b>3</b>
Subject(s) - ESL
Related Subjects -English Literature
Grade Level(s) – 9-12
Date Submitted – August, 2006

## **Short Abstract of Curriculum Unit (3-6 sentences):**

This unit would be for an Intermediate ESL class, which could include grades 9-12 and speakers of several non-English languages. The number of students in the Intermediate ESL classroom is generally 12 – 16 students. The Intermediate level concentrates on expanding English vocabulary, emphasizing correct grammar usage, and writing with fluency. This unit will incorporate those three components by studying who Thoreau was, what he stated in his writings relative to the use of time and resources, and the answering of the essential question “What’s Wrong With Materialism?” from each student’s point of view.

## **List of Reading Materials:**

Selected passages from Thoreau’s “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” from “Walden”.

English- language dictionaries.

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

A classroom TV connected through an InFocus box to a computer for the teacher’s Powerpoint presentation.

Computers for each student, equipped with the Publisher program from Microsoft.

# Lesson 1

Name - Caroline Yunta
Unit Title - Thoreau - A Model for Today?
Lesson # - 1
Lesson Title - <b>An Introduction to Henry David Thoreau</b>
Lesson Duration -100 min. (ESL classes are a double period)

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

Students will receive an overview of who Thoreau was and why he is remembered through a teacher-created Powerpoint presentation. Particular focus will be given to Thoreau's ideas of simple living as expressed in "Walden". A vocabulary list will be made up by each student of those English words which are new to him or her.

## **Goals/Objectives:**

Students will be able to summarize in their journals what they learned from the Powerpoint presentation on Thoreau's background and ideas. Students will increase their English vocabulary and learn to use their new words in appropriate contexts.

## **Procedure:**

The period will begin with the teacher's introduction of Thoreau as one of the most influential American writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Students will then view the teacher's Powerpoint presentation on Thoreau, which will include quotes from "Walden" particularly related to Thoreau's espousal of simple living. During the presentation students will write down in their journals all English words that are new to them. After the presentation is finished, the students will work in pairs to look up the definitions to their words in dictionaries provided by the teacher. Each word learned will then be used in a sentence in their journal.

For homework, the students will write in their journals a minimum of one page on what they learned about Thoreau in class. They will be expected to use their new vocabulary words in their summaries.

## Lesson 2

Name - Caroline Yunta
Unit Title - Thoreau - A Model for Today?
Lesson # - 2
Lesson Title - <b>What Did Thoreau Think About Materialism?</b>
Lesson Duration -100 min. (ESL classes are a double period)

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

Selected passages from “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” related to simplified living will be read together as a class; discussion will follow on the meaning of what Thoreau wrote and its possible application to modern life. This lesson will also provide an opportunity to learn new English vocabulary and expressions, as well as exposing the students to Thoreau’s particular writing style.

### **Goals/Objectives:**

Students will interpret and analyze selected writings by Thoreau through collaboration. New English vocabulary and expressions will be added to the student’s language register. Students will form an opinion on whether or not Thoreau’s ideas can be applied to today’s life.

### **Procedure:**

Selections from Thoreau’s “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” will be distributed to the class. Students will highlight all vocabulary that is new to them, write those words in their journal, and look them up in their teacher-provided dictionaries.

Working in small groups, students will then discuss what they think Thoreau meant in the selections from “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” distributed by the teacher. Each group will then report to the class on their findings. A full-class discussion will then follow. The teacher will then ask the students if Thoreau’s ideas of simple living can have a place in modern life, and will ask students to respond to that question in their journals, writing a minimum of one page. The journals will be collected by the teacher at the end of the period.

## Lesson 3

Name - Caroline Yunta
Unit Title - Thoreau - A Model for Today?
Lesson # - 3
Lesson Title - <b>Is Henry David Thoreau Relevant in 2006?</b>
Lesson Duration -100 min. (ESL classes are a double period)

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

The next three double class periods will be spent in the computer lab, where the students will work on creating a brochure using Microsoft Publisher or other equivalent program and the Internet. The brochure will include the following:

- A brief overview of Henry David Thoreau - when he lived, who he was, what he thought, and how he lived.
- The student's own ideas and opinions on whether or not Thoreau's ideas can be applied to today's world
- Appropriate graphics, correct English conventions, works cited correctly as per teacher-created brochure rubric.

### **Goals/Objectives:**

Students will synthesize information obtained from the Internet and learn to search for that information efficiently. Students will correctly express their opinions in English writing and will demonstrate knowledge in a creative format. Students will be able to support their opinions.

### **Procedure:**

Students will be in the computer lab on three consecutive days for double-period classes. Directions for the brochure project will be handed to each student together with the grading rubric and the students will then work on their own, with frequent input from the teacher. Students will be encouraged to view each other's work-in-progress from time to time.

## Brochure Rubric

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Grade</b>	<b>100 - 90</b> <b>A+, A</b>	<b>90-80</b> <b>B+, B</b>	<b>80-70</b> <b>C+, C</b>	<b>70-65</b> <b>D</b>	<b>64 and under</b> <b>F</b>
<b>Accuracy</b>	No mistakes, scholarly and accurate. Excellent knowledge of the topic shown	Few if any mistakes, any mistakes must be minor in nature, very good knowledge of the topic shown.	Some, but not many, mistakes made, good knowledge shown.	Several mistakes made, fair knowledge of the topic shown.	Many mistakes made. Does not show an adequate knowledge of the topic.
<b>Demonstrated learning and understanding</b>	Applied integrated concepts; made connections between facts and ideas.	Clearly understood topic well.	Understood topic.	Followed directions, had a basic knowledge of the topic.	Thinking not justified; no evidence that knowledge was acquired.
<b>Mechanics (Grammar)</b>	Grammar usage was without errors.	Grammar had few errors.	Some errors but not enough to distract.	Distracting errors, difficult to read.	Fragmented sentences and grammar. Very difficult to understand
<b>Neat and orderly</b>	Professional appearance	Quality appearance	Neat and orderly, easy to follow.	Moderately neat, almost distracting.	Lacks neatness and orderliness. Hard to understand
<b>Citations</b>	All sources used are cited and in the correct form.	Most sources used are cited and in correct form.	Some sources used are cited and in correct form.	Few sources are cited and in correct form.	Sources are not cited.