

Where's Walden?

An Interdisciplinary Unit on Perspective, Place,
and the Meaning of Home

by Jonathan Hartt

*We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.
- T. S. Eliot*

“Where’s Walden? An Interdisciplinary Unit on Perspective, Place, and the Meaning of Home”

by Jonathan Hartt

Unit Title - “Where’s Walden? An Interdisciplinary Unit on Perspective, Place, and the Meaning of Home”
Name - Jonathan Hartt
Duration of Unit - 9 weeks
School - Maimonides School
School City and State - Brookline, MA
Number of Lessons in Unit - 5
Subject(s) - English
Related Subjects - Science, Art, History
Grade Level(s) - 11
Date Submitted - August, 2006

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

Designed for use in 11th grade American Literature as part of a semester spent on the American Renaissance, this multidisciplinary unit combines local history, art, and science in the study of place. Using Thoreau’s experiences and writings, we will explore the meaning of “the wild,” self-reliance, and living in community. This unit will also emphasize hands-on, field-based learning with the goal of fostering stewardship as well as scientific and artistic inquiry. Students will hike local areas and draw and journal in response to close observation. The quarter culminates in the Journal of Place and a researched presentation that they will make to a non-junior class.

List of Reading Materials:

Walden chapters:

- “Economy”
- “Where I Lived and What I Lived For”
- “Sounds”
- “Solitude”
- “The Ponds”
- “Conclusion”

Other Thoreau Essays:

- “Walking”
- “Civil Disobedience”

Other Sources:

- Excerpts from “Nature,” “Self-Reliance,” and “The Oversoul” by Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “The Sense of Place” by Wallace Stegner
- “Owls” by Mary Oliver
- “The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” by William Cronon

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

- Laptop and projector for Powerpoint presentation
- Olympus Digital Camera
- “The Private Eye” Half Loupe Set: 18 high quality, imprinted loupes (5X) in poly-grid case; box set.

In This Unit:

- Curriculum Unit Outline
- Journal Prompts
- Lesson 1 - “An Introduction to Thoreau”
- Lesson 2 - “Defining the Wild”
- Lesson 3 - “Journaling in Nature”
- Lesson 4 - “Mapping Events in Nature”
- Lesson 5 - “Confronting Inconvenient Truths”
- Sources and Resources

Curriculum Unit Outline

Note: At Maimonides, we meet with students 4 times per week for 45 minutes. If I dedicate one day per week to vocabulary quizzes and grammar review, that leaves me with just 27 class periods per quarter. I have therefore tried to dedicate as much class time to fieldwork as possible. The first four lesson plans train students for more intensive group work and research to be done in the fifth lesson.

Lesson	Time	Purpose	Readings	Assignments
1	4 days	Introducing Emerson and Thoreau	Emerson, "Nature," "Self-Reliance" Thoreau, "Solitude"	Study questions and notes
2	3 days	Annotating and defining the wild	Thoreau, "Walking" Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness"	Annotating and ½ page response to reading
3	4 days	Drawing, journaling	Thoreau, "Economy," "Sounds," "Where I Lived" Stegner, "Sense of Place"	Leaf drawing, sound description
4	6 days	Mapping	Thoreau, "The Ponds," "Conclusion" Oliver, "Owls"	Childhood Place Map, Event Map
5	10 days	Fieldwork	Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"	Journal of Place and Researched Presentation

Key Assignments

Journal of Place

Students will maintain a journal throughout the quarter comprising a minimum of 10 typewritten entries (including five botanical samples with accompanying journals) and a minimum of two maps. Journals will be collected for review every Monday. (See next page for a supplemental list of prompts.)

Class Presentation

Students will continue the work they began with the Journal of Place to further research their home place and make a formal presentation on a topic (the state of the environment, society, government oversight, etc.). If it is a persuasive presentation, it must be made in a way that makes the problem and the student's perceived solutions relevant to their community. The presentation rubric will be student-created.

Journal Prompts

by Matt Burne, Reading Memorial High School

- Go out and spend an afternoon getting familiar with the entire property: walk its trails (if there are any), identify obvious boundary indicators, get a sense of the area's upland and wetland composition, etc. Once you think you've got a good sense of the area, write a descriptive narrative that gives your classmates an overview of the features of the property. This should be written in a matter-of-fact way that gives an accounting of the location, features, and characteristics of the property.
- Observe one organism that you find on your selected property closely for 20 or 30 minutes. Write a descriptive narrative based upon your observations. Be sure to include classification details and other pertinent scientific information.
- In your travels around your selected property, take note of an organism (any type) that you can empathize with. Place yourself in that organism's stead and write about your observations of the young student that you've noticed on a few occasions poking around and observing things.
- What do you think the cultural history is of the area you've selected? How has the land been used by humans throughout time? What evidence is there?
- What is the value of the area you've selected? To whom is it valuable and why? Write a narrative exploring the myriad values of your selected property.
- Write an advocacy piece for your property. Was it worth protecting? Is there a better use of the land? Fully defend your position.
- Draw something you observe on one of your walks. Create several field sketches from different angles or perspectives.
- Create a fictional account of the property.
- Write a poem about your property, or about something you've observed there.
- Write a draft of the contents of a travel brochure for your selected property.

Lesson 1

Name - Jonathan Hartt
Unit Title - "Where's Walden? An Interdisciplinary Unit on Perspective, Place, and the Meaning of Home"
Lesson # 1
Lesson Title - "An Introduction to Thoreau"
Lesson Duration - 4 days

Abstract (2-5 sentences):

Emerson wrote: "It is said to be the age of the first person singular." It is only fitting that "Nature" and "Self-Reliance" – defining essays in American literature – introduce the Thoreau unit and our year of study. Once students grasp the radical influence of Emerson's ideas, we will begin the 100-slide Powerpoint presentation on Henry David Thoreau. It defines Transcendentalism, presents Thoreau's biography, and describes Walden Woods. The follow-up exercise uses "Solitude" to get students thinking about Thoreau's style.

Goals/Objectives:

This presentation is intended to provide a useful literary and historical context for students before (and as) they begin reading *Walden*. It is a 360-degree view of Thoreau's life and legacy. Many of these slides will also become touchstones to which the class may refer later in the unit.

Procedure:

Day 1

Discuss "Nature" and "Self-Reliance," which students will have read in preparation. Review study questions on "Self-Reliance" and important quotes (see next page). Discuss Emerson's "transparent eyeball" metaphor.

Days 2-3

Instructor uses a laptop and projector to display the Powerpoint presentation. Students will want to take notes, but no other materials are needed. Because it incorporates close reading and reflective exercises, this will take more than one period to complete. The presentation features Thoreau quotations, photos, maps, paintings, diagrams, etc. Slides are divided into chapters: "A Brief History of New England"; "The Poet, Naturalist, and Transcendentalist"; "Walden Woods: Ecological and Literary Unit"; "An Environmental and Social Legacy"; and "The Walden Woods Project."

For homework: Read Thoreau's "Solitude" and highlight a favorite line or passage.

Day 4

Discussion. Why did this line from "Solitude" stand out to you? Group students and ask them to share their favorite lines with each other. Once all members of each group have shared, instruct each group to compose a list of adjectives describing the speaker. Who is this person writing to us from some previous century? Possible labels: loner, hermit, saint, heretic, hopeless Romantic, egomaniac, etc. All of these are true and false.

Remind students that this is a persona.

Understanding Emerson's Essay

by Jone Johnson Lewis, Transcendentalists.com

Quotes from "Self-Reliance"

It's worth reflecting on these lines and puzzling them out in context.

- Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string.
- Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members.
- Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.
- What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think.
- A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do.
- It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.
- Travelling is a fool's paradise.
- Insist on yourself; never imitate.
- Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other.
- The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet.
- Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not.
- And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments that protect it, is the want of self-reliance.
- Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

Questions to consider:

- How is Emerson's idea of Self-Reliance different from and similar to the common use of the term (take care of your own needs and don't depend on others outside yourself)?
- Is Emerson really saying "Believe anything you want to believe and do anything you want to do"? Is he really saying "Nothing outside yourself matters"?
- In what ways is Emerson speaking religiously ~ that is, about our relationship to the divine?
- Emerson's religious ideas are claimed today by groups as diverse as the Unitarian Universalists and the Mormons. Does this make sense? How have such different religious groups made use of Emerson's ideas, especially those in "Self-Reliance"?
- How do Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and Thoreau's ideas (in "Walden" and elsewhere) inspire the environmental and sustainable growth movements today?
- What would Emerson think of the survivalist movement?
- What would Emerson think of 21st century American capitalism?
- Would Emerson's ideas as expressed in this essay result in a stronger or weaker government? More or less democracy?
- Was Emerson a liberal or conservative ~ and in what ways? (You might also want to read Emerson's essay "The Conservative.")
- What would Emerson think about today's libertarianism?
- What would Emerson say about the human capacity for good and for evil?
- How have Emerson's ideas helped shape our concept of the American Dream?
- Should students read more essays of Emerson, or just this one? Is this the best selection from Emerson for a high school or college student?

Lesson 2

Name - Jonathan Hartt
Unit Title - "Where's Walden? An Interdisciplinary Unit on Perspective, Place, and the Meaning of Home"
Lesson # 2
Lesson Title - "Defining the Wild" (Based on a lesson by Jamie Pietruska, Dover-Sherborn High School)
Lesson Duration - 2 days

Abstract (2-5 sentences):

This lesson is an excellent way to peak students' interest and introduce Thoreau's "Walking." It will require them to think concretely *and* conceptually.

Goals/Objectives:

It is important to get students outside the classroom walls to experience at least the school's immediate surroundings - whether natural or manmade - before letting them loose on "Walking," where it is easy to get bogged down in Thoreau's philosophical abstractions. This will be the first flexing of their observational muscles.

Procedure:

Day 1

In the classroom setting, tell students they will spend the period in search of things that are "wild" as part of an attempt to define this category. Do not provide any additional instructions or begin eliciting definitions of "wildness" yet. Set the expectation that they will probably need to search outdoors. Follow the class as they make their way outside. Students may search in pairs or individually. Each group or individual must choose one area or object or image to be photographed with the digital camera. Each group or individual should explain briefly what is "wild" in the chosen setting. (Digital images will be uploaded to a slideshow for the following day.)

If students finish early, they may begin their homework.

For homework: Read most of Thoreau's "Walking" and annotate. Remind students that highlighting key words or phrases and annotating highlights with marginal notes can be very useful. Consider elements such as speaker/audience, tone, occasion, purpose, and subject. This may call for a quick review of drawing conclusions and making inferences.

Day 2

Give students time (10 minutes or so) to revisit or finish "Walking" while you prepare the slideshow equipment. Then display the "wild" images from yesterday. Have students explain their choices.

Class discussion of Thoreau's definition of "the wild." What is "the wild"? Is it a place? Is it a metaphor? How can a region (West) be "wild"? (The page numbers below are from the 1991 Beacon Press edition of Emerson's "Nature" and Thoreau's "Walking," with an introduction by John Elder.)

Significant quotations and concepts for discussion:

- Nature = "absolute freedom and wildness" (71)
- Man should inhabit nature, not society (71)
- Man should be equally at home everywhere
- "Half the walk is but retracing our steps" (73)
- "I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit...But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village" (78)
- There's a "subtle magnetism in Nature" that will guide us
- "Eastward I go only by force, but westward I go free" (86)
- "We go eastward to realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race; we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure" (87)
- "From the East light; from the West fruit" (90)
- West = Wild (94)
- "How near to good is what is wild" (97)
- "Life consists with wildness" (97)
- "Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated field, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps" (98)
- "My desire for knowledge is intermittent, but my desire to bathe my head in atmospheres unknown to my feet is perennial and constant" (113)
- "I live a sort of border life" (115)

For homework: Write at least ½ page relating something in "Walking" to something going on in your life or current events. Tell students that this is a kind of extended annotation and it will be especially easy if they completed last night's homework.

Day 3

Collect homework and offer the floor to whoever would like to share their writing. This time may also be used for concluding class discussion of “Walking.” How is it an American essay?

Either give students plenty of time to read Cronon’s “The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” or select from the quotes below. Either way, make yourself available to students.

Cronon’s perspective is a welcome counterpoint to the Romantic idealism normally associated with Transcendentalism—students won’t so easily dismiss Cronon. A frank discussion of environmentalism in this context may clear the air. Ask students to explain the following quotes (taken from his essay in *Uncommon Ground*):

- “Far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity, it is quite profoundly a human creation...” (69).
- “The removal of Indians to create an “uninhabited wilderness”—uninhabited as never before in the human history of the place—reminds us just how invented, just how constructed, the American wilderness really is. To return to my opening argument: there is nothing natural about the concept of wilderness” (79).
- “By imagining that our true home is in the wilderness, we forgive ourselves the homes we actually inhabit” (81).
- “Indeed, my principal objection to wilderness is that it may teach us to be dismissive or even contemptuous of such humble places and experiences. Without our quite realizing it, wilderness tends to privilege some parts of nature at the expense of others” (86).
- “We need to honor the Other within and the Other next door as much as we do the exotic Other that lives far away...” (89).

One conclusion that may be reached at the end of discussion may be that Thoreau is not so Romantic as might be thought. Perhaps he was living by the same ethic that Cronon preaches: the most important wilderness may be found in one’s own backyard.

Lesson 3

Name - Jonathan Hartt
Unit Title - "Where's Walden? An Interdisciplinary Unit on Perspective, Place, and the Meaning of Home"
Lesson # 3
Lesson Title - " Journaling in Nature " (Based on Walden Seminars lessons)
Lesson Duration - 4 days

Abstract (2-5 sentences):

Self-expression is extremely important for the development of children and adolescents. Nature journaling develops students' observational skills and often leads to more thoughtful and reflective journaling and writing. Journaling in the outdoors develops a student's sense of place, a connection to the places in which he or she lives.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will learn to observe, document, and classify botanical samples using scientific method and Thoreauvian observation skills. This lesson transitions well to mapping and intensive research.

Procedure:

Day 1: Sights

Ask students to name popular commercial brands and draw them. Then, ask them to name trees and draw their leaf shapes. Ask them to compare the two exercises and to reflect. Which exercise was easier? Why? Let's not fool ourselves into thinking that we are the same people that we were 100 years ago. Our natural "education" is considerably lacking. Let's do something about that!

Hand out a packet containing excerpts from Thoreau's journal, a leaf key, and select pages from the Little-Luther unit - a botanical journal page, a botanical sample page, a suggested list of Greater Concord plants (an adapted version), and Nature's Design Handbook, a guide to the six basic forms and patterns in nature. Ask students to look over the botanical sample drawing template. They will be using this in a minute.

Directions for students: Find a leaf - it may be a tree leaf or a plant leaf - and complete a sketch of your sample. This drawing will be due at the end of class. If you have a chance, also try to find the common and scientific names of the plant to which it belongs.

Distribute a jeweler's loupe to each student. Tell them that they may find this useful when they draw their detail view. Then, get outside and, using a leaf key or field guide, help students identify their specimens. In Brookline we are likely to find red maple and white pine and evergreen shrubs, among others.

Spend some time at the end of class sharing drawings. Ask students what they thought of the exercise. Some will say that they can't draw, but it's important to encourage them to try. Don't allow them to make excuses.

For homework: Read “Economy” Part 1(pages 1-13) and annotate.

Day 2: Sounds

Class discussion of “Economy.” Give students 2 minutes to find their favorite line, then go around the room reading them. Also, try this: direct the 2nd student to explain why they think this line appealed to the 1st student. A teacher will learn a lot about his or her class this way, but it may be easier to do this in a private school than in a public school, as students will be more familiar with one another.

Allow students to venture outside and use the rest of the period to respond to this prompt:

Sit down with your eyes closed for 2 minutes. Pay attention to the sounds around you. Did you hear birds, trees, car horns, construction, etc.? Just as a music score creates a feeling or tone in a movie (often manipulatively), these sounds are part of your experience and therefore equally important to your perception of place. Describe what you hear.

For homework: Read Thoreau’s “Sounds” and highlight a favorite passage.

Day 3: Touch

Class discussion of the sounds from yesterday. What did you expect? What did you experience? What was new to you? What did Thoreau hear while he was at the Pond?

After discussion, get outside. Put nature objects in a box and ask one volunteer to identify the object by putting his/her hand through a hole in the box. Ask the volunteer to describe the object using adjectives. Show the object to the rest of the group beforehand, so that they know what their peer is touching. After the volunteer has listed at least three or four adjectives, he or she may attempt a guess. If stumped, he or she may ask for an adjectival hint from the group.

Any remaining time can be devoted to journaling. Students should pick something that they observe every day (preferably in nature) and describe or draw it. Loupes may be used for this exercise.

For homework: Read Thoreau’s “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” and paraphrase his message.

Day 4: All Senses

Only those students who finished their reading homework may participate in the following warm-up exercise:

- Divide your students into teams of two.
- Blindfold one person and spin him/her around to lose all sense of direction.
- Lead the blindfolded person to a site.
- The blindfolded person uses his or her sense of touch, smell, taste, and hearing to get to know the spot.
- Next, lead the blindfolded person away. Remove the blindfold. Ask the person to find the spot he/she explored when blindfolded.
- Switch roles.

Next, guide a class discussion of “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” and Thoreau’s rhetoric. Are there any lines or passages here that scream thesis or quotable quote? Does this chapter have a main idea, or is it merely a compilation of deep thoughts? Finally, how did you respond to this reading?

For homework: Read Stegner’s “The Sense of Place” and highlight as you go.

Lesson 4

Name - Jonathan Hartt
Unit Title - "Where's Walden? An Interdisciplinary Unit on Perspective, Place, and the Meaning of Home"
Lesson # -4
Lesson Title - "Mapping Events in Nature" (Based on Walden Seminars lesson)
Lesson Duration - 4 Days

Abstract (2-5 sentences):

This lesson will teach students how to record their experiences and observations in a spatial and representational way. Mapping a great way to approach journaling and the study of ecology.

Goals/Objectives:

The objective is to get them so involved that the instructor will not need to push them into discovery. By beginning with a childhood place, students will rediscover a fondness for their home place and for their own personal memories. This will get them to start thinking about the cause-and-effect relationship between human beings and their natural environment.

Procedure:

Day 1

Class discussion of Wallace Stegner's "Sense of Place" and Stegner's definition of an American. How does Stegner define a "place"? What does it mean to be a "placed person"? What role does History (big 'H') play in the New World? What literary authorities does he cite?

Next, the instructor should introduce the Childhood Place Map exercise. Explain these instructions briefly:

Draw a map of your special childhood place. It can be a neighborhood or a city park or just your backyard. Do not bother to draw this map to scale. It is better to choose an outdoor location and make important things larger, non-important things smaller or nonexistent.

Remind students that this is an assignment that will require some reflection and one that they will share with the class tomorrow. It is better not to show them an example; you don't want to limit their creativity. Allow students time and room to roam. Art materials that should be made available: unlined paper, markers or crayons, rulers.

For homework: Complete the Childhood Place Map

Day 2

Before collecting the maps, group students and have them share their maps with each other. Tell them to discuss why it was important and how it made them feel. Then describe what the place is like now. What does that mean to you? How symbolic can a map be? After students have had a chance to share with the class, the

instructor may want to share his or hers also. I will show them my map of Haiti, Ecuador, and Seattle and remind them of Stegner's words: "These migrants drag their exposed roots and have trouble putting them down in new places." The key to rootedness is inquiry.

Group activity: map comparisons of Concord. Group students and provide each group with 3 different types of maps of Concord: 1852 historic, modern topographic, modern aerial. Allow students 15 minutes to study them closely and, in their groups, write down:

- a) the differences between types of maps and the information they carry
- b) changes in the Concord landscape that you notice by comparing the 1852 and modern maps

Discuss the students' conclusions. Write them on the board. Similarities: Concord/Assabet/Sudbury rivers, hills, most ponds, railroad, town center, town roads. Differences: number of houses, Rte. 2, golf course, ballfields, Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge, sandpit, landfill.

Questions to consider:

- What can we infer about the town and people of Concord?
- What was its chief industry?
- How did they manage the land?
- What is the distance between Walden and the town?
- How does the past influence and create the present conditions?
- How might Concord compare to Brookline?
- What information is missing from these maps?

For homework: Read Thoreau's "The Ponds" and annotate.

Day 3

Read these quotes by Thoreau from *Walden*:

"The scenery of Walden is on the humble scale, and, though very beautiful, does not approach to grandeur, nor can it much concern one who has not long frequented it or lived by its shore; yet this pond is so remarkable for its depth and purity as to merit a particular description."

"When I was four years old, as I well remember, I was brought from Boston to this my native town, through these very woods and this field, to the pond. It is one of the oldest scenes stamped on my memory. And now, to-night my flute has waked the echoes over that very water. The pines still stand here older than I; or, if some have fallen, I have cooked my supper with their stumps, and a new growth is rising all around, preparing another aspect for new infant eyes. Almost the same johnswort springs from the same perennial root in this pasture, and even I have at length helped to clothe that fabulous landscape of my infant dreams, and one of the results of my presence and influence is seen in these bean leaves, corn blades, and potato vines."

Then have students respond to some of these **reflective journaling questions**.

- What are the qualities that Thoreau depicts about his relationship to Walden Pond and Walden Woods in this selection?
- What are the words that he uses?

- What is the atmosphere that he evokes?
- What are the actions implied?
- Where does he fit in to his surroundings?
- What do you think Thoreau wants the reader to feel? To think?
- Do you have a sense of place? What is your Place or Places?
- Why is it important to have a sense of place?

Afterwards, discuss. Highlight some favorite lines from “Higher Laws” and then ask students for some of their own from “The Ponds.” What imagery did you find striking? Note the spiritual importance of the Pond to Thoreau. What metaphors or symbols does Thoreau use? How is this a particularly spiritual or Transcendental chapter?

For homework: Read Mary Oliver’s essay, “Owls.”

Day 4

Briefly discuss “Owls” and Oliver’s method of description. Is she spiritual like Thoreau? Is she scientific? Are these approaches mutually exclusive, or can they be complimentary?

Inform students that they are taking a hike off-campus tomorrow from the Brookline Reservoir to Olmsted Park. They will need comfortable walking shoes and water.

Introduce the Event Map below.

An event map is a way of recording and remembering your experiences and feelings on a particular day outside. One can think of it as showing an “adventure over time.” This type of map shows a trail of personal encounters. It helps to answer the question, “What’s going on here?” by including a mixture of words, images, and symbols.

To create this map you need to be alert, but you also need to allow things to happen independent of you in the environment. Naturally, the more quiet you can be in preparing this map, the more things you will notice that will be going on around you! This is not necessarily a map that is drawn to scale. It shows your route through the landscape, but the more interesting a particular event is to you, the larger you may want it to appear on your map.

How to prepare an event map:

- Try to make the overall shape of the map mirror your own path.
- Mark the sites of “event,” or things that catch your attention, using at least a few words and images, sketches, or careful drawing.
- You may find that you note some events briefly while others you detail very carefully. You will need to decide how much detail you want to include for each event.
- Any questions that come up as you are walking can become events.
- Don’t worry about being able to name everything you see. You are not expected to be able to do this. If you can name it, great! Otherwise you may decide to research the unknown object later using a field guide or reference book.

Some starting ideas for your Event Map:

- Changes in altitude
- The terrain underfoot
- Wet areas
- Plants
- Clouds (shapes and shadows)
- Geology (interesting rocks, etc.)
- Microenvironments
- Animals and animal behavior
- Lighting and light reflections
- Wind patterns (e.g. over water)

Inform students that the goal of the visit will be to gather information about the green spaces they will visit in this urban area - roads, water, plants, animals, people, etc. Brainstorm with them how it might be best to take notes, so that they can complete their maps when they return.

For homework: Work on Event Maps of today’s hike.

Day 5

Finish Event Maps.

For homework: Read Thoreau’s “Conclusion.”

Lesson 5

Name - Jonathan Hartt
Unit Title - "Where's Walden? An Interdisciplinary Unit on Perspective, Place, and the Meaning of Home"
Lesson # 5
Lesson Title - "Confronting Inconvenient Truths"
Lesson Duration - 10 days

Abstract (2-5 sentences):

This lesson is an introduction to the researched presentation. Having concluded *Walden*, it is time to act on Thoreau's advice. The questions now are:

- How do we take Thoreau's ideas and implement them at home?
- How do we turn prescriptions into positive actions?
- Who in the community would have an interest in these issues? Why?
- What are the kinds of things we would like for our community?

Goals/Objectives:

Students will read "Civil Disobedience," continue their work on their Journals of Place, and begin to conduct scientific and historical research (either alone or in small groups) in preparation for an in-class presentation about their home place. In order to acknowledge their efforts and in order to make a difference in their own school, student will be challenged to present their findings to a class of non-juniors.

Procedure:

The remaining class periods this quarter will be dedicated to field trips and visits to the computer lab. Here are some "wishlist" ideas for final activities:

- Watch the film *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) and discuss it
- Maimonides biology teacher Nate Berman lectures on botany
- Visit the Concord Museum
- Thoreau reenactor Richard Smith (Concord Museum) accompanies the class on a nature walk
- Join a local environmental protest rally

Sources and Resources

Lessons:

“English Curriculum Unit” by Jamie Pietruska, Dover-Sherborn High School

“Forbidden Places and Forgotten Spaces - Exploring Interlachen Watershed Area” by Bill Goncalo, Bishop Connolly High School

“Art & Science: Where Do You Draw the Line?” by Wayne D. Little and C. David Luther, Burlington High School

“Natural History Writing” by Matt Burne, Walden Woods Project

Internet:

Charles River Watershed Association: <http://www.crwa.org>

Jamaica Pond Project: <http://communityartsadvocates.org/jamaicapondproject.html>

Emerald Necklace Conservancy, <http://www.emeraldnecklace.org>

Massachusetts Audubon Society, <http://www.massaudubon.org>

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)—Division of Urban Parks and Recreation, <http://www.mass.gov/dcr>

Massachusetts Forestry Association, <http://www.massforests.org/>