

## Examining Desperate and Deliberate Lives

Suggested pacing: 2 weeks, 10 - 50 minute class periods

### **Learning Goals:**

Students will understand Transcendentalism as a philosophy and literary period.

Students will be able to analyze and evaluate Thoreau's writing style (words/phrases, structure, point of view, etc.) and how it impacts meaning.

Students will be able to write an informative/explanatory essay that examines Thoreau's philosophy of living deliberately.

### **Essential Questions:**

1. What does Thoreau mean when he says, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation"?
2. How does Thoreau use language to enhance his philosophy?

### **Supporting Questions:**

What does Thoreau's antidote to desperation—living deliberately—really mean? In other words, how does one live deliberately?

How are the principles of Transcendentalism embedded within living deliberately?

What role does nature play in living deliberately?

What role does Civil Disobedience play in living deliberately?

### **Materials:**

*Walden* by Henry David Thoreau

- ✚ Economy excerpts
- ✚ Where I Lived...
- ✚ Civil Disobedience...

Internet access:

Thoreau Quotes

Transcendentalism

Padlet

Socrative

## Lexington/Concord Brochures/Ads

### **Lesson Progression:**

1. 2 days - Context: Transcendentalism & Concord
  - a. Transcendentalism – Students define Transcendentalism creating a [concept map](#) by visiting <http://www.ushistory.org/us/26f.asp>
  - b. Concord/Place: In order to understand and generate interest in Thoreau, students read a variety of texts from Concord: Concord museum ad, Emerson’s house ad, Thoreau Farm ad, Minute Man Park flyer, Robbins House Ad, Historic Concord Map, Concord Village Photos, Lexington advertisements, etc.

**Assess:** Concept Map

- c. Students discuss Thoreau’s Concord being sure to capture the following:
  - i. What role did Thoreau’s beloved Concord play in American History?
  - ii. Who were some of Thoreau’s neighbors?
  - iii. How might living in a place like Concord have influenced its 19<sup>th</sup> century residents?

**Assess:** Exit Slip with above questions

- d. Students read collection of [quotes](#) and begin to characterize Thoreau through discussion and reflection by considering the following:
  - i. What do you notice about Thoreau’s writing style? (aphorism, parallelism, metaphor)
  - ii. What are some of the themes T discusses? Why do you think he chooses these themes?
  - iii. What is T’s attitude toward his themes?
  - iv. What are his dominant values?
- e. To further their initial understanding of Thoreau, students watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhP7PKoRmmY>

**Assess:** Mini Poster with graphic representation, 3 significant quotations, analysis of themes and writing style (analysis skills scaffolded earlier in quarter).

**HW:** On going for 10 days Nature/place journal – notice details of surroundings write one page per day.

2. 1 day - Discuss definition of Desperate

- a. Think, pair, share – student definitions for desperate, i.e. What does it mean to be desperate or act desperately?
- b. Divide quote below by sentence. Distribute one sentence to 5 groups. Groups discuss where their sentence would fall in a five sentence paragraph and why.
- c. Project entire quote below while groups discuss and share content of assigned sentence considering the following: key words, imagery, syntax.

1.) *The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.* 2.) *What is called resignation is confirmed desperation.* 3.) *From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats.* 4.) *A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.* 5.) *There is no play in them, for this comes after work.*

**Assess:** Written response:

In a formal paragraph, explain Thoreau’s claim that “[t]he mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” What does he mean?

❖ **Be sure to:**

- ✓ Include introductory and concluding sentences
- ✓ Cite evidence from text
- ✓ Use proper grammar, usage, mechanics including punctuating quotations.

3. 1 day - Discuss and define Living Deliberately

- a. How do you spend your time? Have students clock a typical day. What does their “daily schedule” suggest about their values? Use [Padlet](#) to display.
- b. Define Deliberate with Laura Walls lecture i.e. liberty, libre, liberal.
- c. Read “Where I Lived and What I Lived For”
  - i. Read first paragraph together and discussing language and themes creating a Double-Entry Journal with focus on what it means to “live deliberately” in preparation for digital Socratic

**Assess: connection to theme and depth of analysis**

Page #	Significant Quotation/Text	Interpretation/Analysis

4. 1 day - Socratic Discussion on “Where I Lived and What I Lived For” question.

**Assess:** Writing Prompt

How does Thoreau suggest that one live deliberately?

What role does nature play in living deliberately?

Use **Be Sure To** criteria above

5. 3 Days - “Civil Disobedience”
- a. Double-entry journal
  - b. Discussion on structure and style
  - c. Discussion of argument and connection to living deliberately.
  - d. Possible skype with Jeffrey S. Cramer to answer remaining questions.

**Assess:** Double-entry journal and/or discussion

6. 2 Days – Essay

In a well-developed essay, Introduce and explain Thoreau’s philosophy of desperate v. deliberate living.

**Assess:** [Expository Essay Rubric](#)

Assessments/Learning Evidence:

Concept Map