

LIVING IN SOCIETY

Essential questions

- How do Henry Thoreau and Abraham Lincoln help us understand citizenship in the United States both in their generation and in ours? Does Thoreau justify breaking the law? Does Lincoln justify keeping it?
- How do we perform our roles as citizens through understanding our lives under law “deliberately”?
- How might we articulate the “civic understanding” called for in the College Board’s AP Language and Composition requirements?

Lesson 1

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to articulate Thoreau’s arguments in “Civil Disobedience” in a written précis of his essay.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience”

Procedure:

1. Identify ‘difficult’ passages in “Civil Disobedience” through pair sharing annotations and discussion.
 - a. Suggested passages:
 - i. “All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now. But such was the case, they think, in the Revolution of '75. If one were to tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have their friction; and possibly this does enough good to counterbalance the evil.” **What is the difference between the American Revolution and other acts of rebellion?**
 - ii. “I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that

other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.” **Is there a difference between Northern and Southern calls for succession? How can anyone know if they have “God on their side”?**

- iii. “When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half an hour — for the horse was soon tackled — was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen”—**What different ways might we view Thoreau’s first act after being released from jail?**
- iv. “Still, [Daniel Webster’s] quality is not wisdom, but prudence. The lawyer’s truth is not truth, but consistency or a consistent expediency. Truth is always in harmony with herself, and is not concerned chiefly to reveal the justice that may consist with wrong-doing. He well deserves to be called, as he has been called, the Defender of the Constitution. There are really no blows to be given by him but defensive ones. He is not a leader, but a follower.” **Given Webster’s role in the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law, why might Thoreau single him out?**
- v. “They who know of no purer sources of truth, who have traced up its stream no higher, stand, and wisely stand, by the Bible and the Constitution, and drink at it there with reverence and humility; but they who behold where it comes trickling into this lake or that pool, gird up their loins once more, and continue their pilgrimage toward its fountain-head.” **What “purer sources of truth” exist beyond the Bible and Constitution? Is Thoreau for or against these sources?**

2. Discuss individual passages in groups with guide questions as above.
3. ‘Jigsaw’ groups to discuss various passages and Thoreau’s central claim and purpose.
4. Assessment: Students will write a précis of “Civil Disobedience”.

Précis format:

1. (Author’s credentials), (author’s first and last name) in his/her (type of text), (title of text), published in (publishing info) addresses the topic of (topic of text) and argues that (argument).
2. He/she supports this claim by _____, then _____, then _____, and finally _____.
3. (Author’s last name)’s purpose is to (author’s purpose in writing) in order to (change in reader/society the author wants to achieve).
4. He/she adopts a(n) _____ tone for his/her audience, the readers of (publication) and others interested in the topic of _____.

Lesson 2

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to chart the development of Thoreau's anti-slavery arguments as an example of rewriting and rethinking given the political events of his day.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," "Civil Disobedience," "Slavery in Massachusetts," "A Plea for Captain John Brown"

Procedure:

1. Review the events experienced by Thoreau prior to the Civil War with dates of his own writings.
 - a. Dates:
 - i. Missouri Compromise 1820
 - ii. Texas annexation 1845
 - iii. Move to Walden July 4, 1845
 - iv. Mexican War 1846
 - v. Night in Jail July 23, 1846
 - vi. "Civil Disobedience" published 1849
 - vii. Fugitive Slave Law 1850
 - viii. *Walden* published 1854
 - ix. Kansas/Nebraska Act 1854
 - x. "Slavery in Mass" 1854
 - xi. Founding of the Republican party 1854
 - xii. Sumner Beating 1856
 - xiii. Pottawatomie Massacre 1856
 - xiv. Harper's Ferry 1859
 - xv. "A Plea for Captain John Brown" 1859
2. In groups, create a "pi" chart of three columns listing events in one column, quotations and works in the next column, and noting changes in tone and emphasis in the third.
3. Present the changes and their significance in a class discussion.

Assessment: Present the changes and their significance in a class discussion; Write a comparative analysis essay involving two or more of Thoreau's anti-slavery essays.

Lesson 3

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will clarify their understanding of Thoreau's argument in "Civil Disobedience" and Abraham Lincoln's "On the Perpetuation of our Political Institutions" as well as their own positions by forming opinions on current events.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau anti-slavery essays, Abraham Lincoln, "On the Perpetuation of our Political Institutions"

Procedure:

1. Read and discuss briefly two short articles on two different current acts of civil disobedience or political resistance/protest which reflect contrasting political view points (i.e. occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and street closures by Black Lives Matter movement).
2. Conduct four corners exercise in which students move to one of four corners expressing what they believe to be their own opinions, Thoreau's opinion, and Lincoln's opinion.
3. Discuss as a whole class student opinions as well as how student personal responses may lack the consistency of Thoreau's or Lincoln's positions.

Assessment: Write an essay in which students create a rhetorical frame using Lincoln and Thoreau to assess a current issue of the day.

CHOOSING LIFE WITH PRINCIPLE

Essential questions

- How do we come to grips with ourselves as people living with varying degrees of privilege in a modern society?
- How do we form arguments that recognize and respect opposition as well as their internal inconsistencies? How do we write "deliberat[ive]ly"?
- What are ways to acknowledge complexity as called for in the College Board's AP Language and Composition requirements?

Lesson 1

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to understand the concept of a rhetorical position through the analogy of material space of Walden Pond.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," and "The Pond in Winter"

Materials: Thoreau's survey map of Walden; excerpt from Laura Dassow Walls, *Henry David Thoreau: A Life*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2017; drawing paper

Procedure:

1. Observe and discuss Thoreau's survey map of Walden Pond.
 - a. Questions for discussion:
 - i. How is the survey "an extravagant thing to do, wholly impractical" (Walls, 206)?
 - ii. Why would you want to know the exact measurements of the pond?
 - iii. What does this tell you about Thoreau's efforts to live "deliberately"?

- iv. How do maps function metaphorically? What are the multiple meanings of ‘survey’?
2. Read from Walls, pages 206-207. (“Thoreau’s quest for the ‘bottom’ of the pond was also his quest for bedrock truth....”)
3. Journal on an issue you care about with an eye toward a thesis.
4. Discuss “The Pond in Winter” (“the line of greatest length...”)
5. Draw and label a diagram demonstrating the “length,” “breadth,” and “depth” of your argument.

Assessment: The diagram students create, as well as their ability to form a thesis in their essay.

Lesson 2

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will recognize opposition in arguments by understanding the complexity and contradiction of their own decision making.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, “Economy,” and “Where I Lived and What I Lived For.”

Procedure:

1. Discuss cognates of the word “deliberately.”
 - a. Possible cognates
 - i. Liber—Latin for book
 - ii. Liberty
 - iii. Library
 - iv. Libra/balance
 - v. Deliberation/deliberatively
2. Discuss multiple meanings for the words “account” and “economy.”
3. Brief lecture comparing Thoreau’s historical to our own, i.e. inequality, more choices and more “desperation”; globalization example of Walden ice.
4. “Account” for your day: List activities over the course of a day/money spent over the course of the day.
5. Journal on how your list of time/money reflects your character and values.
6. Everyone says one thing on their list that they are proud of.
7. Discuss as a whole class examples of what is necessary and unnecessary, what is hypocritical and what compromises modernity/society requires of us.

Assessment: In essay writing, the degree of clarity students make in their arguments as well as their ability to recognize opposition.

Lesson 3

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to acknowledge complexity in their arguments by recognizing opposition, and understanding how to create qualification and counter-argument.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, “Economy,” and “Where I Lived and What I Lived For.”

Procedure:

1. Pair share what is necessary and what is not in your list from Lesson 2, what compromises you make and do not make between principle and modernity.
2. Discuss compromises as whole class; discuss concepts of opposition and counterargument.
3. Make a brief defense to the class of your partner’s least necessary time or expense.
4. Discuss as a whole class what was effective as qualification or recognition of opposition.

Assessment: In essay writing, look to students’ ability to recognize opposition, make counter-arguments, and offer qualification.

Lesson 4

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to acknowledge complexity and qualify their arguments through an understanding of Thoreau’s more deliberative arguments.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” “The Bean-Field,” “Former Inhabitants”

Procedure:

1. Read and discuss ‘woodchuck’ passage from “The Bean Field” (“These beans have results which are not harvested by me.”) **What are various sides of the argument about the woodchucks who eat his crop does Thoreau consider?**
2. With a partner, locate other passages from the readings in which Thoreau considers multiple positions.
3. Discuss passages as a whole class: **How does Thoreau manage to write about more than one position? How does he make conflicting evidence or position lead to a unified claim and/or purpose?**
4. Write a paragraph that presents a qualified argument for something on your list from Lesson 2.

Assessment: Paragraph as above; students’ ability to make qualified arguments in their essay writing.

BEING AWAKE, AWARE, AND ALIVE

Essential questions

- How do experiences shape writing? How does writing shape experience?
- How is writing a kind of ‘action from principle’?

- How do writers create purpose in a rhetorical sense?

Lesson 1

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to articulate the rhetorical concept of purpose.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, “Ktaadn” excerpts; contemporary personal essays, e.g. David Sederis, Joan Didion, &etc.

Materials: Henry David Thoreau, Nov. 16, 1857 letter to H.G.O. Blake

Procedure:

1. Read aloud to students, Thoreau’s Nov. 16, 1857 letter to H.G.O. Blake (“What did the mountain say...”)
2. Discuss as a whole class what it might mean “to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountain amounted to for you,” as well as “not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short.”
3. Pair share to discuss personal narrative you’ve been asked to complete in your past experience as a student. Suggest ideas to one another for what else those stories might have “amounted to.”
4. Discuss as a whole class ideas from previously assigned personal narratives as well as what else various contemporary essays might have “amounted to.”
5. Define in a brief lecture “amounted to” as rhetorical purpose.

Assessment: Students can state on a short quiz the rhetorical concept of purpose in their own words; student can formally and in formally identify purpose in essays they read.

Lesson 2

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to develop rhetorical purpose in their writing as part of the process of writing.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, “Ktaadn” and journal excerpts; contemporary personal essays, e.g. David Sederis, Joan Didion, &etc.

Materials: examples of Thoreau’s journal, selected rewritten passage from various works of Thoreau (i.e. the “different drummer” passage).

Procedure:

1. Discuss and lecture briefly on Thoreau’s journal and process (i.e. notes to journal to annotating journal to lecture to essay to drafting to publication; seven drafts of *Walden*; the idea of the Lyceum).
2. Write individually notes about an experience, then journal about a purpose for that experience.
3. Every student speak briefly about their experience.

4. Journal about the reaction of your classmates to individual statements
5. Discuss as a whole class what are things you would need to do to make an essay purposeful given your classmates reactions.

Assessment: Review drafts of student essays to check for understanding of the writing process and the development of purpose.

HEARING THAT DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Essential Questions

- Who is Henry Thoreau as a person and a writer? What's the difference between the person we are and the persona we create in writing? Why is recognizing that difference important?
- What are rhetorical strategies Thoreau uses? How can actions “from principle” be strategies to convey a purpose?
- What actions can we take to best convey our principles? How can we transform actions into a statement of principle in our writing?

Lesson 1

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to articulate an understanding of *Walden* within its historical and literary/rhetorical context as a way to separate the persona of *Walden* from the person of Thoreau.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden*, “Economy,” “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” “The Bean-Field,” and “Reading,” “Sounds,” “The Ponds,” “Baker Farm,” and /or “Former Inhabitants and Winter Visitors”; selections from Thoreau’s journal

Materials: Buell, Lawrence. “What Would Henry Do—About Anything?”, *What Would Henry Do?* Thoreau Farm Trust, 2017.

Procedure:

1. With partner, describe the person of Thoreau as presented in the selections from *Walden*. Discuss observations as a whole class.
2. In groups of four (pairs of pairs), conjecture Thoreau’s thoughts and actions on current issues:
 - a. Current issues:
 - i. Globalization
 - ii. Climate change
 - iii. Immigration
 - iv. Inequality
 - v. Privacy
 - vi. Race relations
 - vii. Conflict in the Middle East
3. Discuss as a whole class

4. Read Buell, “What Would Henry Do—About Anything?”
5. Discussion and lecture on the historical and biographical context of *Walden*.
 - a. Points of discussion:
 - i. ‘House’ vs. ‘cabin,’ ‘shanty,’ ‘hut,’ &etc.
 - ii. Thoreau’s various professions
 - iii. Leaves Walden when Emerson asks him to. Relationship with Emerson’s wife and children.
 - iv. Don’t freeze Thoreau at Walden—ages 27-30
 - v. The misnomer of “Life in the Woods
 - vi. Disestablishment of religion in Massachusetts
 - vii. Rising inequality and “globalization” example of Walden ice.
 - viii. Slavery and the dates of ‘Civil Disobedience’

Assessment: Ticket to Leave: What are three ways your understanding of Thoreau is more complex than the persona of *Walden*.

Lesson 2

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to understand the way writers rewrite for tone, audience, and purpose:

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden*, “Economy,” “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” “The Bean-Field,” and “Reading,” “Sounds,” “The Ponds,” “Baker Farm,” and /or “Former Inhabitants and Winter Visitors.”

Materials: Selection from Thoreau’s Journals

Procedure:

1. Consider as the day’s objective *The Portable Thoreau* editor Jeff Cramer’s statement: “It’s not being at Walden that matters—it’s writing *Walden* that matters” and Thoreau as first and foremost a writer.
2. Select passages to read aloud that reveal Thoreau’s persona in *Walden*. Take suggestions, read aloud, and discuss as a whole class the tone of the passages. Consider whom Thoreau criticizes in those passages and his use of the second person pronoun.
3. Discuss and explain with whole class Thoreau’s Concord Lyceum audience, American protestant tradition of the jeremiad, and the time lag between the Thoreau’s living at Walden Pond and publication of *Walden* (five years) and “Civil Disobedience” (2+ years). Read selected passages from Thoreau’s journals.
4. Discuss in small groups to determine the audience for *Walden* and journal passages.
5. Discuss as a whole class Thoreau’s purpose in addressing those specific audiences.

Assessment: In analysis, look to students’ ability to identify tone and audience.

Lesson 3

Objective: Students in an eleventh grade AP Language and Composition class will be able to class will be able to understand how varied descriptions and narrations can function strategically to achieve their purposes in writing.

Assigned reading and annotation: Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden*, “Economy,” “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” “The Bean-Field,” and “Reading,” “Sounds,” “The Ponds,” “Baker Farm,” and /or “Former Inhabitants and Winter Visitors.”

Procedure:

1. Create list of important current issues suggested by students, i.e. climate change.
2. In partners, develop ideas for taking action that shows why those issues are important or what can be done about them.
3. Discuss “The Bean-Field”
 - a. What issues does Thoreau address by growing a field of beans?
 - b. How is his bean field an illustration of his response to those issues?
 - c. How does his description of his growing a field of beans create a specific bean field?
 - d. Of what is he trying to convince his audience of those who encounter his bean field both in person and in writing? What is his rhetorical purpose?
4. Identify the bean field as a strategy to achieve a purpose. (Note Thoreau’s possible overreach in growing his beans and his decision not to grow them after his first summer).
5. In partners, identify another passage used strategically to achieve a purpose in *Walden*. Share passages as a class.

Assessment: In essay writing, look to students’ ability to develop descriptions and narrations strategically to achieve their rhetorical purpose.