

NEH “Living and Writing Deliberately” Curriculum Unit  
August 2017  
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Thread: Being Awake, Aware, Alive

### Unit Summary

Students will select quotations from the writings of Henry David Thoreau, illustrate the quotations with photographs or drawings, write the quotations in their own words, and present their work to the class.

### Objectives

Students will become familiar with the work of Henry David Thoreau by

reading/listening to biographies of Thoreau.

reading and discussing quotations from his work.

Students will show their understanding of the work of Henry David Thoreau by

writing the quotations in their own words.

illustrating the quotations with photos or drawings.

explaining the why they chose the quotations and the illustrations.

presenting their work to the class.

### Notes for teacher

1. The idea for this series of lessons comes from the book *Henry David Thoreau for Kids* by Corinne Hosfeld Smith. See bibliography.
2. The unit may be adapted for teaching to students in grade 3-12.
3. A good resource for this unit is now out of print, but if you can find a copy, it will help your students understand the final product for this unit. *In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World* has been called “the first coffee table book.” In it, Eliot Porter created and paired his color photographs of the New England woods with passages by writer Henry David Thoreau. See bibliography.

### Editorial Review from *Publishers Weekly*

“... word and picture complement each other in celebration of the New England countryside through the seasons. This was a landmark work. Porter's images of woods and streams, bogs and forests, plant and animal life remind us that Thoreau saw these

things in similar settings more than a century ago. The book is timeless. “

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4. If your students are already familiar with Thoreau, you may want to save time by skipping Lesson 1 and beginning the unit with Lesson 2. Also, some parts of the lessons may be assigned for homework, making this unit shorter.
5. Decide on the final product choices and how final products will be presented, depending on time and your students. Create final product handout for students, if needed.

#### Product and Presentation Choices

**Books-** Each student or group of 3-4 students creates a book of quotations and illustrations. Students’ “His Words and My Words” handouts may be included. Allow class time for students to browse the books.

**Posters –** Each student makes one or more posters, each with a quotation and a photo or illustration. Posters are displayed in a Gallery Walk. “His Words and My Words” handouts may be included.

**Slide Shows-**Each student or group of 3-4 students creates a slide show with their quotations and illustrations. Slide shows are presented to the class with students narrating using their “His Words and My Words” handouts.

6. Decide how you will evaluate the final products so you can tell your students your expectations. Create grading rubric, if needed.

#### **Materials**

Biographies of Henry David Thoreau See bibliography for suggestions.

Books and posters showing Thoreau’s quotations illustrated with drawings or photograph See bibliography for suggestions.

Notebooks for students to copy quotations

Devices for students to take photographs, one per student or one for each pair of students and/or art supplies for students to create illustrations

A selection of appropriate quotations from Henry David Thoreau's writings, either in print or accessed online See bibliography for suggestions.

Copies of "3,2,1" handout for students (included) You will use this for a "ticket out the door" to check your students' understanding.

Copies of "His Words and My Words" handout for students (included)

Copies of grading rubric, if needed

Copies of final product directions and expectations, if needed

## Lessons

### Lesson 1 - Guiding Question: Who was Henry David Thoreau?

#### Preparation

1. If this is your students' first encounter with Henry David Thoreau, choose a picture book biography to read aloud. Or select and copy a short biographical excerpt for students to read. See bibliography for suggestions.
2. Copy "3,2,1" handouts for students.

#### Procedure

1. Read the biography aloud or ask students to read the excerpt.
2. Discuss Thoreau's life and philosophy with students.
3. Call students' attention to quotations from Thoreau's writing as they encounter them in the texts.
4. Use the "ticket out the door" strategy to check for understanding by asking students to complete "3, 2, 1" handout.

### Lesson 2 - Guiding Question: What are Thoreau's most enduring ideas?

#### Preparation

1. Gather an array of books and/or posters that feature photographs and quotations to help students understand that they will choose one or more quotations to illustrate with photos or drawings.
2. Decide how you will help students access quotations. If students have computer access, "The Walden Woods Project" has an extensive list of quotes, grouped by subject. See bibliography. Or provide copies of a variety of Thoreau quotations.

3. Check students' "3,2,1" handouts and plan for any necessary re-teaching.

#### Procedure

1. Reteach, as needed, based on "3,2,1" handouts.
2. Students browse books and posters.
3. Discuss how the words and illustrations work together to create meaning.
4. Students choose quotations that they like and copy them into their notebooks.

### Lesson 3 - Guiding Question: What do Thoreau's words mean to you?

#### Preparation

1. Copy "His Words and My Words" handout for students.
2. Copy product directions and expectations, if needed.
3. Copy grading rubric, if needed.

#### Procedure

1. Explain final product expectations. Distribute directions and rubric handouts if needed.
2. Provide time for students to browse the quotations in their notebooks.
3. Provide time for students to go outdoors or travel throughout the school to take photographs. Can also be assigned as homework.
4. Alternatively, provide time for students to make drawings.
5. Students complete "His Words and My Words" handout. Can also be assigned as homework.

### Lesson 4 - Guiding Question: Why are Thoreau's words important to us today?

#### Procedure

1. Students present final products.

#### **Formative Assessment**

"3,2,1" – Ticket out the Door handout

#### **Summative Assessment**

Final Product and "His Words and My Words" handout

## Bibliography

### Thoreau Biographies

Burleigh, Robert. *If You Spent a Day with Thoreau at Walden Pond*. New York: Henry Holt, 2012.

Imagines what it would have been like to spend a day with Henry David Thoreau at his secluded cabin by Walden Pond, where he recorded his reflections on the natural world. For younger students.

Johnson, D. B. *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

While his friend works hard to earn the train fare to Fitchburg, young Henry walks the thirty miles through woods and fields, taking the opportunity to enjoy nature. Includes biographical information on Henry David Thoreau. For younger readers.

Locker, Thomas. *Walking with Henry: the Life and Works of Henry David Thoreau*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishers, 2011.

Introduces philosopher, writer, and environmentalist Henry David Thoreau, using selections from his own writings and an imaginary journey into the wilderness. For grades 4-8

Olson, Steven P. *Henry David Thoreau: American Naturalist, Writer, and Transcendentalist*. New York: Rosen, 2006.

Presents the life and career of famed American naturalist and author, Henry David Thoreau, and discusses the legacy of his work. For grades 6-12.

Smith, Corinne Hosfeld. *Henry David Thoreau for Kids*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2016.

Summarizes Thoreau's life and contributions culture. Includes project ideas, timeline, and resources. For grades 4-8.

Thoreau, Henry David and Peter Fiore. *Henry David's House*. Watertown, Maine: Charlesbridge, 2007. For grades 4-8.

Introduces Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, through excerpts from the original work.

### Thoreau Quotations

Thoreau, Henry David. *Thoreau: a Book of Quotations*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2000.

The following link to the "The Walden Woods Project" provides an extensive list of Thoreau quotations, grouped by subject.

<https://www.walden.org/thoreau/thoreau-quotations/>

### Books combining Thoreau quotations with photographs or drawings

Gorman, Stephen. *Thoreau's New England*. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2007.

Full-color photographs harmonize with selections from the writings of Thoreau.

McCurdy, Michael. *Walden Then and Now: An Alphabetical Tour of Henry Thoreau's Pond*. Watertown, Maine: Charlesbridge, 2010.

Alphabet book with black-and-white illustrations of animals, plants, seasons paired with quotations from *Walden*. References to *Walden* chapters and paragraphs are included.

Thoreau, Henry David. *In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World, from Henry David Thoreau*. Photographs by Eliot Porter. San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1962.

Color photographs of the New England woods are paired with passages by Henry David Thoreau.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Thumbing Through Thoreau: A Book of Quotations by Henry David Thoreau*. Edited by Kenny Luck. Illustrated by Jay Luke, Ren Adams. Archbald, PA: Tribute Books, 2010.

Groups Thoreau's quotations into three categories: "Society & Government," "Spirituality & Nature," and "Love," accompanied by original drawings. Includes index and bibliography.

# 3 - 2 - 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

3 things I learned while reading or listening

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 interesting facts

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1 question I still have

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**His Words and My Words**

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Quotation from Henry David Thoreau

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Quotation in my own words

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I chose this quotation because

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I chose this illustration for the quotation because

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