Alexis Cournoyer Georgetown Middle High School 11 Winter St, Georgetown, MA 01833 Grade 10 HN English II Submitted: August 3, 2022

# Transcendentalism: A Unit of Self Discovery

#### Unit Overview:

This unit will be the first literary unit grade 10 students cover after returning back from winter break. In this unit, students will be reading from authors Mary Oliver, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Each author is specifically chosen to match discussion questions and/or a journaling prompt. Students will not only identify, discuss, and write about the concepts of these authors' writing, but hold a mirror up to their own identities. Through journaling assignments, students will write about themselves as learners, places that are important to them, what makes them happy, and what makes them feel like they belong. Students will develop a deeper understanding of transcendentalism by pointing out in their writing what they value and what is important to them individually.

## **Objectives:**

- Students will be able to determine the central idea of each excerpt, poem, essay or article
- Students will be able to make connections between their own identity and our authors
- Students will know how to identify key concepts and themes of poetry
- Students will write journal entries to highlight what is important to them and what they believe
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of course topics and literary themes through discussion posts and oral discussions with peers

Timeline: Some lessons will take one class period with an opportunity for students to finish their journal for homework if they do not finish it in class. Other lessons require two class periods, with more opportunities to dive deeper into the readings and have more time for group discussions. The total amount of time dedicated in these unit plans calculates eight 60 minute class periods, or two weeks depending on if your school has a drop schedule.

## Lesson #1 Whitman: Traditional vs. Untraditional Education

## Overview:

In this lesson, students will read Walt Whitman's "When I heard the learn'd Astronomer" in order to think more broadly on how people learn best. Not everyone learns best from a lecture, and that is exactly the point Whitman sets out to show his readers. We will use this as our first

text so students can reflect on the broader idea of what schools should look like. By using the The Sudbury Valley School Website as a contrast to their own public school experience, students can contemplate if an environment with more learning freedom would have been right for them. Students will ultimately use what they learned from this activity in their journaling assignment where they reflect on what kind of learner they are and how they individually learn best.

Duration: two 55-minute class periods

Goals:

- Students will analyze the significance of Walt Whitman's poem When I heard the learn'd Astronomer and identify the key concepts
- Students will research a way of education different from their own experience through the Sudbury school website
- Students will be able to reflect on any learning experience they have had and identify why its their preferred way of learning

MA Curriculum Frameworks: https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of a text.
- 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.

# Day 1 Agenda:

Do Now: Students will walk into the classroom and see on the board that there is a Jamboard for them to respond to. They will log onto google classroom and click on the jamboard. The question on the Jamboard is, "When you think of high school what words come to mind?" / They will take a few minutes to think and add their words/ phrases to the Jamboard. Then, we will look at the completed Jamboard and open it up to a full class discussion on the trends we notice.

Background Information: I will provide students with a brief google slide of biographical information on who Walt Whitman was, and lead that into how we will be reading his work "When I heard the learn'd Astronomer" in class. This portion of the lesson should take no more than 5 minutes.

Reading/ Activity 1:

I will post the link to Whitman's When I heard the learn'd Astronomer to Google classroom as well as display it up on the board. We will start by reading through it one time, a minute for reflection, and then reading through it again on their own. Then, as a class we will work through annotating and analyzing the poem and its message.

# Activity 2:

Students will start preparing for the second phase of the lesson by taking the remaining few minutes to organize themselves into groups of 3-4. Students will have the opportunity to go onto the Subsury schools website and see what an untraditional k-12 education looks like. They will start researching what that looks like compared to their own.

# Day 2 Agenda:

Do Now: Students will walk into the classroom and see the question on the board " If you had the option to pick what you learned everyday what would it be?" / They will take a few minutes to think and discuss their answers with a partner. Then, we will open it up to a full class discussion for students to share their answers.

Activity 3: Students will rearrange their seating so that they are with the same groups from the day prior. Students will have 20 minutes to not only continue looking through the sudbury school website, but to start working on their group assignment. This assignment is called Traditional vs. Untraditional Education and it will be posted on google classroom. Each group must answer the following questions on the shared document:

- What's your first impressions of the Sudbury school?
- Imagine you are a student here. What are the positives of a school like this? What are the drawbacks/ negatives?
- Answer any of the following: Do you believe LHS should be more like this? Why or why not and how? Would you consider going to school here? Do you think (as a junior) is it too late to change your way of thinking about education?

Once all groups are finished adding their input to the group document, we will go through each of the questions and students will share their groups answers in a full group discussion.

# Homework:

Journaling Assignment #1: In their notebooks or as a google doc in google classroom, students will respond to the following journal prompts. This can be written formally or informally. Bullet points, full paragraphs, it is up to the individual student.

- How do you learn best?
- What kind of learner do you think you are?
- What learning environment do you believe makes you the best student?

# Materials/ Resources:

Jamboard:

https://jamboard.google.com/d/15uWYMz28Vm8dX3oRmD0hM8ByC6uStnLcrsFXHOXsZNM /edit?usp=sharing

Reading: When I heard the learn'd Astronomer https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45479/when-i-heard-the-learnd-astronomer

Group Doc Assignment: Traditional vs. Untraditional Education https://docs.google.com/document/d/1g5IJbg9CaWRXW\_kCG52MgYOOCESgdUvy4EWVUoxKE/edit?usp=sharing

Researching: The Sudbury Valley School Website <a href="https://sudburyvalley.org/">https://sudburyvalley.org/</a>

Daily Google Slides:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LcfMdn313mFs96mPUDGOF5g6cfYp0dA\_yYUfvdZIt -U/edit?usp=sharing

# Journal Entries Google Doc:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/154tdcWkg4YdSoU2HeEKBoWh2qxADGeJeoXaVZW9G 9xM/edit?usp=sharing

# Lesson #2 Emerson: Self-Reliance vs. Self Centered

Overview:

In this lesson, students will read Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Self Reliance*. Prior to reading Emerson's work, students will signify the differences between what it is to be self centered and what it is to be self reliant. Once students are aware of how these are different, we will use *Self Reliance* to analyze Emerson's interpretation of what it means to be a self reliant individual. Students will ultimately use what they learned from this activity in their journaling assignment where they reflect on what self reliant and self centered habits they currently possess.

Duration: two 55-minute class periods

Goals:

- Students will be able to define the terms Self- Reliant and Self-Centered
- Students will be able to identify some of the key concepts of being self reliant in Emerson's *Self Reliance*
- Students will engage in discussion about what they found significant in Emerson's *Self Reliance*
- Students will be able to write about what self reliant and self centered habits they currently possess

# MA Curriculum Frameworks: https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf

- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
- Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of a text.
- 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.

# Day 1 Agenda:

Do Now: Students will walk into the classroom and see the question on the board "Imagine you are watching tv and get up to go to the kitchen. Your sibling asks you to get them something but you do not. Was this self centered?" They will take a few minutes to think and discuss their answers with a partner. Then, we will open it up to a full class discussion for students to share their answers.

Background Information: I will provide students with a brief google slide of biographical information on who Ralph Waldo Emerson was, and lead that into how we will be reading his work *Self Reliance* in class. This portion of the lesson should take no more than 5 minutes.

Activity 1: Students will see up on the board the terms Self- Reliant and Self-Centered, circled and spaced far enough apart so we can have separate discussion on each term. For this activity, students can work either on their own or with a partner. Students will be prompted to think about words or characteristics that they associate with each of these two terms. After 5-7 minutes of discussion, thinking, and/or writing, students will go up to the board and place their associated works under the terms Self- Reliant and Self-Centered. Once all groups and individuals have had an opportunity to contribute to the boards, we will have a full group discussion on what words they selected and why. Then, I will click to the next slide on the presentation which shows the official dictionary definition for Self- Reliant and Self-Centered.

Reading: I will post Emerson's *Self Reliance* to Google classroom as well as give students the option of paper copies to be able to highlight. Students should begin working on annotating and highlighting the reading so that they can be prepared for our next class. If they do not complete this before the end of class it will be assigned as homework to complete.

Day 2 Agenda:

Do Now: Students will walk into the classroom and see the question on the board "What jobs or roles is it most important that you are self reliant in? "/ They will take a few minutes to think and discuss their answers with a partner. Then, we will open it up to a full class discussion for students to share their answers.

# Activity 1:

In groups of three, students will go over their highlighted and annotated *Self Reliance* work as a group. They will have 10 minutes allotted to them being able to engage in discussion about what stood out to them in the passage with their group members, as well as why they highlighted or annotated specific words or lines. I will pull up the passage on the projector and paragraph by paragraph each group will share what they found and why it stood out. They should turn these in before leaving class.

# Homework:

Journaling Assignment #2: In their notebooks or as a google doc in google classroom, students will respond to the following journal prompts. This can be written formally or informally. Bullet points, full paragraphs, it is up to the individual student.

- What habits do you currently have that make you self-reliant?
- What habits do you currently have that make you self centered?
- Is there anything going forward that you would like to do differently?

Materials/ Resources: Whiteboards & Assorted Dry Erase Markers

## Reading: Emerson Self Reliance

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dBzNP-JCD\_Ezz0atNg2R\_3IQuUs7rhqbb4BRravx7os/edit?usp=sharing

## Daily Google Slides:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LcfMdn313mFs96mPUDGOF5g6cfYp0dA\_yYUfvdZIt -U/edit?usp=sharing

## Journal Entries Google Doc:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/154tdcWkg4YdSoU2HeEKBoWh2qxADGeJeoXaVZW9G 9xM/edit?usp=sharing

## Lesson #3 Thoreau: Sense of Place

Overview:

In this lesson, students will read Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* excerpt Chapter 5 Solitude. As the teacher reads aloud, students will be actively highlighting and annotating the text. Students will be not only looking at where Thoreau feels impacted by nature and significant lines, but also reflecting on the value of sense of place. Once students are aware of how Walden was a place of significance for Thoreau, they will reflect on what their own place of significance is. Students will ultimately use what they learned from this activity in their journaling assignment where they reflect on a place that brings them happiness or makes them feel at peace.

Duration: one 55-minute class period

Goals:

- Students will be able to identify examples of the significance of place in Thoreau's Chapter 5 Solitude
- Students will be able to identify through their highlighting and annotations the theme or central idea of Thoreau's Chapter 5 Solitude
- Students will be able to identify and write about a place that brings them happiness or makes them feel at peace

MA Curriculum Frameworks https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf

- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
- Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of a text.
- 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.

# Day 1 Agenda:

Do Now: Students will walk into the classroom and see the question on the board "You can go anywhere (all expenses paid!) Where are you going? "/ They will take a few minutes to think and discuss their answers with a partner. Then, we will open it up to a full class discussion for students to share their answers.

Background Information: I will provide students with a brief google slide of biographical information on who Henry David Thoreau was, and lead that into how we will be reading excerpts of his work *Walden* in class. This portion of the lesson should take no more than 5 minutes.

# Reading/ Activity 1:

I will post *Walden* Chapter 5 Solitude to Google classroom as well as give students the option of paper copies to be able to highlight. I will read aloud pages 143- pg 148 of *Walden* Chapter 5 Solitude, pausing briefly after each paragraph so that students will have enough time to highlight and make any annotations. After I have read through the passage aloud with my students, they will be given another 5-7 minutes to be able to read through it again and make any additional comments to their individual copies. Students will turn in their individual copies so that they can be graded for credit.

# Activity 2:

Journaling Assignment #3: In their notebooks or as a google doc in google classroom, students will respond to the following journal prompts. This can be written formally or informally. Bullet points, full paragraphs, it is up to the individual student. (To be completed for homework if not finished in class)

Thoreau describes at length a place (Walden Pond), where he feels at peace.

- Where is your "happy place" or a place that brings you peace?
- Do you go there often or is it a place you have never been to?
- Describe this place. Why is it so important to you?
- How do you feel when you are in this place?

## Materials/ Resources:

Reading: Henry David Thoreau Solitude <u>https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ey4tS6\_3q0-OTpELcZ\_YKxAwL77jXjYq/view?usp=sharing</u>

## Daily Google Slides:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LcfMdn313mFs96mPUDGOF5g6cfYp0dA\_yYUfvdZIt -U/edit?usp=sharing

## Journal Entries Google Doc:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/154tdcWkg4YdSoU2HeEKBoWh2qxADGeJeoXaVZW9G 9xM/edit?usp=sharing

# Lesson #4 Thoreau: Sense of Belonging

## Overview:

In this lesson, students will choose from a selection of articles on the people who lived at Walden pond before or at the same time as Henry David Thoreau. Students will be given time to read the article of their choosing and answer questions about why the person(s) in their article should be represented in the history of Walden pond. Once students are aware of how Walden was a place of refuge for "outcasts" of society, they will reflect on belonging. Students will ultimately use what they learned from this activity in their journaling assignment where they reflect on if they feel a sense of belonging, representation, and a sense of value by their community.

Duration: one 55-minute class period

Goals:

- Students will be able to independently read the article of their choosing and answer questions on its significance
- Students will be able to identify the value of a different viewpoint from what we read in the class prior
- Students will be able to identify and write about if they feel a sense of belonging, representation, and a sense of value by their community.

MA Curriculum Frameworks: https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf

- Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized or deemphasized in each account.
- 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.
- Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

# Day 1 Agenda:

Do Now: Students will walk into the classroom and see on the board that there is a Jamboard for them to respond to. They will log onto google classroom and click on the jamboard. The question on the Jamboard is, "What's the best advice you've ever been given?" / They will take a few minutes to think and add their advice to the Jamboard. Then, we will look at the completed Jamboard and open it up to a full class discussion on the trends we notice.

Background Information: I will provide students with a brief google slide of information on the "outcasts" who made up the population of Walden Pond in Thoreau's time. People of color, people of Irish descent, drunks, as well as a few others were the original "outcasts" living at Walden. This portion of the lesson should take no more than 5 minutes.

## Activity 1:

For this activity students will work individually. Students will have 20 minutes to select and choose one of the provided articles about people of color living at Walden Pond. This assignment is followed by a discussion question posted on google classroom. Each students must answer the following questions on google classroom:

- Who was your article about?
- Why were they at Walden Pond?

• Why might this piece of history be important when we are thinking about Walden Pond and its legacy?

Journaling Assignment #4: In their notebooks or as a google doc in google classroom, students will respond to the following journal prompts. This can be written formally or informally. Bullet points, full paragraphs, it is up to the individual student.

- Do you feel like you have a sense of belonging in your community?
- Do you feel valued by society?
- Do you feel represented in the media?
- Do you feel represented in your community?

Materials/ Resources:

Jamboard: Best Advice

https://jamboard.google.com/d/17fBCr3iZBzrT4zuGGk1ya\_7YIVNLQGiI7v6zkaxIssM/edit?usp =sharing

Group Research: People of Color at Walden Pond Article Choices

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FwwnlLOtIBKQVVOwgD7YyNb4EROakh\_icVcmS2L6o yw/edit?usp=sharing

Articles Used Within This Choice Document:

- https://www.outdoors.org/resources/amc-outdoors/history/the-forgotten-history-of-walden-pond/
- https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2010/septemberoctober/feature/black-walden
- https://www.wbur.org/radioboston/2017/07/12/walden-thoreau-forgotten
- https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/10/opinion/thoreaus-invisible-neighbors-at-walden.html
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/11/28/thoreau-walden-brister-freeman-slavery/
- Brister Freeman's Home Site https://robbinshouse.org/projects/brister-freeman-familyhome-site/
- Educator Info <u>https://www.walden.org/what-we-do/library/lectures/thoreaus-lectures-before-walden-lecture-43/</u>

# Daily Google Slides:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LcfMdn313mFs96mPUDGOF5g6cfYp0dA\_yYUfvdZIt -U/edit?usp=sharing

# Journal Entries Google Doc:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/154tdcWkg4YdSoU2HeEKBoWh2qxADGeJeoXaVZW9G 9xM/edit?usp=sharing

# Lesson #5 Mary Oliver: Summer Day & Individual Happiness

## Overview:

In this lesson, students will read Mary Oliver's poem A Summer Day. Students will be focusing on figurative language, patterns and what they believe the significance of the poem to be. Once we have read through the poem as a class, students will complete their final journaling exercise. Mary Oliver's poem highlights individual happiness, and students will reflect on what the last line of the poem signifies in their own lives. Students will ultimately use what they learned from this final journaling assignment and the poem reflects on what they believe will make them happy in the future. Once this is complete, the final day of our unit is an opportunity for students to look through all their completed journal assignments and physically display (on a party hat) what transcendentalism means to them. Students will have an opportunity to engage in discussions with their peers about the significance behind their party hats on the final day of our unit.

Duration: two 55-minute class periods

Goals:

- Students will be able to identify key elements of individual happiness in Oliver's A Summer Day
- Students will be able to write about their plans for the future and what brings them happiness
- Students will be able to create a piece of art that identifies through words, drawings, symbols, etc. what transcendentalism means to them

MA Curriculum Frameworks: https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf

- Analyze a case in which a character's point of view and actions signal acceptance or rejection of cultural norms or intellectual ideas of a period or place, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.
- Determine the figurative or connotative meaning(s) of words and phrases as they are used in a text; analyze the impact of words with multiple meanings, as well as symbols or metaphors that extend throughout a text and shape its meaning. (See grades 9–10 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
- 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.
- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades *9–10 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### Day 1 Agenda:

Do Now: Biweekly Mental Health Check-in. Students will receive a piece of paper with a temperature gauge and a space for them to write about how they are feeling. Students will have a few minutes to individually write, and then when they are finished flip over their paper. The teacher will come around and collect the papers discreetly to keep students from seeing their peers' responses.

Background Information: I will provide students with a brief google slide of biographical information on who Mary Oliver was, and lead that into how we will be reading her poem A Summer's Day in class. This portion of the lesson should take no more than 5 minutes.

#### Reading/ Activity 1:

I will post the link to Olivers A Summer's Day to Google classroom as well as display it up on the board. We will start by reading through it one time, a minute for reflection, and then reading through it again on their own. Then, as a class we will work through annotating and analyzing the poem and its message.

Journaling Assignment #5: In their notebooks or as a google doc in google classroom, students will respond to the following journal prompts. This can be written formally or informally. Bullet points, full paragraphs, it is up to the individual student.

The last line of Mary Oliver's "The Summer Day" reads, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do / with your one wild and precious life?" You have 15 minutes to just write. Think about what is going to make you happy, things you want to accomplish, etc. Now. This goes without saying, but you do not have to have your entire life figured out at 16! This assignment does not have to have one central idea/ train of thought. You can be scatterbrained, word vomit, and have a general bulleted list of goals if you so wish. Now. What is it you want out of life?

#### Day 2 Agenda: Transcendentalism Party

Do Now: Students will walk into the classroom and see the question on the board "Where do you see yourself in 20 years?" They will take a few minutes to think and discuss their answers with a partner. Then, we will open it up to a full class discussion for students to share their answers.

Activity 1: Students will start by going through all their journal entries to determine their own philosophy of transcendentalism. Students will be given a blank white cone party hat. Students will have 25 minutes to review their journal entries, determine the highlights of their journal entries, and decorate their party hats in a way that displays what's important to their lives.

Activity 2: Students will walk around the room with their party hats on and completely decorated. Each student has to be able to discuss with their peers why they decorated their hat the way they did and why it's symbolic or relates to their journal entries.

Materials/ Resources: Reading: Mary Oliver The Summer Day <u>https://www.loc.gov/programs/poetry-and-</u> <u>literature/poet-laureate/poet-laureate-projects/poetry-180/all-poems/item/poetry-180-133/the-</u> <u>summer-day/</u>

# White Party Hats

https://www.amazon.com/Pieces-White-Adults-Birthday-Supplies/dp/B0965G51QJ?pd\_rd\_w=UZhU5&pf\_rd\_p=8e4731a7-b756-4530-8014-2f681a6d39bb&pf\_rd\_r=7NECNKDRBMJ0SR8AW37D&pd\_rd\_r=677b06a7-7ab7-4025-94c3c7f7ce07866e&pd\_rd\_wg=s2o0H&pd\_rd\_i=B0965G51QJ&psc=1&ref\_=pd\_bap\_d\_rp\_13\_t

# Mary Oliver Freewriting Activity

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11TcCB1uXLHUeJeqtneh\_T93FSq7elE6L-6Kk8golLcw/edit?usp=sharing

# Daily Google Slides:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LcfMdn313mFs96mPUDGOF5g6cfYp0dA\_yYUfvdZIt -U/edit?usp=sharing

# Journal Entries Google Doc:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/154tdcWkg4YdSoU2HeEKBoWh2qxADGeJeoXaVZW9G 9xM/edit?usp=sharing

Grading System/ Rubric Link: grading

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Fox, Carolyn Shepard. "Home." Home | Sudbury Valley School, https://sudburyvalley.org/.

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Oliver, Mary. "The Summer Day." *The Library of Congress*, https://www.loc.gov/programs/poetry-and-literature/poet-laureate/poet-laureateprojects/poetry-180/all-poems/item/poetry-180-133/the-summer-day/.

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