

**The Literary Garden:
Literal and Metaphorical Manifestation of
Universal and Individual Truth**

**Cultivating an awareness of unique self-identity,
understanding of social and communal purpose,
and appreciation for natural environments through
literary analysis, writing processes, Socratic
seminars,
and planning and nurturing a garden with a literary
motif.**

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The Literary Garden: Literal and Metaphorical Manifestation of Universal and Individual Truth

- I. Living in Nature: Planting and maintaining a garden.**
- II. Alive, Awake, Aware: Journaling daily observations of interactions with the natural world.**
- III. Practicing Simplicity: Apply and compare the Thoreauvian principles of individual worth and the natural world to the values of modern society.**
- III. Choosing Life with Principle: Compose an essay that examines the relationship between the natural world and human society.**

Inception:

This unit will focus on the creation, cultivation, and maintenance of a communal project, a Literary Garden. I started this about 5 years ago, quite unplanned, to occupy my restless seniors who had completed their exams and were biding time until graduation. The idea was to take the symbol of the garden, present in so many of our texts, and bring it to life in a literal form. The plan, shape, plants, and garden art all came from the students. They contributed to the garden with plants they bought or grew, art they bought or made, tools they borrowed, materials they repurposed, and stones they donated and painted. In the center of the garden is an apple tree (naturally!) and it is encircled by stones painted with quotes from our literature, sculptures with literary references, and assorted flowers and plants, perennial and annual. Each year the incoming class is responsible to cultivate, repair, and add to it.

Academic projects:

Many academic exercises and projects can be developed around the ongoing Literary Garden projects. This unit will focus on the collection of field notes, the practice of journaling, the development and refinement of voice in various writing modes, a short persuasive composition in the style of a blog or editorial, and a more formal essay that combines the four modes of discourse in a personal manifesto of "Life with principle." Speaking and listening skills will be honed in informal class discussion, Socratic seminars, and a Lyceum style exchange of ideas.

Interdisciplinary options:

A unit of this kind offers endless interdisciplinary opportunities. I have worked with the horticulture instructor whose class grew and donated many plants. The Horticulture club donated and planted the apple tree. We worked with the ceramics instructor whose students created planters that encircled the garden. There are numerous possibilities, depending on the curricular needs, facilities, and interest.

Objectives:

To demonstrate close observation of the natural world.

To interact with the natural world.

To evaluate the relationship between natural setting and artificial surrounding.

To engage in a specific selected activity that links the self with the care of the natural world.
To document the observation and interaction with nature in various writing modes.
To examine the role of the individual in cultivating a harmonious relationship between the demands of modernity and the needs of the natural environment.
To analyze the texts of Thoreau, and other authors, in addressing the larger questions of social, environmental, and individual responsibility.
To implement actions to improve the natural environment and the social environment.

Essential Questions:

How can physical interaction with nature give us a deeper understanding of human nature?
How can a sustained observation of nature give us a deeper understanding of our individuality and identity?
To what extent are behaviors, patterns, and anomalies of nature exhibited in human nature?
How can planting and maintaining a garden be a gesture of harmony with nature?
How can we demonstrate a responsible relationship with the natural world?
What evidence exists of our neglect, abuse, or control of our natural environment? What actions would create a healthy balance that avoids the extremes of neglect, abuse, and control?
What universal truths can be inferred by a close observation of the natural world?
What unique philosophical insights can be discovered by a close observation of the natural world?
What skills do we need to be keen observers of nature?
What can nature teach us about ourselves?

Activities and assessments:

Planting and maintaining a garden.
Close annotated analysis of Walden excerpts with reflections.
Close annotated analysis of excerpts of literary works that use the garden as setting.
Close annotated analysis of texts from other disciplines (science, psychology, history, humanities, etc.)
Maintain a journal that documents observations of and interactions with both natural and social environments.
Write a blog style entry that makes an argument for simplifying the excesses of modernity.
Create an original poem that addresses an observation of natural world.
Craft essay using the four modes of discourse in the spirit of Thoreau that examines a place of significance and how it cultivates.

"We boast of our system of education,
but why stop at schoolmasters and schoolhouses?
We are all schoolmasters, and our schoolhouse is the universe.
To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse
while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd."
(Journal, October 15, 1859, Henry David Thoreau)

This is the second year of our garden. The apple tree is a 5 variety grafted tree donated and planted by the Horticulture class. The stepping stones were donated by a student who had a pile of stones at her home that were being discarded. The stones were painted with quotes from the literature we read throughout the year. The garden art pieces with literary references, such as a tomb stone for *The Metamorphosis*' Gregor Samsa and *Hamlet*'s Yorick, a quote from *Fahrenheit 451* and *Candide*, were also created by students. The ceramic planters in oversized teacups were inspired by *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and were made by the Ceramic Art students. If you look carefully, sitting on a limb, is an unclothed Ken doll, aka Adam from the garden of Eden, or Yossarian at Snowden's funeral from *Catch-22*.



*"Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no
seed has been,
I have great faith in a seed - a, to me, equally mysterious
origin for it.*

*Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to
expect wonders."*

(The Succession of Forest Trees, lecture 1860, Henry David
Thoreau)

I. Living in Nature: Planting and maintaining a garden.

"I have always cultivated a garden."
(Walden, Where I lived and what I lived for, Henry David Thoreau)

a. Objectives

- i. To demonstrate close observation of the natural world.
- ii. To interact with the natural world.
- iii. To engage in a specific selected activity that links the self with the care of the natural world. To produce a variety of writing that documents the activities.
- iv. To implement actions to improve the natural environment and the social environment.

b. Essential questions

- i. How can physical interaction with nature give us a deeper understanding of human nature?
- ii. How can planting and maintaining a garden be a gesture of harmony with nature?
- iii. How can we demonstrate a responsible relationship with the natural world?
- iv. What evidence exists of our neglect, abuse, or control of our natural environment? What actions would create a healthy balance that avoids the extremes of neglect, abuse, and control?
- v. What skills do we need to be keen observers of nature?
- vi. What can nature teach us about ourselves?

c. Procedures: This project can take place over the course of the school year. It can involve as many days as needed or wanted, some class time is used especially when tied to academic activities. Our activities will reflect the spirit of Thoreau in Walden, specifically *Where I lived and what I lived for*, covered in another section of this unit.

- i. **Day 1:** Initial visit. Take class out to the garden with journals. Have them take observational notes on the condition of the garden and what is needed to attend to it. (Weeding, pruning, repair or repurposing of garden art, etc.).
- ii. Upon return to class, distill notes into a journal entry that concentrates on observational details of the visit.
- iii. Based on class shared observations, create a plan of action to clean up the garden and prepare for winter.
- iv. **Day 2:** Fall clean up. Revisit the garden for a second assessment and work detail documenting with field notes. Depending on student availability, this can be done on off-class hours for a mandatory or voluntary homework assignment. Students unable to work in the garden can contribute by researching needs for the garden in the spring.

- v. Return to class to distill notes into an observational journal entry.
 - vi. **Days 3 and 4:** Spring preparation. Revisit garden, taking notes on condition and plans for garden. Document ideas regarding expansion, addition, and enhancement of garden.
 - vii. Return to class and pool all ideas to discuss vision for the garden. Students will select what they will contribute to the garden such as:
 - 1. Labor: Weeding, planting, repairing path stones.
 - 2. Beautification: Contribute new plants, flowers, etc.
 - 3. Artistic literary elements: Incorporate themes of our texts with painted quote rocks, literary related sculpture, literary signs, etc.
 - 4. Any unused items from home that can be reused or repurposed.
 - viii. **Days 5-7:** On a rotating schedule have students participate in the activity of their choosing (non-instructional days or extra-curricular hours) to complete their task.
 - ix. Final Gathering around tree to take pictures and enjoy the finished garden. Record final thoughts and observations of the communal project.
- d. Needed materials**
- i. Donated or borrowed garden tools and gloves.
 - ii. Donated or purchased plants/flowers.
 - iii. Donated garden items for beautification.
 - iv. Journals to be kept throughout the year to include this project and ancillary assignments detailed later in the unit.
- e. Assessments**
- i. Journal assignments as individual classwork checks. Journal entries will be considered in part or whole to contribute to the culminating Thoreauvian essay in Part IV, Life with Principle.
 - ii. Primarily, this is a participation project. As such, it is one of the few times I award a participation grade if the student contributes to the garden with the activity of choice.



II. Alive, Awake, Aware: Journaling daily observations of interactions with the natural world.

"To be awake is to be alive.

I have never yet met a man who was quite awake.

How could I have looked him in the face?"

(Walden, Where I lived and what I lived for, Henry David Thoreau)

a. Objectives

- i. To demonstrate close observation of the natural world.
- ii. To evaluate the relationship between natural setting and artificial surrounding.
- iii. To document observations and discoveries in a journal that is sustained throughout the project.

b. Essential questions

- i. What does it mean to be "alive, awake, and aware"?
- ii. How can a sustained observation of nature give us a deeper understanding of our individuality and identity?
- iii. What universal truths can be inferred by a close observation of the natural world?
- iv. What unique philosophical insights can be discovered by a close observation of the natural world?
- v. What skills do we need to be keen observers of nature?
- vi. How do surroundings, both natural and social, connected to identity?

c. Procedures: This lesson will emphasize the benefits of the practice of journal keeping that focuses on natural and social environments. The idea is to provide a comfortable, non-judgmental writing experience in which the students can explore ideas gleaned from observations that focus on developing student voice. Journals are idea centric, not grammar or structure centric. Grammar and structure can be finessed in the writings that develop from the journal topics (see following lesson plans). Using the field notes from the garden visits (and other encounters with natural and social environments) described in the previous lesson plan, create a journal entries that document and process observations. A typical lesson may look like this:

- i. **Day I:** Have students identify what kind of writing is associated with a reflective journal. Follow with a short group discussion covering expectations and goals of a reflective journal. Distinguish between a reflective journal and personal diary. Note content propriety based on audience of self, teacher, and sometimes verbally with peers.
- ii. Share an academic definition such as: "A reflective journal is a personal record of student's learning experiences. It is a space where a learner can record and reflect upon their observations and responses to situations, which can then be used to explore and analyze ways of thinking. Journals,

although generally written, can also contain images, drawings and other types of reference materials.”

(http://wikieducator.org/Reflective_journals)

- iii. Review 4 modes of discourse and discuss modes conducive to journaling. <https://letterpile.com/writing/Four-Types-of-Writing>
- iv. Show/handout excerpt of Thoreau’s journal. Read aloud and have students annotate what they notice about the content, style, voice, and modes of discourse.
- v. Show/handout excerpt of Hawthorne’s journal. Read aloud and have students annotate what they notice about the content, style, voice, and modes of discourse.
- vi. Discuss identifying and contrasting traits of each author.
- vii. Show photo image of each of the journals and discuss the open format of the journal that may include notes, asides, drawings, etc.
- viii. Give students time to “free search” for published journals of noted public figures. Share findings and observations with class. Homework option: Select a journal entry of a noted historical, cultural, or literary figure. Write a summary/reflection on the voice, style, and content of the entry and select a quote that best represents that entry. Share “free search” findings and observations of student selected journal entries. Discuss unique traits of various authors, i.e. <http://listverse.com/2015/03/01/10-revealing-diary-and-journal-entries-of-famous-figures/> (This may be split with day 2 if more time is needed for the previous activities.)
- ix. **Day 2:** Begin by reading aloud an excerpt of Walden aloud. “Where I lived, and what I lived for”, beginning with “Every morning was a cheerful invitation...” and ending with “Simplify, simplify” (3 ½ paragraphs). Students will write a question about the text on note cards. Collect and read select questions aloud to prompt class discussion. Refine and extend questions in context of discussion. Focus on the need and importance of Thoreau’s call for renewal.
- x. First Fall entry: Students will bring notecards on a brief field trip to the garden. (Note: Our literary garden is just outside of our classroom; as such, frequent field trips and garden work is accessible and convenient.) Students will spend 10 minutes or so taking observational notes. Staple notecards in journal for future reference when discussing process writing.
- xi. Students will return to the class and write a journal entry using the field notes and additional personal insight. While journal entries may initially be primarily descriptive in content, they should, with guided prompts, become increasingly reflective in nature.
Observational questions may be:
 1. What do observe about the garden’s current state?
 2. What needs attention, repair, or care?
 3. How can it be added to, improved, or beautified in the Spring?Reflective questions may be:

4. How can I contribute to care for natural space?
 5. What worth do I place on natural space?
 6. How do natural and social settings contribute to my identity?
- xii. Beginning in small groups, then sharing with whole class, share observation, needs, and potential plans for the garden.
 - xiii. Return to the garden for simple clean up and return to plans in Spring.
 - xiv. Return to record a brief journal description of participation. Have students consider the role of natural environment in modern society.
 - xv. **Other potential extended journal discussions and entries:**
 1. Alive, Awake, Aware: Explore Thoreau's statement: "To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him/ in the face?" (Walden, Where I lived and what I lived for, Thoreau). Discuss student definitions and dictionary definitions of alive, awake, aware.
 2. Select a familiar setting and create four journal entries, each using a different mode of discourse: descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive. This exercise will prepare students for the final writing project in this unit: Where is your Walden?
 3. Social or artificial settings: Detailed description of a "non-natural: environment" such as classroom, work place, bedroom. Note traits distinct from nature and traits that imitate nature. (I have in mind Thoreau's descriptions of his cabin and the railroad.)
 4. Detailed description of a natural setting the student is familiar with. Note the role this place has in community (i.e. beach, bike trail, dog park, back yard, etc.).

d. Needed materials

- i. Journal
- ii. Internet access, chrome books, projector screen to visually share class findings.
- iii. Handouts with copies of journal excerpts from Thoreau and Hawthorne
- iv. Walden text

e. Assessments

- i. A given number of journal entries will be selected by the student for submission as a formative assessment (quiz) grade. (Depending on the number of entries (and class enrollment!) a suggested number is anywhere from 5 to 10 entries.
- ii. Reflection assignment: The student will select a Thoreau quote that best reflects a recurrent theme or motif or idea in the entries. The reflection can be a summative assessment on the experience of journaling, the gleaned insights, and the effect on writing quality.
- iii. Use the following documents to assess student annotations.

Transcript of Thoreau's Journal, 1854

Monday Sep 4th

Observed the undersides of a multiflorous shrub willow by the river lit by the rays of the rising sun--shining like silver or dew drops-- Yet when I stood nearer & looked down on them at a different angle they were quite dull.

1

2 I have provided my little snapping turtle
3 with a tub of water & mud--& it is surprising
4 how fast he learns to use his limbs & this
5 with the yolk still trailing from him
6 world. He actually runs. ^ The insensibility &
7 as if he had got new vigor from contact with the mud.
8 toughness of his infancy--make our life with
9 its disease & low spirits ridiculous-- He
10 impresses me as the rudiment of a man
11 worthy to inhabit the earth. He is born with
12 a shell-- That is symbolical of his toughness.
13 His shell being so rounded & sharp on the
14 back at this age he can turn over without
15 trouble.

16

17 Pm to Climbing Flowering Fern--Polyg.
18 articulatum ap 3 or 4 days
19 --In the wood paths I find a great many
20 of the cast-steel soap galls--more or
21 some are saddled on the twigs
22 less fresh-- They are now dropping from
23 the shrub oaks. Is not Art itself a
24 gall? Nature is stung by God & the
25 seed of man planted in her-- The artist
26 changes the direction of nature--& makes
27 her grow according to his idea. If
28 the gall was anticipated when the oak
29 was made--so was the canoe when
30 the birch was made. Genius stings nature
31 & she grows according to its idea.

Mr. Thoreau (spelled "Thorow" but corrected on website) from Hawthorne's Journal

September 1, 1842. Mr. Thoreau dined with us yesterday.... He is a keen and delicate observer of nature--a genuine observer--which, I suspect, is almost as rare a character as even an original poet; and Nature, in return for his love, seems to adopt him as her especial child, and shows him secrets which few others are allowed to witness. He is familiar with beast, fish, fowl, and reptile, and has strange stories to tell of adventures, and friendly passages with these lower brethren of mortality. Herb and flower, likewise, wherever they grow, whether in garden or wildwood, are his familiar friends. He is also on intimate terms with the clouds, and can tell the portents of storms. It is a characteristic trait that he has a great regard for the memory of the Indian tribes, whose wild life would have suited him so well; and strange to say, he seldom walks over a ploughed field without picking up an arrow-point, a spearhead, or other relic of the red men--as if their spirits willed him to be the inheritor of their simple wealth.

With all this he has more than a tincture of literature,--a deep and true taste for poetry, especially for the elder poets, and he is a good writer,--at least he has written a good article, a rambling disquisition on Natural History, in the last Dial, which, he says, was chiefly made up from journals of his own observations. Methinks this article gives a very fair image of his mind and character,--so true, innate, and literal in observation, yet giving the spirit as well as letter of what he sees, even as a lake reflects its wooded banks, showing every leaf, yet giving the wild beauty of the whole scene. Then there are in the article passages of cloudy and dreamy metaphysics, and also passages where his thoughts seem to measure and attune themselves into spontaneous verse, as they rightfully may, since there is real poetry in them. There is a basis of good sense and of moral truth, too, throughout the article, which also is a reflection of his character; for he is not unwise to think and feel, and I find him a healthy and wholesome man to know.

After dinner (at which we cut the first watermelon and muskmelon that our garden has ripened) Mr. Thoreau and I walked up the bank of the river; and, at a certain point, he shouted for his boat. Forthwith, a young man paddled it across the river, and Mr. Thoreau and I voyaged farther up the stream, which soon became more beautiful than any picture, with its dark and quiet sheet of water, half shaded, half sunny, between high and wooded banks. The late rains have swollen the stream so much that many trees are standing up to their knees, as it were, in the water, and boughs, which lately swung high in air, now dip and drink deep of the passing wave. As to the poor cardinals which glowed upon the bank a few days since, I could see only a few of their scarlet hats, peeping above the tide. Mr. Thoreau managed the boat so perfectly, either with two paddles or with one, that it seemed instinct with his own will, and to require no physical effort to guide it. He said that, when some Indians visited Concord a few years since, he found that he had acquired, without a teacher, their precise method of propelling and steering a canoe. Nevertheless he was desirous of selling the boat of which he is so fit a pilot, and which was built by his own hands; so I agreed to take it, and accordingly became possessor of the Musketaquid. I wish I could acquire the aquatic skill of the original owner.

from American Notebooks (1835-42) published posthumously, 1868
<http://www.eldritchpress.org/nh/nhhdt1.html>

III. Practicing Simplicity: Apply and compare the Thoreauvian principles of individual worth and the natural world to the values of modern society. Discriminate between necessity and extravagance.

"Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion." (Walden, Where I lived and what I lived for, Thoreau)

a. Objectives

- i. To document the observation and interaction with nature in various writing modes.
- ii. To examine the role of the individual in cultivating a harmonious relationship between the demands of modernity and the needs of the natural environment.
- iii. To analyze the texts of Thoreau, and other authors, in addressing the larger questions of social, environmental, and individual responsibility.
- iv. To advocate actions to improve the natural environment and the social environment.

b. Essential questions

- i. How can a sustained observation of nature give us a deeper understanding of our individuality and identity?
- ii. To what extent are behaviors, patterns, and anomalies of nature exhibited in human nature?
- iii. What universal truths can be inferred by a close observation of the natural world?
- iv. What unique philosophical insights can be discovered by a close observation of the natural world?

c. Procedures

- i. In preparation for the next two lessons, students will need to have read and annotated the following sections (excerpts) from Walden:
 1. Economy (excerpt beginning "I have thus a tight shingled house" to "a peck of corn to mill")
 2. Where I lived and what I lived for (last two paragraphs)

3. Solitude (last two paragraphs)
 4. Sounds (excerpt beginning “The Fitchburg Railroad” to “Keep on your own track then”)
- ii. **Day 1:** Students will address each of the following journal topics in class (5 minutes), each followed by 10 minutes of discussion sharing unique observations and common denominators. In-class journal topics:
1. Make a financial accounting in list form of all you have spent in the last 24 hours.
 2. Make an accounting in list or chart form of how you have spent your time in the past 24 hours.
 3. What would you consider is a “necessity of life”?
- End class with a discussion of Thoreau’s perspective as presented in the excerpted section in Economy. Have students speculate how they might simplify the way they spend time and money.
- iii. **Days 2 and 3:** Socratic seminar
1. Divide class into small groups, each of which will be assigned one of the Thoreau passages listed (and/or any additional passage you may wish to select).
 2. Reference the previous discussion of the “Simplify” passage in “Where I lived” as a model for the following student led activity.
 3. Give class time to discuss passage and create questions in the style of a Socratic seminar to prepare for the next group discussion. Questions should reference text specifically, and be designed to elicit responses that honor the complexity of the text. Questions may also extend beyond the text to contemporary relevance. Questions should consider Thoreau’s emphasis on simplicity, renewal, and any other Thoreauvian virtues students may discover. Some examples of Socratic seminar forums:
 - a. <https://www.paideia.org/socratic-questioning/>
 - b. <http://pms.pasco.k12.fl.us/wp-content/uploads/pms/2014/08/Socratic-Seminar.pdf>
 - c. <https://www.nwabr.org/sites/default/files/SocSem.pdf>
 4. Depending on the ability level of the class you can feature small group discussion for a large group audience in a couple of ways:
 - a. Have each group lead class discussion by posing its passage questions to the rest of the class.
 - b. Have each group take turns conducting its discussion in the center of the class with the rest of the class as active observers.
 - c. Create new groups with one member of each group representing one of the passages in the new group.
- iv. **Day 4:** Blog Post:
1. Students will share a blog style written commentary in which they appeal to their peers to simplify their lives.

2. Interdisciplinary blog read for fun and inspiration:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/meditation-modern-life/201507/henry-david-thoreau-simplify-simplify>

d. Needed materials

- i. Walden
- ii. Journal

e. Assessments

- i. Write a blog style post in which you propose one way in which you and your peers could radically simplify your lives. Create a webpage design with graphics, if fitting. Consider reference material that is of interest and relevance to you such as scientific data, philosophical insights, spiritual wisdom, historical, literary, and cultural allusions, etc. Your proposal should be the simple focus and should appeal to your audience: your peers. Use blog style tips in creating your persuasive appeal:
<http://www.copyblogger.com/blogging-writing-guide/>



Our mascot Gnome Chomsky; Alice's Flamingo Croquet mallet; Gregor's gravestone; the Cheshire Cat smiles beneath a wood burned F451 quote; Yossarian as Adam eats the apple.

IV. Choosing Life with Principle: Compose an essay that examines the relationship between the natural world and human society.

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion." (Walden, Where I lived and what I lived for, Thoreau)

a. Objectives

- i. To document the observation and interaction with natural and social environments in various writing modes.
- ii. To examine the role of the individual in cultivating a harmonious relationship between the demands of modernity and the needs of the natural environment.
- iii. To analyze the texts of Thoreau, and other authors, in addressing the larger questions of social, environmental, and individual responsibility.

b. Essential Questions:

- i. How can a sustained observation of our surroundings give us a deeper understanding of our individuality and identity?
- ii. What universal truths can be inferred by a close observation of the natural world?
- iii. What unique philosophical insights can be discovered by a close observation of the natural world?
- iv. What can nature teach us about ourselves?
- v. Where do you go to feed your soul?

c. Procedures and summative assessment

- i. Read aloud excerpt from Walden, "The Ponds" beginning with "Nevertheless, of all the characters I have known, perhaps Walden wears best" and ending with "God's Drop." Discuss signature traits of Thoreau's voice and style. Discuss inclusion of poem.
- ii. Assign final writing project in which students will write their own "Walden chapter" of a place of significance. Discuss expectations of assignment and field student suggestions and questions. Be open to

student input as this is an academic project that is uniquely student centered. See the following assignment.

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately,
to front only the essential facts of life,
and see if I could not learn what it had to teach,
and not, when I came to die,
discover that I had not lived.”
(from Walden, “Where I lived and what I lived for,” Henry David
Thoreau)

Topic:

Consider our exploration of the importance of place in literary and historical context. For Thoreau, Walden was a place of spiritual sanctuary, physical solitude, philosophical rumination, scientific exploration, and existential renewal. His decision to “live deliberately” allowed him to confront his identity with intention and honesty, without the distractions of modern society.

Think about a place that you consider to be a place of sanctuary. Where is your Walden? Where do you go to feed your soul? Is it a natural or social environment? Why do you identify with it? How does it cultivate your individuality? How does it renew or energize you?

Task:

Write an essay that features a place of significance to you. Think of it as a chapter to a larger work like Walden, but one that is unique to you, written in first person. You don’t necessarily need to emulate Thoreau’s style, but use his style as an example of how to write about setting, experience, and self.

Requirements: (500-800 words)

1. Chapter title that includes the name of the place
2. Integrate the four modes of discourse in your chapter. How you integrate this is up to you. You can choose to separate sections or paragraphs by mode, or integrate modes throughout your essay.
 - a. Expository: Depending on your place, you may consider facts or figures that include significant history, architectural process, scientific facts, etc.
 - b. Descriptive: Language that appeals to the senses (see Chapter 4 in *Of Sound and Sense*.)
 - c. Persuasive: Your appeal will depend on your place and its relevance to the reader. Do you want to persuade your reader to visit? To preserve? The persuasive goal may be to simply share your insight or appreciate your enthusiasm.
 - d. Narrative: Recount experiential details that may include brief anecdotes or significant moments.
 - e. Optional: Consider including original verse that expresses your connection to your place in poetic form.
3. Visual element: Include a visual depiction of your place. It can be photographs, drawings, or a painting. Present it as a cover page to your chapter.