

Thoreau: Exploring Sense of Place in Society

By Katie Hillstrom

Title of Unit- Thoreau: Exploring Sense of Place in Society
Name- Katie Hillstrom
Duration of Unit- Direct Thoreau lessons: 1 to 1.5 weeks; however, ideas and concepts will be woven throughout the semester.
School- Winchester High School
School City and State- Winchester, MA
Number of Lessons in Unit- 6 (six)
Subject(s)- English
Related Subjects- History, Art (although I won't be working with those depts.)
Grade Level(s)- grade 10
Date of creation: August, 2006; projected date of use: Jan./Feb. 2007

Short Abstract of Curriculum Unit:

The second semester of the 10th grade year is entitled "American Dream"; we teach American Literature and use this overarching title as a way to find a thematic connection among all the texts. The Thoreau Unit will be introduced near the beginning of the semester, since he was one of our earliest recognized American writers. We will explore all of these ideas related to Thoreau: *sense of place, the outsider, freedom, and what it means to "live deliberately," be successful, etc. (American Dream ideas)*. After spending 1-2 weeks studying Thoreau, we will move on to the other planned texts for the semester; however, we will use our developed ideas about Thoreau, place, and the American Dream to guide our studies of the rest of the American Dream literature. In a sense, our studies of Thoreau will be a doorway to understanding what it means to have a "place" in society vs. being an outsider (or having freedoms restricted). Students will reflect and write about their own place throughout the semester, as well as explore how characters in the literature struggle with finding a "place" in their search for the "American Dream." *See the Introduction to this unit for the essential questions that will help guide our study.*

List of Reading Materials:

- Excerpts from *Walden* (most likely, but subject to change: portions of "Economy," "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," "Solitude," and "Conclusion").
- Portions of "Slavery in Massachusetts", "Civil Disobedience", "A Plea for Captain John Brown", and "Life without Principle".
- Some excerpts from Thoreau's journals about his ideas on freedom and slavery.

Additional texts we will study throughout the semester:

The Crucible; *Catcher in the Rye*; related poems, essays, articles (need to select!); *Nine Stories*; possibly *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; *The Great Gatsby*.

List of Equipment

computer, LCD projector, place journals (created by students), maybe loops, texts and copies of essays, journal excerpts, any other related reading materials.

Introduction

I wanted to include this introduction to further explain how I plan to combine a shorter, more focused study of Thoreau (the “meat” of this unit) with a broader study of the American Dream in general and how the *ideas* we discuss during the Thoreau study will be integrated (hopefully, if successful!) throughout the rest of the semester, even if we are not talking about Thoreau specifically. The following specific lesson plans will outline the focused Thoreau study, while this introduction will provide a general overview of how I plan to connect the ideas in the mini-Thoreau unit to the rest of the semester’s study, therefore allowing Thoreau and his ideas to be integrated indirectly into the entire semester’s exploration of the American Dream.

There will be two major Thoreau-connected assignments that students will work on over the course of the semester (which I will introduce these during our Thoreau study at the semester’s beginning):

1) **Place Journal**—Students will continue to use the journal they start during our Thoreau study (see attached lesson plans) outside of class, with the knowledge that they will receive a completion grade as well as a quality grade. They will need to visit their selected “place” once a week and record observations as well as feelings. They will also have guiding questions to help provide structure, especially for those who are less comfortable with the journaling idea. (*See attached handout for details.*)

2) **Service learning project**—Students will have two options:

a) They find a place in their community that they want to improve somehow (maybe it could even be their journaling place) and perform an ongoing project there, with written reflections and a culminating presentation to the class.

OR

b) They identify a group of people who are still outsiders/on the fringes, in our society—immigrants, homeless, minorities, disabled, etc.—and volunteer some time at a related organization, with written reflections about the American Dream/what it means to have a “place” in today’s society and a culminating presentation to the class.

(*See attached handout for details.*)

Essential Questions to guide Thoreau & American Dream Unit:

- 1) What is “place”?
- 2) What does it mean to have a “sense of place” in society?
- 3) Where is your “place” and how does this place help to identify who you are, as well as your connection to society?
- 4) How did Thoreau use Walden to help identify who he was, and what was his relationship to society?
- 5) How do the characters in the literature we will read this semester struggle to find their own place in a society that presents them with challenges and obstacles? (Note the importance of the “outsider” throughout literary history.)
- 6) What is the American Dream? (Note differences in ideas about it over time—from beginning of country’s existence to present day society.) **Note: This is a question we will discuss in separate lessons at the very beginning of the semester, before starting Thoreau Unit.**
- 7) How does one’s sense of place connect to ideas about the American Dream? What were Thoreau’s ideas related to the American Dream? What would he think of our materialistic leanings now and our lack of connection to real “place” in society? (or do kids even agree?)
- 8) In the works we study, how does each character’s struggle to find a place in society connect with his/her struggle to achieve the American Dream?

Thoreau Unit Lesson Plan 1

Name: Katie Hillstrom

Unit Title: Thoreau: Exploring Sense of Place in Society

Lesson #: 1

Lesson Title: *Observing the Ordinary; Discovering the Extraordinary*

Lesson Duration: one 47 minute class period

Abstract: As a “hook” activity, before introducing Thoreau, students will explore the limited “wild” right outside their school building’s doors. They will observe an object in nature, reflect in writing, & discuss the experience as a creative introduction to Thoreau and the idea of “place”.

Goals/Objectives: Students will be able to explore the school’s outdoor space as an introduction to “place” and will practice observing and writing about an object closely, as well as understand the activity’s connection to our future studies: how good authors & readers are masters at observation and how the idea of “place” will be woven throughout the semester.

Procedure:

- **Timeline:** a one day lesson; see activities for specific time increments.
- **Topic(s) Covered:** observing nature, noticing details, writing & illustrating, and the idea of place as connected to Thoreau
- **Activities:**
 - 1) As students come into the classroom, tell them we will be going outside for the first ten minutes of class, and, as it will most likely be chilly (Jan.), give them a chance to retrieve coats, gloves, hats if necessary.
 - 2) Take them to the small patch of grass /trees/rocks behind the school, making sure they have a notebook and a pen/pencil.
 - 3) Ask them to find ONE natural object in the immediate space. Note that this is an *individual* activity, so they each need their own object, or if they are sharing a bigger object, they must still work *silently*. They should observe this object closely for 5-7minutes: sketch it, describe it in as much detail as possible—from the concrete to the abstract—and also write about how they are *feeling* during this exercise.
 - 4) Once back inside, begin a class discussion by asking WHY they think I had them participate in this activity and HOW they felt about it. Desired discussion outcomes: A) Students will share and explore the challenges of paying such close attention to one thing. B) Students will share the feelings they had while partaking in the activity. C) Students will discuss whether it changed their view of what is right outside the school’s doors OR of the objects in nature that they take for granted. I will NOT, during their discussion, share my reasons for the activity yet. (20 minutes)
 - 5) Wrap up their discussion and connect the activity to what we will be studying: explain how both talented writers and readers are also skilled observers and introduce the idea of place by sharing that we will be studying Thoreau, who was a masterful observer and appreciator of place, as is so evident in *Walden*.
- **Homework:** Find a journal they can use over the course of the semester that has plenty of room for writing and illustrating. Buy it or make it, but be aware that I want it to have a creative cover eventually. Every journal should have the generic title “Place Journal” on the cover and the student’s name, but they can add their own subtitle and photos, collage, other art over time.

Leave the first page of the journal empty (for an illustration/photo of their place), then complete these two entries for homework: 1) Label as entry # 1 & include the date! Transfer the observation notes from today’s activity into your new Place Journal—feel free to cut & paste, or to rewrite. 2) Label as entry #2 & include the date! Answer this question: What is place? Define it and write your thoughts about what it means to have a “sense of place.” No “right” answers! Think outside the box!
- **Assessment/Rubric:** No concrete assessment; observation of discussion and brief check of day’s writings; homework will be checked for completion next day.

Thoreau Unit Lesson Plan 2

Name: Katie Hillstrom

Unit Title: Thoreau: Exploring Sense of Place in Society

Lesson #: 2

Lesson Title: *What does it mean to have a sense of place?*

Lesson Duration: one 47 minute class period

Abstract: The bulk of this lesson will consist of two discussions: students will understand the meaning of “place” by sharing their own ideas and creating a definition AND students will explore the idea of living in relative solitude, minus creature comforts. The last part of the lesson will include a brief introduction from me about Thoreau, and will allow them to share their prior knowledge, if any, of Thoreau.

Goals/Objectives: Students will be able to understand multiple perspectives about “place,” create a class definition, and recognize the connection between yesterday’s activity and our upcoming study of Henry David Thoreau.

Procedure:

- **Timeline:** a one day lesson; see activities for specific time increments.
 - **Topic(s) Covered:** definition of place, ideas about solitude, necessities vs. desires, materialism of today’s society vs. Thoreau’s, and Thoreau’s reasons for going to Walden Woods, brief info. about the work
 - **Specific Readings:** *New York Times* article, “Someone to Watch Over Me (on a Google Map)”

 - **Activities:**
 - 1) Students will share their homework journal entries about place and discuss their insights with each other. (5 min.)
 - 2) From the class discussion, as well as some excerpts about “place” from writers that I share with them, students will create a class definition of “place.” They will record this definition in their Place Journals as entry #3. (10 min.)
 - 3) Students will write an answer to these questions in their Place Journals as entry #4: Would they be willing to give up their “creature comforts” and live in solitude for at least a year? Why or why not? If forced to live alone, and only allowed to bring one small bag of items, what could they not live without? (5 min.) We will then discuss their responses to these questions and delve into the related topics of materialism in today’s society and the interconnectedness of everyone due to technology. I will share the *NY Times* article. (15 min.)
 - 4) Transition to a more direct discussion of Thoreau by explaining how all these ideas we have been discussing are prevalent in his works—and were important to his life. Read a quotation from *Walden* (probably “I came to the woods...), discuss briefly, then ask them to share their prior knowledge of Thoreau. By the end of this discussion, make sure they understand the REAL reason Thoreau went to the woods—clear up any misconceptions. *They should take notes in their notebooks, not in Place Journals.*
- Homework:** Entry # 5 in Place Journal (label it and write the date!): Write down and describe two places: 1) your special childhood place—why is it important and how did it make you feel? What memories does it hold? If you can, describe what the place is like NOW. 2) a place that is special to you *right now, that you could easily visit*—somewhere in or very near Winchester. (NOTE: Give them the two related assignments—childhood place map and ongoing place journaling. *See attached handouts.*)
- **Assessment/Rubric:** Completion check of yesterday’s journal homework; informal assessment of their understanding of place through listening to their discussion and their definitions; informal assessment of their knowledge of Thoreau through their sharing of information about him

Thoreau Unit Lesson Plan 3

Name: Katie Hillstrom

Unit Title: Thoreau: Exploring Sense of Place in Society

Lesson #: 3

Lesson Title: *Who was Thoreau, really?*

Lesson Duration: one 47 minute class period

Abstract: Today's lesson will allow students to share their journal entries about special places. I will also share a power point presentation about Thoreau, his life, and works (this will include a brief intro. to transcendentalism, although we will not go in depth since some will receive this information again as 11th graders).

Goals/Objectives: Students will be able to identify the major turning points and published works in Thoreau's life, as well as understand his basic philosophy. They should also be able to recall (with the help of good notes—another outcome of lesson) in writing some of the new information they gain about Thoreau.

Procedure:

- **Timeline:** a one day lesson; see activities for specific time increments.
- **Topic(s) Covered:** Thoreau's life and works
- **Specific Readings:** excerpts from "Economy" and "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" (for homework)
- **Activities:**
 - 1) Ask some students to share about their special places while doing a quick completion check of journal homework, then explain the mapping assignment related to their special childhood place (See *handout; I'm stealing Walden Woods' idea! Hope that's okay!*). Also, see if they have any questions regarding the journaling assignment about their current special place that they will be completing throughout the semester. (10 min.)
 - 2) Power Point about Thoreau, his life, and works—I will use the one created at Walden Woods Institute as a foundation, but incorporate my own information, photos, etc. into it. Make sure students are taking notes in their notebooks during the lecture. (30 min.)

Homework: Read excerpts from "Economy" and "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" and answer these questions:

- 1) How is what Thoreau writes about still relevant today?
- 2) Are people in today's society "living deliberately"? Explain.
- 3) How is Thoreau critical of the way in which people in his society tend to lead their lives?
- 4) What is his primary goal, according to what he writes in "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," in going to the woods?
- 5) What do you think Thoreau's definition of the American Dream would be? And how does his philosophy differ from the one that our current society seems to hold, according to our discussions of the American Dream at the beginning of the semester?

NOTE: Remind them that the childhood place mapping assignment is due in two days (on Lesson #5 day).

- **Assessment/Rubric:** My assessment of their understanding of Thoreau's life and works will be a pop quiz the following day where they can use their notes from the power point lecture. I will also assess them by having them complete an "exit card" on which they must write three new things they learned about Thoreau; this is their ticket out of class. My assessment of today's homework will be another completion check, along with observing their ability to discuss the readings tomorrow. I will also probably add a couple of easy reading check questions onto the power point lecture quiz.

Thoreau Unit Lesson Plan 4

Name: Katie Hillstrom

Unit Title: Thoreau: Exploring Sense of Place in Society

Lesson #: 4

Lesson Title: *Sucking the marrow out of life*

Lesson Duration: one 47 minute class period

Abstract: Students will review what they learned from yesterday's power point presentation. We will then discuss their reading and questions from yesterday's *Walden* excerpts, with an emphasis on what it means to "live deliberately" and to "suck life's marrow."

Goals/Objectives: Students will be able to show what they learned about Thoreau from yesterday's presentation; they will also be able to express their thoughts and questions about the reading excerpts from yesterday, and by the end of the lesson, will understand what Thoreau meant by "living deliberately" and "sucking the marrow" rather than living a "life of quiet desperation."

Procedure:

- **Timeline:** a one day lesson; see activities for specific time increments.
- **Topic(s) Covered:** *Walden* excerpts from yesterday's homework and Thoreau's views about his society, life, etc.
- **Specific Readings:** same as yesterday ("Economy" and "Where I Lived...") and excerpts from "Solitude" (homework)
- **Activities:**
 - 1) Brief quiz on yesterday's power point presentation and reading (Students can use their notes.) (5-7 min.)
 - 2) Discuss the questions from last night's reading as a whole class to clarify students' confusions and share ideas about the excerpts. (15 min.)
 - 3) Connect our discussion to the present day and students' lives by asking what Thoreau would think of our fast-paced, high-tech society. (Note: Make sure to clarify that the "myth" of *Walden* is that Thoreau was 100% "nature boy"; he contradicts himself, and did appreciate the farmers' "technology," having visitors, going to town, etc.; however, he would be critical of people who let such things distract them from "living deliberately.")

Remind them of the *Times* article from the other day and ask them to make a list of the "gadgets" they use on a daily basis, thinking back to what they said they couldn't live without in lesson #2; then ask them to make a second list of the things they take for granted on a daily basis. (Maybe read them something from Sark or Sarah Ban Breathnach) Have some students share their lists.

Challenge them at the end of this discussion to attempt to live more deliberately—use their weekly entries in Place Journals to record what they are grateful for, what it is like to have even just 30 minutes a week to sit quietly, thinking and observing, with none of the gadgets to distract. Challenge them further by asking them to give up the use of one "gadget" for a week; if it's something portable they can give me for safekeeping, even better, but if not, ask them to record a few words each day on what it's like without the gadget, and to choose a "buddy" to sign off that they actually did it. (Maybe give some extra credit for this?) "A man is rich in proportion to the amount of things he can afford to leave alone." (20 min.)

Homework: Finish childhood place map

Read excerpts from "Solitude" and write a paragraph that summarizes Thoreau's feelings on loneliness and solitude (make sure to note the difference between the two).

- **Assessment/Rubric:** Quiz on Thoreau info.; observation during discussion of reading questions

Thoreau Unit Lesson Plan 5

Name: Katie Hillstrom

Unit Title: Thoreau: Exploring Sense of Place in Society

Lesson #: 5

Lesson Title: *Solitude and Place*

Lesson Duration: one 47 minute class period

Abstract: This lesson will wrap up our brief study of *Walden* through a discussion of “Solitude” and a reading and discussion of the “Conclusion.” We will also share our childhood place maps and discuss the relevance of the assignment.

Goals/Objectives: Students will be able to distinguish the difference, according to Thoreau, between loneliness and solitude, as well as the difference in their own minds between the two. Students will recognize the importance of place by sharing their own childhood place maps and seeing several examples of others’. Students will be able to summarize the main points in each of the excerpts we read from *Walden*.

Procedure:

- **Timeline:** a one day lesson; see activities for specific time increments.
- **Topic(s) Covered:** Thoreau’s ideas on solitude and loneliness, as well as his concluding message in *Walden*; the importance of place
- **Specific Readings:** excerpts from “Solitude” and “Conclusion”
- **Activities:**
 - 1) Begin class with a “Do Now” question that asks students to write about a time in which they felt completely lonely (note that they won’t have to share these) and/or a time in which they were completely *alone*, but enjoyed that solitude. (5 min.)
 - 2) Transition to a discussion of “Solitude” and whether or not the students can relate to Thoreau’s feelings in this piece. (10 min.)
 - 3) Transition to the sharing of their childhood place maps by clarifying that Thoreau understood “place” so clearly, and *Walden* is, in many ways, the quintessential “place” book—this is the primary reason I have asked them to think about the idea of place and their own special places—and why we will continue to explore this idea connected to the American Dream in each work we read. Then, split them into small groups and ask them to share their childhood places with each other. If time, ask people who are interested to share their maps with the whole class. (10 min.)
 - 4) Read the “Conclusion” of *Walden* together, discussing some of the more inspiring quotations. Introduce the creative assignment for *Walden*, in which they will have to select a favorite quote, create an artistic piece around it, and memorize it. (*See attached handout.*) (20 min.)

Homework: Write a 1-2 sentence summary of each of the excerpts we read in *Walden*.

Creative quotation assignment due in one week

- **Assessment/Rubric:** Observation during discussion, as well as reading their summaries of ideas in “Solitude”; observation of the sharing of their maps to see if they are engaged with the assignment/activity and if it seems to help them appreciate the concept of “place” more. (I will also grade maps according to criteria on assignment handout.)

Thoreau Unit Lesson Plan 6

Name: Katie Hillstrom

Unit Title: Thoreau: Exploring Sense of Place in Society

Lesson #: 6

Lesson Title: *Thoreau's Social Justice Side*

Lesson Duration: three 47 minute class periods

Abstract: Over the next three days, students will participate in a very compressed study of the readings below in order to learn about and explore Thoreau's beliefs beyond *Walden*. We will focus on him as an early activist, emphasizing the importance of putting actions behind one's words in order to make a difference. I will connect our discussions of these works to ideas about the American Dream, being an outsider in society/searching for a "place", and exploring places/people in their community to help through the service learning project.

Goals/Objectives: Students will be able to define "civil disobedience" and generate examples of it. They will understand Thoreau's deliberate decision not to pay his poll tax, and all of his beliefs about slavery and living with principle that are connected to that action and are in the readings. Students will also be able to read passages on their own and explain their meaning in writing. Finally, they will understand the bigger picture: that Thoreau inspired many after him to take action, and that I am asking them to do the same through the service learning project.

Procedure:

- **Timeline:** see activities below for breakdown of days & specific time increments.
- **Topic(s) Covered:** Thoreau's abolitionist views and actions and how they connect to his ideas about "living deliberately"
- **Specific Readings:** Portions of "Slavery in Massachusetts," "Civil Disobedience," "A Plea for Captain John Brown," and "Life without Principle," and some excerpts from Thoreau's journals about his ideas on freedom and slavery

DAY ONE

- **Activities:**
 - 1) Begin class by having them respond to these two "Do Now" questions: If you could break any rule that is part of your life right now, what would it be and why? Is there any person, issue, idea you care strongly enough about that you would be willing to go to jail in order to stand up for that person, issue, idea, etc.? Explain. (5 min.)
 - 2) Have some students share their answers then discuss the fact that Thoreau was not a "one hit wonder" with *Walden*. He cared passionately about other issues, and next to *Walden*, is most well known for "Civil Disobedience," as they learned in the power point presentation. Ask them to share some ideas about what "civil disobedience" is, come up with a working definition as a class, and brainstorm some examples from history. (Hopefully, they will bring up Ghandi and MLK, Jr.—explain to them that Thoreau was sort of the first of their kind—he—and this essay specifically—inspired them. Emphasize the POWER OF WRITING and its ability to inspire generation after generation and leave a lasting impact on the world.) (10 min.)
 - 3) Read excerpts of "Civil Disobedience" together, focusing on the message he relays in these two quotations (I know they're not from essay): "to effect the quality of the day" through one's action was most important to Thoreau and people are "on earth not to do good but to be good." Explain his strong anti-slavery stance, and how he even considered himself above his northern peers who called themselves abolitionists—they still paid their poll taxes, etc.; he refused, on principle—can't support the state that is supporting slavery.

Desired outcomes of this reading and discussion: Students will understand the importance of making deliberate choices—how many people have the power to do good and are not willing to use it (ask them to think about and discuss some modern day examples here), that sacrifices must be made to create social change (again, bring in some more recent examples from our society), and that Thoreau was seen as an outsider in many ways for his actions, although he saw the slaves as the true outsiders, on society's fringes, etc.—ask them to brainstorm who our society considers “outsiders” today. Also connect this idea to the concept of the “outsider” being so important in literature and tell them this is something we will analyze closely in our upcoming texts. (25 min.)

Homework: Break a rule (a MINOR one! not a law!) or a social norm (like walking down the street in your bathrobe, something not generally accepted) and be ready to talk about it tomorrow.

Based on our brainstorm about “outsiders” and on your response to the question about an issue you care strongly about, begin thinking about possible service learning projects.

DAY TWO

- **Activities**

- 1) Share rule-breaking stories. (5-10 min., depending on students' engagement)
- 2) Place students into cooperative learning groups. Three students in each group—one student receives an excerpt from “Slavery in Mass.,” one receives an excerpt from “A Plea for John Brown,” one receives an excerpt from “Life without Principle.” Students should read silently, highlighting and annotating their excerpts as they read. They should then summarize what they read for the rest of their group, noting questions, confusions, thoughts, etc. I may decide to give them guiding questions to help ease this process. (30 min.)
- 3) Ask certain students to share major points from the readings, clarifying any confusion they might have and highlighting important points I do not want them to miss. (5 min., but will carry over into next day)

Homework: Read excerpts from Thoreau's journals on freedom/slavery and review all of the essays we have read in preparation for a passage test.

DAY THREE

- **Activities**

- 1) Brief discussion about the journal entries and wrap-up of yesterday's discussion if necessary—final questions, clarifications, etc.
- 2) Passage test (see below—*Note: I cannot make up the test this far in advance, as I need to gauge how the students are actually interacting with the material, and I don't have specific excerpts/passages chosen yet; however, it will assess their understanding of the essays and of Thoreau's beliefs/philosophies reflected in his writing.*)

Homework: Creative Quotation Assignment due in two days! (*NOTE: I will give them the day after the test to work on memorizing their quotation in class, to talk to them about service learning project ideas, etc.*)

- **Assessment/Rubric:** Along with informal assessments of students' understanding during class discussions, I will assess their understanding of the excerpts we read by selecting one or two important passages from each one and asking them to write about what those passages mean in an in-class test on the last day of this lesson.

Thoreau Unit Handouts

Mapping Your Childhood Place



Purpose

Now that you have selected a favorite childhood place, you are going to create a map of that place in order to practice what we learned on the first day of this unit during our brief outdoor excursion: paying close attention to detail and observing the extraordinary in the ordinary.

I also want this to be one of those assignments that ends up being more than just “homework,” however. I want you to see it as an opportunity to reflect on good memories and to make those memories permanent through the creation of this map that I hope you can come back to for years to come.

Finally, one of the most important purposes of this assignment is to help you to further explore the idea of “place” and its importance in our lives, as well as in literature.

Guidelines

- Use at least an 8x10 piece of paper, the sturdier the better (like posterboard, or even a piece of cardboard, or *you can be even more creative and do something 3-D!*), but your map can be bigger if you would like it to be.
- Make important things larger, non-important things smaller or non-existent; it does NOT have to be drawn to scale or an exact replica of the place: don’t worry!
- If necessary, create a key or label your map.
- DEFINITELY use color and stretch your artistic skills! We all have an artist somewhere inside us (mine just happens to be stuck at the elementary school level, which is okay!). If you absolutely have to, you can include images from magazines or the computer, but your map **MUST** have some of *your own unique illustrations*.
- HAVE FUN & BE CREATIVE!

Grading

This assignment is worth 20 points and I will grade it based on your adherence to the above guidelines, as well as how much time and effort it reflects (Trust me, I’ve done this long enough now that I can tell!).

DUE DATE: _____

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”

-Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Place Journal: Discovering the Importance of Place in our Lives

GUIDELINES

- Once a week (yes, for the rest of the semester), visit the place you wrote about in entry #5: the place that is important to you right now (NOT your childhood place).
- Spend at least thirty minutes—with NO other distractions (this means go by yourself!)—observing your surroundings and reflecting. Write about what you see, what you are feeling and thinking, and even include sketches if you are so inclined.
- MAKE SURE TO NUMBER EACH ENTRY AND INCLUDE THE DATE AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE!!! VERY IMPORTANT FOR YOUR FINAL GRADE!!!
- START WRITING ON A NEW PAGE FOR EACH NEW ENTRY & MAKE SURE YOUR HANDWRITING IS LEGIBLE!

HELPFUL HINTS TO GUIDE YOUR WRITING

- Each entry should include at least some direct observations of the place that week: What is different about it since last week? How is the weather different? What do you see, hear, smell? Use this opportunity to really observe the nature around you.
- You can also write about how you are feeling at that particular moment in time, what’s going on in your life, etc.
- Use these questions to guide your thinking and writing when you are really stuck:
 - *How is this assignment helping you to understand your sense of place?
 - *How do you fit into these surroundings? Into society as a whole?
 - *Who in our current society is without a true place—is an outsider or is searching for a sense of place?
 - *How is the main character in the literature we are reading struggling to find his/her place in society? How is this person an outsider?
 - *Why is it important to have a sense of place? (Or is it? Share your opinions.)

GRADING

There will be two grades for this Place Journal: a completion grade and a quality grade.

COMPLETION GRADE: I will check your entries each week, which means you cannot try to cram in a ton of entries right before the end of the semester. If you have kept up with your weekly entries throughout the semester (exact # for the semester: TBA), you will receive an ‘A’ for completion.

QUALITY GRADE: Throughout the semester, I will occasionally collect journals and read one or two entries at random. I will grade them based on the depth of thought they include and on their adherence to the above guidelines. In addition, near the end of the semester, I will give you an assignment in which you choose ONE of your journal entries and expand it into a personal essay. I will combine these two grades in order to decide your quality grade. Details TBA.

Think of this assignment as an opportunity to slow down and look around for at least a little bit in your busy schedules during the week, and as a reminder to “live deliberately,” as Thoreau would say.

Creative Quotation Assignment

Walden is amazing in that you can open it, turn to almost any page, and find a passage that stands out—whether it's because of the beauty and the poetry in its sentences, or its ability to inspire, or the ease with which you can relate to Thoreau's words (their timelessness).

This assignment will allow you to select one of these passages from the excerpts we have read, represent it creatively, and memorize it so it can stay with you and inspire you for years to come.

GUIDELINES

- Select your favorite quotation from one of the *Walden* excerpts we studied together in class.
- Find a creative way to share that quotation with the rest of class. You have endless options here: create a painting or drawing, a collage, a sculpture, a mobile, a song built around the quote, a video . . . the only thing you **MUST** remember is to include the quotation prominently in whatever you create.
- Keep in mind that you will be sharing these in class and I will be displaying them.
- Memorize your quotation! Be ready to recite it to me in class!

GRADING

I will grade this assignment based on the following criteria:

- The quotation is from an excerpt we read.
- The final product reflects time, effort, and creativity (specifically, it should include the quotation, and definitely include color)
- You have memorized and are able to recite the quotation clearly.