

Sean Farrell

“The Wild in Our Lives”

Wachusett Regional High School  
1401 Main Street, Holden, MA 01522.

Nature Writing Grades 11-12

8/16/18



## UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will come early in the fall semester of this one-semester course. It will follow a brief unit on journal writing, editing, observation, and an introduction to such topics with Thoreau's journals.

The unit is intended to acquaint students with their own surroundings and to look for "the wild" in the world immediately around them, as this course will soon depart from the local to consider wilderness in distant, more grand locations. It will develop observational skills, ground students in their current landscapes, and explore the importance of wilderness in their lives so far. Primary texts will be an excerpt from H.D. Thoreau's *Walden* and the full text of his essay "Walking."

In total, this unit will take three weeks of class time, wrapping up by the end of September. By the end, we will have

- learned about a famous naturalist (Thoreau) from just down the road and read and discussed some of his philosophy
- practiced the art of observation, field-note taking, and journal writing
- learned the origins of place names nearby and evaluated the process of naming
- considered and explored the importance of wild places in our own lives

## **“...in Wildness is the preservation of the World”**

### **State Standards met in unit:**

#### **Reading Literature [RL]**

##### **Key Ideas and Details**

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of a text.
3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story, poem, or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

##### **Craft and Structure**

4. Determine the figurative or connotative meaning(s) of words and phrases as they are used in a text; analyze the impact of specific words or rhetorical patterns (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place, how shifts in rhetorical patterns signal new perspectives). (See grades 11–12 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution, the choice to introduce a new tone or point of view) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, understatement, notable omission).

##### **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth, nineteenth and early-twentieth century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

#### **Writing Standards [W]**

2. Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
  - a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include text features (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

e. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

### **Production and Distribution of Writing**

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

a. Demonstrate command of standard English conventions (as described in Language Standards 1–3 up to and including grades 11–12).

b. Demonstrate the ability to select accurate vocabulary appropriate for audience, purpose, and style (as described in Language Standards 4–6 up to and including grades 11–12).

6. Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

### **Range of Writing**

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### **Speaking and Listening Standards [SL]**

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. (See grades 11–12 Reading Literature Standard 1 and Reading Informational Text Standard 1 for specific expectations regarding the use of textual evidence.)

b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or

issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task

### **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, vocabulary, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks. (See grades 11–12 Language Standards 4–6 for specific expectations regarding vocabulary.)

## **Language [L]**

### **Conventions of Standard English**

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned in previous grades. (See grades 11–12 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 6 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of conventions.) Word Usage a. Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested. b. Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary of English Usage, Garner’s Modern American Usage) as needed.

2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

a. Observe hyphenation conventions.

b. Spell correctly, recognizing that some words have commonly accepted variations (e.g., catalog/catalogue).

### **Knowledge of Language**

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

a. Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte’s Artful Sentences) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

b. Revise and edit to make work more concise and cohesive.

### **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., conceive, conception, conceivable).

c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.

d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text. b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; independently research words and gather vocabulary knowledge. (See grades 11–12 Reading Literature Standard 4 and Reading Informational Text Standard 4 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading; see grades 11–12 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 4 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of vocabulary.)

# The Daily Plans

**Day 1:** Prepare for unit

-Talk about the quote “in Wildness is the preservation of the World”

-What is Wild?

-does it mean different things for places, plants, animals, people?

-What is the value of the Wild?

-What does it mean to “preserve the world”?

-does preserve mean keep as is, or revert to something else, or progress towards something specific?

-what needs preserving? What is WORTH preserving?

-In this unit we’ll be talking about Wildness, where it can be found, and what it has to do with us. We’ll also be considering, more broadly, how our surroundings – both the natural and the manmade worlds – shape who we are and become.

Hand out “Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors,” explain who Thoreau was, where he lived, and from what context this chapter derives

**HOMEWORK:**

**For Day 2,** think about what former inhabitants have left behind in your neighborhood. Think about places you know of where there are abandoned buildings, foundations, former fields, roads, train tracks, etc. You may also think about smaller, more day-to-day things – signs, carvings in trees, plantings, things left in closets when you moved in, things you’ve dug up from previous occupants, etc.

**List as many as you can.**

**For Day 4,** read 407-413. Highlight interesting passages, write notes or questions in the margins. Find one quote that you think reveals Thoreau’s attitude about humankind and Nature. Be prepared to read your quote aloud to class and explain what you like about it/why it is meaningful.

## Day 2:

-“Former Inhabitants” lists many place names and the people who inhabited them, and he creates a brief human history of the land surrounding his own cabin in Walden Woods, pointing out the signs of their former occupancy now that they’ve moved on.

For the next couple of days I want us to think about the former inhabitants of our own towns and about the things they’ve left behind.

- 1) List on the board some places we know of where signs of past inhabitants remain. Example: Central Mass Rail Trail, Rutland Prison Camps
- 2) Discuss:
  - What do the surroundings of these places look like? (talk about states of disrepair, maybe being overgrown, etc.)
  - How does it feel to look on the remains of former human activity?
  - What sorts of lessons might we take from these places?** For this question, I may have kids write down some thoughts individually, then talk to someone next to them to compare answers. Finally, share out as a group. Maybe start with something as simple as “Manmade objects are temporary.”
  - How does it feel to think that someday *you’ll* be the one to leave traces behind for others to interpret and consider?
- 3) In another of Thoreau’s essays, “Walking,” he dismisses the importance of the names people give to each other and to places, saying that these names typically have nothing to do with the object they’re naming. To look a little deeper into this, we’ll participate in a “naming activity” – see handout named “What’s in a name?” Read through assignment and give students time to fill in the list of places they’ll choose. Tomorrow, we’ll go to the Media Center to look up place names/histories to complete the sheet.
- 4) HOMEWORK: Reading and passage marking for **Day 4**.

**Day 3:**

- 1) Briefly discuss handout “What’s in a name” – talk through the sample names listed on the handout (Cape Cod, Provincetown, Plymouth, Massachusetts). Talk about which of these names feel meaningful and which don’t. Why?
- 2) In Media Center, students will complete their worksheet, beginning by searching for the names of the 10 places they’ve chosen for this worksheet. All students must research the origin and name of their town. Other suggestions include street and school names, villages, etc. Students may be surprised to discover a mixture of European and Native American place name origins in these towns.
- 3) In the end, students are asked to rename some places, choosing meaningful names. We can get a chance to discuss the importance of naming things, what names do for places, and what they can mean for future generations (if anything). What makes a name good?
- 4) HOMEWORK:  
Tomorrow, “Former Inhabitants” due. Also, I will collect worksheets and responses about the importance of names and what they reveal about our values.

#### Day 4:

- 1) Collect written responses to naming along with worksheets. Discuss what makes a name good. Do we agree with Thoreau that many of our names are meaningless, or do we want to argue with him?
- 2) Discuss "Former Inhabitants"
  - Have students gather in groups of 3-4 to explain what they understood and discuss what they had questions about. Have each group share one of their selected quotations aloud and explain briefly what they got out of it.
  - Each of the other groups should respond to the quote that has been shared in turn.
- 3) If this quotation hasn't yet come up, we must grapple with Thoreau's request: "Deliver me from a city built on the site of a more ancient city, whose materials are ruins, whose gardens cemeteries" (413).
  - To "deliver someone from something" means to "rescue" or "protect"
  - What does Thoreau mean in saying that the materials are ruins and the gardens are cemeteries? What is he *really* trying to say about his feelings about previous inhabitants?
- 4) As we saw a few days ago, Thoreau believes that "in Wildness is the preservation of the World." This desire of his to escape from the ruins of the past may connect to his concept of "wildness" and its appeal.
- 5) HOMEWORK: Hand out short reading from *How to Raise a Wild Child*, by Scott Sampson. Read pages 58-62. Briefly introduce "sit spots" – places we're likely to visit easily and regularly and from which we can carve out a few minutes each day (ideally) to sit, observing the world from the same place and taking note of the changes (in weather, temperature, sensory input, etc.).

## Day 5:

- 1) Discuss the observations Sampson made from his “sit spot,” SUCH AS wildness can be just in our backyard; animal behaviors are patterned and purposeful instead of random; people can learn the “language of nature” by observation and careful recording of detail; how to write in detail about the behaviors of creatures
- 2) Quote of the day, from the last page of the homework reading: “If we are going to foster in our children (and ourselves) that all-important sense of internal wildness, we must first have abundant experience of external wildness. In the end, to be connected to nature is to expand one’s awareness and become native to place” (Sampson 62). Discuss.
- 3) Hand out Field Journals – notebooks in which students will take notes about experiences in the wilderness. Field journal entries can include:
  - a) Date, time, weather
  - b) Sketched map of location at time of observations
  - c) Sketch of objects or sights of interest
  - d) Notes on all senses – taste, touch, sight, hearing, smell
  - e) Careful observation of one particularly interesting thing
- 4) After Lunch, we are going to walk to the woods. We will find our own “sit spots” off the trail and will complete a field journal entry. We will also take careful note of how we arrived at our “sit spot” so that we can describe it in writing – See handout “Where in the World?”
- 5) Walk to the woods (1 hour) – as we leave the building together, students will look for evidence of “former inhabitants” in our school hallways – we’ll go past old theater posters, athletic trophies and plaques, memorials for students who have died, alumni courtyards, and so on. Then, before we get to the woods behind the school (on the cross country trail), we’ll stop alongside the driveway and parking lot for a quick field-note entry about our sensory experiences here. Then, on to the woods; there, we’ll scatter alone (but not too distant) into the woods off of the trail, paying attention to landmarks that get us to our location. For 10-15 minutes (depending on time) we will sit, observe, take notes, and experience with our senses. Also, students should return to the classroom with a baggie filled with “artifacts” – leaves of trees, interesting rocks or sticks, etc. – that inspire curiosity and might help students learn the vocabulary that will help them provide directions to their “sit spot.”
- 6) HOMEWORK: Write clear, specific directions to your sit-spot. Also, hand out “Walking” for reading over the course of the next week. Follow attached reading schedule.

**Day 6:**

- 1) Debrief about woods walk, about comparisons between field-note observations in parking lot and in woods, and about signs of former inhabitants. Discuss how this walk made us feel, what it made us think about, what we would like to do more or differently, etc.
- 2) Discuss the “next step” after experiences and field notes – conversion from raw materials to Journal Entry. Refer to “Taking and Using Field Notes” handout.
- 3) In class, review field notes from the woods walk. Consider these and the discussion earlier in class. With these in mind, convert the field notes into a more polished journal entry that attempts to *make meaning* of the experience of the day before. Attempt to connect these experiences to Thoreau’s chapter on “Former Inhabitants,” as well.
- 4) Share out, either reading entry or else sharing one idea you stumbled across in the writing of this entry.
- 5) HOMEWORK: Students should select a “sit spot” to visit near their homes. It should be comfortable to access and to be in, and preferably it will be a place they already visit. Three times in the coming week, students must sit in this spot for at least 15 minutes and take field notes. The first entry should include a sketched map of the location. All entries should follow the format on the “Taking and Using Field Notes” Handout. These will be due in school Day 12.

## Day 7:

- 1) Assign students to groups of four, with each student in the group then having a number (1-4) – these will be their reading groups for “Walking”. Students should move to sit with their group and be sure not to lose their number.
- 2) First “Walking” reading is due today (pages 557-566). Students should discuss the reading with their group: review their reading, summarize among their group, answer any questions they had and take note of any questions that they cannot answer as a group. **Also, they should select one key quotation from the reading that they’d like to share. This quotation should be highlighted in their texts and should be ready to present. Each person in the group will have to stand and present one quotation this week.** This will require them to understand the quotation, be able to read and pronounce it correctly, be able to talk about what it means and why it is special, and be able to summarize the conversations the group had about this quotation.
- 3) Each group should ask whatever questions they have about the reading for clarification from the class or teacher.
- 4) Each group should share their favorite quotation from the text and explain what it means, why it stands out as meaningful, and what discussions arose from it within their group. Group member #1 can present today.
- 5) My two focus points in this reading are about truly going into the woods (leaving the village behind) and mankind’s “improvements” of the land that deform, cheapen, and tame it.
  - Discuss the original Colonial mandate to “improve the land” – cut down trees, fence in yard, work the soil, or else lose your land
  - Inherent attitude about land and its value based on this language of “improvement”
  - Does Thoreau agree with this valuation of land, or does he have something else in mind? What? How can we tell?
- 6) Photos of “pleasure-grounds” as described by Thoreau as signs of “evil days”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasure\\_ground#/media/File:Glienicke\\_Park1.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasure_ground#/media/File:Glienicke_Park1.JPG)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasure\\_ground#/media/File:Glienicke\\_Park2.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasure_ground#/media/File:Glienicke_Park2.JPG)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasure\\_ground#/media/File:Beet\\_5.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasure_ground#/media/File:Beet_5.jpg)

<https://www.francisfrith.com/warminster/warminster-lake-pleasure-ground-c1965-w261062>

[https://www.123rf.com/photo\\_4253730\\_the-pleasure-ground-park-in-interlaken-of-switzerland-.html](https://www.123rf.com/photo_4253730_the-pleasure-ground-park-in-interlaken-of-switzerland-.html)

**Day 8:**

- 1) Second "Walking" reading due (566-572). Students should discuss in their groups following same format as Day 7.
- 2) Class discussion/answering of any questions. Be sure to explore the idea of East as "the past" – prior cultures, prior learning, civilization; of West as "the future" – new horizons, wild lands, room to develop individually
- 3) Presentation of meaningful quotations, selecting group members that haven't presented yet
- 4) My focus: Thoreau believes that the climate in nature can affect a person mentally and physically. Specifically, he writes that "mountain air feeds the spirit and inspires" (570).
  - Do we believe that some landscapes and surroundings are more inspirational (emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, physically) than others?
  - Do we believe natural surroundings are more inspirational than manmade? Why/why not?
- 5) Journal Response to end class: What natural landscape has had the effect on you that Thoreau describes when he writes about the mountain air? How and why did it affect you? Explain, and be specific.

**Day 9:**

- 1) "Walking" reading assignment three is due today (572-50).
- 2) Students should discuss and review with their reading groups.
- 3) Class discussion/Q&A
- 4) Presentation of meaningful quotation, selecting group members that haven't presented yet
- 5) Refer back to conversation on Day 1 – what does Wild mean, when and why is it a positive thing? What does Thoreau mean when he says "in Wildness is the preservation of the World"? Does it make sense to us?
- 6) Journal Response to end class: Do you, your parents, your teachers, your society share Thoreau's love of wildness? Is this a value we share today, or not? Explain, and explain why you think people feel the way they do, and provide specific examples.

**Day 10:**

- 1) The end of “Walking” is due today. Gather with reading groups to summarize, discuss, and select a quotation.
- 2) Class Discussion/Q&A
- 3) Presentation of favorite quotations, last remaining member presents
- 4) My focus: Living in the moment, Waking up. Our walk in the woods and description of the directions; our field journals and sit spots – these are efforts to live in the moment, to see what really is around us. How and when are we truly able to do so? When are we free from thoughts and pressures of the past, or of the future?
- 5) Journal to end class: Is Thoreau’s argument in favor of “Walking” convincing to us in 2018? In what ways do you like what he says, and in what ways do you disagree with his points?
- 6) HOMEWORK: Choose one of the quotations from “Walking” that is particularly meaningful to you, and consider how you would artistically depict this quote on a poster. We will work on this tomorrow in class. Also, three field-note entries will be due Day 12.

**Day 11:**

- 1) Each student has selected a favorite quotation from "Walking." These should be NEATLY and ACCURATELY transferred to a piece of construction paper. Paper, markers, and colored pencils will be available.
- 2) The quotation should be written, and the background decorated, in such a way that the meaning of the quotation is amplified. I'm not looking for a cartoon strip, but rather a carefully conceived symbolic representation of the concept. This might be done in the shape and arrangement of the letters, in the size of certain words, in the colors used, in the background image chosen, etc.
- 3) If this is not complete by the end of class, it is homework. Due Day 12.

**Day 12:**

- 1) Hang posters and provide time to view, reflect on the quotations.
- 2) Class discussion about “sit-spots” and events/experiences observed. What were some good things that came from it? What was difficult? Were we able to learn anything about the natural world while we were out there? Were we able to learn anything about ourselves and how we feel in these observational situations?
- 3) In class, review the field notes we took at home. What captured our attention, our curiosity? What did we start to notice more keenly? How did our readings of the last two weeks connect to anything we experienced or thought?
- 4) Write a Journal Entry that *makes meaning* of these field notes and connects them to what we’ve discussed recently. If possible, quote one of our texts in this entry. The point of this exercise is not to arrive at A PARTICULAR MEANING, but rather to consider what it meant to *you*, and how your recent studies have shaped that meaning.

**Day 13:**

- 1) Woods Walk (Part 2): today we will walk back to the woods, back to the same place where we had our first sit-down field-note observation. This time, we will walk in silence from the moment we get into the woods until the moment we leave. We will carry our field notebook and a handout of the following Thoreau quotation from "Walking":

"Of course it is of no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is, - I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? "

- 2) Today, we walk with the goal of getting into the woods in spirit. We will pause for some field notes in the woods, and we will be vigilant of the need to remain mindful.
- 3) If there is time when we return to the classroom, we will debrief about our ability to leave our village behind, and we'll discuss whether this experience has left a lasting impact on us as we prepare for the remainder of our day.

## Final Assignment

### **The Preamble:**

We began this unit with a discussion of Thoreau's quote from Walking "...in Wildness is the preservation of the World." We hadn't yet read the text, so we considered what it might mean to us. Now that we've read the quote in context, we hopefully have a fuller sense of his thinking about the importance of Wildness in the world and in our lives.

We also spent some time thinking about where we are on Earth – what our places are named, who has been here before, and how it feels to be here. We have attempted to more closely observe our own small spot in the world and, maybe, how we fit in here.

### **The Questions, in no particular order:**

What is the importance of Wildness in your life? How so?

What would Thoreau say about the people of the Wachusett District in the 2000s, and what would he say about you in particular?

What do you think of his perspective? Is he right?

### **Requirements:**

1) To answer these questions, you will need to show an understanding of Thoreau's key ideas in these texts. Hopefully, our class discussions and journal entries have given you the raw materials from which to draw.

Particularly,

- You must discuss his feelings about reminders of those who came before
- You must discuss his reasons for Walking and his mindset as he walks
- You must discuss what he means when he talks about "Wildness" and "the preservation of the World"
- You must include and explore relevant quotations from Thoreau's work

2) You will ALSO need to be honest about your own life and perspective. It is not required for you to agree with Thoreau; it is required that you apply his thoughts critically to your own experience and to evaluate for yourself their worth.

Particularly,

- You must draw on textual support to determine how Thoreau would respond to our current way of life
- You must share your own behaviors and attitudes, and you must hold them up against Thoreau's ideas
- You should consider the importance of "where you come from" in determining "who you are"

**This paper is mainly personal, though it contains the element of critical response to Thoreau's texts. The format need not be rigidly formal, but you should quote often, cite properly, and follow conventions of standard English. Do NOT write this as if you are answering questions; structure your ideas naturally and meaningfully.**

**Length: 500-1000 words**

### RUBRIC for FINAL ASSESSMENT

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Conventions of English</b>	Errors obstruct meaning	Several errors, meaning often unclear	Several errors, but meaning largely clear	Few errors – do not detract from meaning	Error-free or nearly so
<b>Organization and Format</b>	Not organized, hard to follow		Clear, simple organization; feels rigid, not natural		Advanced organization and movement from one thought to the next
<b>Personal Content and Understanding</b>	Incorrect or absent information about text and ideas		Some content present; superficial understanding		Thorough understanding of content
<b>Textual Support and Development</b>	Incorrect or absent support; minimal development of ideas		Some textual support; superficial usage and limited development of ideas		Sophisticated use of text in support of essay; thoughtful personal use of text

Conventions = 20%

Organization = 20%

Content = 30%

Support = 30%

## State Standards for Final Assessment:

### [RL]

#### Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of a text.

#### Craft and Structure

6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, understatement, notable omission).

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth, nineteenth and early-twentieth century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

### [W]

#### Text Types and Purposes

2. Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include text features (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

e. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

a. Demonstrate command of standard English conventions (as described in Language Standards 1– 3 up to and including grades 11–12).

b. Demonstrate the ability to select accurate vocabulary appropriate for audience, purpose, and style (as described in Language Standards 4–6 up to and including grades 11–12).

6. Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

**On the following pages are handouts used  
throughout the unit.**

## **“What’s in a name?”**

Names can be meaningful, but names can also be arbitrary. A name that is earned (“The King”) is probably more instructive and meaningful than one given separate from accomplishment (“Elvis”).

What are the places in your life named after, and how meaningful are those names?

Example: We know that when the Pilgrims first came to the New World, they landed on Cape Cod and stopped in Provincetown Harbor before eventually landing at Plymouth. They were the first English colonists to settle Massachusetts.

- 1) Why was Cape Cod called this?
- 2) Why was Provincetown called this?
- 3) Why was Plymouth called this?
- 4) Why was Massachusetts called this?

Do we think these names make sense? Do they say something meaningful about the places they name? Can you think of any more accurate/meaningful names? (Fun fact: Provincetown was almost named “Herrington” or “Herrington” based on popular vote before being changed to Provincetown. Herrington might’ve been more descriptive – there are many herring runs on the Cape that the locals would’ve known about.

ACTIVITY: Identify and research various place names in your area. Think about how these places were named, whether they are meaningful and useful, and whether they could be changed to better label the place. Your town name is required to use. Other options include neighborhood/village names, street names, school names, building names (NOT business names), lake names, hill names, etc. Come up with 10 names and their meanings/histories. Rename at least 5 to be more descriptive/meaningful. Also, name one place or thing that (to your knowledge) has not been officially named, and explain why you’ve chosen this place and name.

1) Town Name:

Named after:

Useful/Not Useful:

Alternate Name:

2-10 – YOU decide:

\*Open Response assignment at the end: What do our place names tell us about our values?

## **“Taking and Using Field Notes”**

When we are in the wild, or even when we're on a park bench beside the busy streets of Holden, we don't often have the desire, time, or patience to create carefully crafted essays about our experiences there. However, if we don't take note of what we're experiencing in the moment, we may forget the brightest or slightest details and leave out important observations when we attempt to write about it later on.

Field notes are the intermediate step between in-the-moment observation and carefully developed journal entry.

As you sit and observe the world around you, quickly jot notes in your Field Notebook. You may use these later to recall your experience and to draw upon the specific details that will inform your Journal Entry.

### **Field Notes Should...**

- Record Day, Date, Time of Day, Weather
- Carefully record location, either by directions or by sketched map
- Record experiences with all five senses
- Describe in quick detail anything of importance or interest that commands your focus

### **Field Notes Can...**

- Include sketches of objects, plants, animals, views, etc.
- Include emotional state/emotional reactions to experience
- Pose questions or thoughts for further research/consideration

### **Field Notes Can Be Used To...**

- Aid in your memory – seeing a sketch of a map and recalling the observations of a moment may help call the whole experience to mind months or even years later
- Provide the raw material from which future journal entries or essays may be crafted
- Journal Entries** are often attempts to *make meaning* of something that we have experienced. Written after field notes, a journal entry may attempt to work out the importance of objects and events witnessed and recorded in field notebooks, to discover trends, or inner feelings, or external themes that arise from our observations. These Journal Entries would be more polished and complete than the field notes.

**\*Field notes alone are not finished products or things to be judged\***

## “Where in the World?”

In a world saturated with technology, we have apps that facilitate most of our movements and tasks. One I see all the time now is GPS; people use their phone’s GPS or Navigation program to get them everywhere – to their hotels, to their vacation house, to the restaurant, to friends’ houses. As we rely more and more on technology, I suspect we *know* less and less. We don’t know each other’s phone numbers or birthdays, and we don’t know how to get where we’re going, without an app.

### **This ends today.**

ACTIVITY: When we walk into the woods today, you must walk with your Field Journal and a pen or pencil in hand. You will find a spot to sit away from the group and off the trail – more than a couple of feet, but not so far that you’re out of sight. There, you will sit and observe the world around you. Focus on sensory descriptions, trying to notice each of the 5: sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell. You’re just taking notes, so there’s no need to write in full sentences. You will be able to sketch something of interest, collect something to examine more closely, and mention weather, time of day, your feelings, etc.

ALSO,

you **MUST** make careful note of where you are, because you must later write a description of how to get to your **precise** location. This means you must be on the lookout for landmarks – trees, rocks, bodies of water, stumps, hills, views, etc. – and must be able to use these to guide someone to your spot.

- Do NOT rely on measurement

- Do NOT try to pick an easy spot (“Immediately after you step into the woods, sit under the first tree on the right”)

- Observe landmarks, relate one to another, and be specific (types of trees and their sizes, level of the land, etc.)

- You *could* name a place if it is part of *our* shared experience. For example, you could talk about “the soccer field,” or you could talk about “the place where Janet saw the mushroom” *as long as we were there to share that experience*. If we weren’t, this won’t be helpful for getting us to your location.

## **“Walking” Reading Schedule (pages 557-589)**

**This is a challenging but thought-provoking essay. As you read, highlight meaningful passages that you’d like to remember or discuss in class. In the margins, take note of places that you have questions about, thoughts the text inspires, keywords to help you recall the main point, etc. In other words, *annotate* the text as you read.**

**Answer the questions for each day’s reading in your notebook.**

Day 7: 557-566

- Questions:
- 1) Of what importance is “sauntering” to Thoreau?
  - 2) How does he feel about those who don’t do it?
  - 3) How does he reveal contrast between walking the road and walking “over the surface of God’s earth”?
  - 4) How might these contrasting paths be symbolic?

Day 8: 566-572

- Questions:
- 1) How does he use traveling east and traveling west as symbols of something greater?

Day 9: 572-580

- Questions:
- 1) What does he mean by “All good things are wild and free” (579)?
  - 2) What examples does he use to support this idea?

Day 10: 580-589

- Questions:
- 1) Thoreau says “Above all, we can not afford not to live in the present” (587). How does his habit of “walking” or “sauntering” for four hours each day ensure that he can live in the present?
  - 2) In what ways does he think most people fall short of this need to live in the present?

### Texts Used in Unit (Works Cited)

“Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors.” *The Portable Thoreau*, by Henry David Thoreau and Jeffrey S. Cramer, Penguin Books, 2012.

Sampson, Scott D. *How to Raise a Wild Child: the Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.

“Walking.” *The Portable Thoreau*, by Henry David Thoreau and Jeffrey S. Cramer, Penguin Books, 2012.