Lesson Plans for Transcendental/Henry David Thoreau Unit
created by Damian Ubriaco for NEH Workshop: Living Deliberately 2017

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Lesson: Present Moment w/ Articles

Objective: Students will be able to identify the benefits of paying attention to the present moment.

Essential Question: Why is it important to pay attention to the present moment?

Situation: Lately you and your friends have been talking about how stressed everyone is with all their responsibilities and the approaching end of high school. You know of unhealthy ways to relieve stress – but you recognize that those methods often create more stress in the long term. Lately you have been hearing a lot about the term mindfulness and the present moment. After a particularly stressful week you decide to find out more information about it. After practicing it for several weeks, you tell your friends what you found out about the present moment.

Task/Procedure: After reading sections from Henry, articles about mindfulness, watching one video, and class discussion, you will adopt one method of practicing mindfulness for a full month. You will keep an on-line journal about your experiences and participate in small group discussion on-line. You will then write a reflection about the experience.

Product: A written reflection about experience.


Assessment: Via on-line journal and discussion. Ultimately, written reflection.
Mindfulness: A Teacher's Guide

by Dr. Amy Saltzman

What Is Mindfulness?

This brief document provides a working definition of mindfulness, an overview of the scientific rationale for offering mindfulness to children and adolescents, a review of the professional and personal benefits of practicing mindfulness, specific suggestions for developing your own mindfulness practice (which is a prerequisite to sharing mindfulness with your students), and two examples of practices you can use in your classroom.

While there are many definitions of mindfulness, the definition I use with children and adolescents is: Mindfulness is paying attention to your life, here and now, with kindness and curiosity. One of the primary ironies of modern education is that we ask students to “pay attention” dozens of times a day, yet we never teach them how. The practice of mindfulness teaches students how to pay attention, and this way of paying attention enhances both academic and social-emotional learning.

As human beings we have the unique capacity to pay attention to/be aware of our internal and external worlds and the interactions between the two. We can attend to the breath, the body, thoughts, emotions, tastes, smells, sights, sounds, and our impulses and actions and their effects on others and our environment. This ability to pay attention is a natural, innate human capacity. One does not need to be Buddhist to pay attention in this way, any more than one needs to be Italian to enjoy pizza.

Why Is Mindfulness Important?

Stress and Learning

As a classroom teacher, you already know that many of your students are stressed. For some, the stress is simply living in our fast-paced, media-saturated, multi-tasking world. For others, the stress is performing, “succeeding,” and getting into a “good” college. For still others the stress is surviving in extremely challenging, even traumatic, home environments and life circumstances. You have also most likely realized that student stress frequently inhibits their ability to learn, and that the emphasis on academics is neglecting the development of the social-emotional qualities essential for skillful world citizenry.

Students are being diagnosed with depression, anxiety, ADHD, eating disorders, cutting, addictions and other self-destructive behaviors at epidemic rates. Cruelty, bullying and violence are on the rise. Most, if not all, children could benefit from learning to focus their attention, to become less reactive, and to be more compassionate with themselves and others.

Fortunately, science is now documenting the negative impact that stress is having on learning everyday, in classrooms across the country. The neurological processes that explain this interaction are collectively called executive function, which includes—
• goal-directed behavior
• planning
• organized search
• impulse control

Not surprisingly the research proves executive function correlates with working memory, emotional regulation, and resilience.² ³ ⁴

The data shows that stress and poverty result in lower executive function and working memory in kids.⁵ Studies by Soniya Luthar at Columbia University Teachers College show that affluent teens are as stressed, depressed and anxious as their low-income peers.⁶ Over 30 years of research with adults has shown that Mindfulness decreases stress, depression, anxiety, and hostility, and enhances executive function, compassion and empathy.⁷ ⁸ ⁹ ¹⁰ ¹¹ ¹² Related studies have shown that self-compassion has academic benefits, especially when dealing with perceived failure.¹³

**Mindfulness as a Foundation for Learning**

The newly emerging discipline of Mindfulness in K-12 education is actively investigating whether offering mindfulness to children and adolescence enhances attention, executive function, and learning, and promotes pro-social behavior and general well-being. The preliminary data are encouraging; below are summaries of four recent studies that demonstrate the benefits of offering mindfulness across the K-12 age spectrum.

In a randomized controlled trial conducted by Maria Napoli, Ph.D., first, second, and third graders who participated in a bi-weekly, 12-session integrative program of mindfulness and relaxation showed significant increases in attention and social skills and decreases in test anxiety and ADHD behaviors.¹⁴

In studying second and third graders who did Mindfulness Awareness Practices for 30 minutes twice a week for 8 weeks, Lisa Flook, Ph.D. and her colleagues at the Mindfulness Awareness Research Center at UCLA documented that children who began the study with poor executive function had gains in behavioral regulation, meta-cognition, and overall global executive control. These results indicate Mindfulness Awareness Practice training benefits children with executive function difficulties.¹⁵

A study conducted by Amy Saltzman, M.D., in collaboration with the Department of Psychology at Stanford, with 4th-7th graders and their parents, showed that after 1 hour of mindfulness training for 8 consecutive weeks the children demonstrated increased ability to orient their attention, as measured by the Attention Network Task, and decreased anxiety.¹⁶

In research on teaching mindfulness to adolescents conducted by Gina Biegel, MA, MFT, the teens reported reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression and somatic (physical) distress, and increased self-esteem and sleep quality. Independent clinicians documented a higher percentage of diagnostic improvement and significant increases in global assessment of functioning scores in the mindfulness group (vs. the control group). In layperson’s terms, this means that adolescents who were initially diagnosed with clinical depression and anxiety were no longer depressed or anxious.¹⁷
While the results are encouraging, it should be noted the field is young and more research is needed.

**Personal and Professional Benefits of Developing a Mindfulness Practice**

Before we explore steps for developing your own practice, let’s examine the personal and professional benefits of doing so. As an educator, you know that teaching is often extremely stressful. The profession requires that you teach specific academic content. High stakes testing creates additional pressure by emphasizing test scores, and knowing over learning. In the midst of this, you aspire to respond to your students with caring and sensitivity, and to communicate clearly and effectively with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators. Often you are working in under-funded, under-staffed settings, facing additional budget cuts. Given these stresses, it is essential that you learn to *care for yourself*. In fact, learning to balance the emotional demands of teaching with other professional and personal pressures is central to the teacher’s art, and vital to professional longevity.

Data from other caring professions (and teaching is definitely a caring profession with all its attendant joys and challenges) shows that mindfulness training decreases burnout and compassion fatigue and increases empathy and effective communication.

The SMART in Education™ (*Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques in Education*) program is an 8-week, 36 contact hour accredited teacher renewal program designed for educators and administrators. The program cultivates the skills necessary for educators to become aware of and regulate their thoughts, emotions and behavior so as to more effectively manage stress and improve health and well-being; to reclaim a sense of wholeness and happiness in one’s personal life and relationships, and to rekindle one’s motivation to teach and improve classroom instructional quality.

Two randomized field trials of the SMART program are testing the program’s feasibility and effects. Compared to teachers in the control group, teachers in the SMART program also reported increased mindfulness, decreased occupational stress, and increased work satisfaction from pre- to post-intervention. At the end of the program, 95% of participants said they would recommend the program to their teacher colleagues and their principal.

A recently published a paper, by Patricia Jennings, Ph.D. and Mark Greenberg Ph.D., outlines how stress reduction and mindfulness programs which support teacher social-emotional competence, enhance the classroom environment, learning, as well as student social-emotional development. Based on their preliminary work, the Department of Education has funded a 1.2 million dollar grant to further investigate these effects.

In summary, practicing mindfulness can decrease your stress and enhance your well-being. This in turn will improve the learning environment in your classroom and make you a more effective teacher. Developing a personal practice can offer significant benefits to you and your students, even if you choose not to share the practices with them in an explicit way. And teaching mindfulness is like teaching anything else: to teach with excellence you must know and be passionate about the subject. Since mindfulness is an experiential discipline, to offer it with integrity, the teaching must come out of your own practice.
Whether you want to develop a mindfulness practice to enhance your own well-being or in preparation for sharing the practices with students, below are some suggestions on how to do so.

- **Read.**
- **Enroll in a professional training.** (Some recommended programs appear below; others can be found at [www.stillquietplace.com](http://www.stillquietplace.com) and [www.mindfuleducation.org](http://www.mindfuleducation.org))
  - Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course (especially for those who have a long-time practice in particular tradition): [www.umassmed.edu/CFM/mbsr/](http://www.umassmed.edu/CFM/mbsr/) (this link lists programs worldwide)
  - eMindful (If there is no program in your local area, you can participate in an online course): [www.emindful.com](http://www.emindful.com)
  - Center for Contemplative Mind in Society: [www.contemplativemind.org](http://www.contemplativemind.org)
- **Establish a devoted daily practice**, preferably with weekly support from a local (or online, if necessary) instructor and community.
- **Maintain your daily practice for a minimum of one year**
- Participate in *at least* one silent meditation retreat of 7 days or longer
- Enroll in an in-person or online training on teaching mindfulness to children or adolescents.
  - [www.stillquietplace.com](http://www.stillquietplace.com)
  - [www.mindfulness altogether.net](http://www.mindfulness altogether.net)
  - [www.wellnessworksinschools.com](http://www.wellnessworksinschools.com)
  - [www.stressedteens.com](http://www.stressedteens.com)
- Devote as much time as you need to in-depth exploration of your intentions, skills and challenges in sharing mindfulness with children.
- **Get additional support or supervision as needed.**
- **For those of you who have an established practice in lineages other than MBSR,** please be aware that it is *crucial* that you be able to understand and present the practices *in ways that are secular, accessible, inviting and jargon free*. Perhaps the most essential and brilliant aspect of MBSR, as a form, is its ordinary everydayness.
- Enjoy the journey.

**How Do I Teach Mindfulness In the Classroom?**
inner stillness and quietness, what I call the Still Quiet Place. Below are two sample practices—an example of how to introduce the Still Quiet Place to students of any age and a practice called P.E.A.C.E. to be offered to students in 5th grade and above to support them in dealing with difficult situations.

Please be aware the written practices below are not intended to be used as scripts to be read to your students. While I can offer experience, language and suggestions, ultimately your teaching must come from the depths of your own practice; you must be able to deal skillfully with whatever comes up. In any given classroom there will be at least a few children who have lived through one or more of the following: neglect, divorce, illness, death of a family member, emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse, violence in their homes or communities, being uprooted from their homes, and war. Unfortunately, in some classrooms these experiences are the norm. These circumstances require that we stretch our capacity to respond to suffering with clarity and compassion. Even with the best intentions we can do harm if we expose a wound that we don’t have the skill to attend to.

Again, it is strongly recommended that you discover your own inner stillness and quietness and practice creating P.E.A.C.E. in your own life before you attempt to share these practices with students.

**The Still Quiet Place**

The language below is for students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and can be adapted for all ages.

*Hi, today I would like to share one of my favorite places with you. It is called Still Quiet Place. It’s not a place you travel to in a car, or a train, or a plane. It is a place inside you that you can find just by breathing. Let’s find it now. If you feel safe, close your eyes. Whether your eyes are open or closed, take some slow deep breaths. See if you can feel a kind of warm smile in your body. Do you feel it? This is your Still Quiet Place. Take some more deep breaths, and really snuggle in. The best thing about your Still Quiet Place is that it’s always inside you. And you can visit it whenever you like. It is nice to visit your Still Quiet Place and feel the love that is there. It is especially helpful to visit your Still Quiet Place if you are feeling angry, or sad, or afraid. The Still Quiet Place is a good place to talk with these feelings, and to make friends with them. When you rest in your Still Quiet Place and talk to your feelings, you may find that the feelings are not as big or as powerful as they seem. Remember you can come here whenever you want, and stay as long as you like.*

To view a brief video of this and other practices go to: [http://www.stillquietplace.com/press_video.html](http://www.stillquietplace.com/press_video.html)

With minimal adaptation, the concept of Still Quiet Place can be used with students from ages three to 93. Children ages three to seven can simply experience the Still Quiet Place and feel it in their body-minds. For older children, the language can be more body-focused with less emphasis on the Still Quiet Place as a location. Children ages eight to ten can
to use the practice to allow them to respond to upsetting circumstances. Most children 11 and older can begin to apply the practices of Mindfulness much as adults do; they can be aware of their thoughts, feelings and physical sensations, and then practice responding rather than reacting to their life circumstances.

For younger children, a simple 5-15 minute session will help them become familiar with the Still Quiet Place. Typically, a session will include two practices, each followed by a brief discussion, and close with a suggestion for home practice. For a single guided practice, a general rule of thumb is that children usually can practice 1 minute per their age in years. (For example, five-year-old children can generally do guided practice for about five minutes.)

With a group of ten or more kindergartners, if each child speaks after each practice, the children may get restless and the experience of the practice may be long gone before it is the last child’s turn to speak. Thus, you may want to hear from some of the children after each practice.

**Practicing P.E.A.C.E.**

Participants begin by attending to the breath and the body, then move on to observing thoughts and emotions. This is a transformative process. When we are aware of our thoughts and feelings, we can choose our behavior, and choosing behavior is how we create our lives. For example, when a student is struggling with a math problem or confronted in the hallway s/he can pause, breathe and then respond to the situation. Below is guided practice to support older students (including us adult learners) in dealing with life’s frequent challenges.

*If we remember to use it, mindfulness can help us deal with difficult situations -- from ordinary every day difficulties like losing your cell phone to more extreme difficulties like failing a class, breaking up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, having a friend go to jail or maybe even going to jail yourself, getting pregnant or grieving a death in your family or community.*

Mindfulness is much more than just watching the breath. For me, the power and beauty of mindfulness is that using it helps me when things are most difficult.

**PEACE** is an acronym for a practice that can be used in any difficult situation. Perhaps you can begin by practicing with small daily irritations. Those of you dealing with more extreme circumstances may need to repeat the practice many times a day, and you may also want to get additional help from a friend, a parent, a counselor, or a doctor.

The practice goes like this.

**P-** P is for pause. When you become aware that things are difficult, pause.

**E-** E is for exhale. When you exhale you may want to let out a sigh, or a groan, or even weep. And after you exhale you want to...Inhale. Just keep breathing.

**A-** A is for acknowledge, accept, allow. As you continue to breathe, acknowledge the...
situation doesn’t mean you are happy about it. It just means that you recognize the situation is as it is, whether you like it or not.

Accept the situation, and your reaction to it. You are furious, devastated, heartbroken, jealous, or all of the above.

Allow your experience. Do your best to rest in the Still Quiet Place and watch the thoughts, feelings, and body sensations. Notice when you are tempted to suppress your experience by pretending you are fine, or to create additional drama by rehashing things in your head or with friends. And allow this, too. See if you can discover a middle way: having your thoughts and feelings, without your thoughts and feelings having you and making you act in ways you may regret.

C- C is for choose. When you are ready, and this may take a few moments, days, weeks or even months, choose how you will respond. At its best, responding involves some additional Cs.

- Clarity: being clear about what you want, what your limits are, what you are responsible for.
- Courage: the courage to speak your truth, and to hear the truth of others.
- Compassion: compassion for yourself, for others, and for how incredibly difficult it sometimes is to be a human being, and
- Comedy: (Actually, I prefer the word humor, but it doesn’t start with C.) It is amazing what a sense of humor and a willingness to not take ourselves too seriously can do.

E- E is for engage. After you have paused, exhaled, allowed, and chosen your response, you are ready to engage with people, with the situation, with life.

Remember, if it is possible, practice with small upsets first. For extreme circumstances you may have to repeat this process over and over and receive additional support. The more you practice, the more PEACE you will have.

Typically these practices are followed by a discussion or journaling about the following:

- What came up for you during the practice?
- Are there situations in your life where this practice might be helpful?
- Are you willing to practice PEACE when difficulties arise during this coming week?

May you discover your own stillness, quietness, and PEACE, and may you nurture these natural qualities in your students.

Words from the Children

At the end of every Still Quiet Place mindfulness course, participants are asked to write a brief note to a friend who knows nothing about Mindfulness describing how it feels to rest in the Still Quiet Place, and how they use Mindfulness in daily life. Reflections from children who have completed the course appear below. The comments are taken verbatim from the children’s notes. misspellings and all.
• I think mindfulness has truly helped me become more aware of focusing. I learned to bring my attention back when it wandered which helped me with hard or confusing tests.
• It feels sort of strange but peaceful. I can’t really tell how I use mindfulness at home, but I do know it helps me when I am mad at my brother.
• It helps you concentrate. I use it every time I have a hard test. It brings my attention back to the test and the problem.
• When I am sad or kind of in a bad mood I take about 10 breaths and I get relaxed. I also forget about my worries. I learned this from mindfulness. I enjoy coming here because I forget about my troubles and I forget about all the things in my life that is sad. My sadness just fades.
• Dear Keith, I am doing this thing called mindfulness. It is a way of understanding and being aware of feelings. One thing you do is go to the Still Quiet Place. It feels relaxing to be there. Mindfulness has helped me before homework because itrelaxes me so I do a good job with my homework.
• Still quiet place has given me a lot of stress relief. I use mindfulness when I’m upset or stressed out. Mindfulness Rocks! Thank you Dr. Saltzman for introducing this wonderful program to me.
• Dear Friend, Mindfulness is a class I am taking at school. It is a time when we breathe and think about our thoughts, about NOW, not the past or the future. When we settle in breathing we go to our “still quiet place”. It feels calming in the “still quiet place”. I use mindfulness when I am nervous about something.
• Dear Invisible Bob, Resting in the Still Quiet Place is very relaxing. It helps you get in touch with your inner self. And find out how you are actually feeling.
• Mindfulness is a great class because you can chill out, and relax. It will cool you down and make you less stressed. You should try it if you are mad or sad or just want to feel better. That’s what I do. Try it!
The Art of Now: Six Steps to Living in the Moment

We live in the age of distraction. Yet one of life's sharpest paradoxes is that your brightest future hinges on your ability to pay attention to the present.

A friend was walking in the desert when he found the telephone to God. The setting was Burning Man, an electronic arts and music festival for which 50,000 people descend on Black Rock City, Nevada, for eight days of "radical self-expression"—dancing, socializing, meditating, and debauchery.

A phone booth in the middle of the desert with a sign that said "Talk to God" was a surreal sight even at Burning Man. The idea was that you picked up the phone, and God—or someone claiming to be God—would be at the other end to ease your pain.

So when God came on the line asking how he could help, my friend was ready. "How can I live more in the moment?" he asked. Too often, he felt, the beautiful moments of his life were drowned out by a cacophony of self-consciousness and anxiety. What could he do to hush the buzzing of his mind?

"Breathe," replied a soothing male voice.

My friend flinched at the tired new-age mantra, then reminded himself to keep an open mind. When God talks, you listen.

"Whenever you feel anxious about your future or your past, just breathe," continued God. "Try it with me a few times right now. Breathe in... breathe out." And despite himself, my friend began to relax.

You Are Not Your Thoughts

Life unfolds in the present. But so often, we let the present slip away, allowing time to rush past unobserved and unseized, and squandering the precious seconds of our lives as we worry about the future and ruminate about what's past. "We're living in a world that contributes in a major way to mental fragmentation, disintegration, distraction, decoherence," says Buddhist scholar B. Alan Wallace. We're always doing something, and we allow little time to practice stillness and calm.

When we're at work, we fantasize about being on vacation; on vacation, we worry about the work piling up on our desks. We dwell on intrusive memories of the past or fret about what may or may not happen in the future. We don't appreciate the living present because our "monkey minds" vault from thought to thought like monkeys swinging from tree to tree.

Most of us don't undertake our thoughts in awareness. Rather, our thoughts control us. "Ordinary thoughts course through our mind like a deafening waterfall," writes Jon Kabat-Zinn, the biomedical scientist who introduced meditation into mainstream medicine. In order to feel more in control of our minds and our lives, to find the sense of balance that eludes us, we need to step out of this current, to pause, and, as Kabat-Zinn puts it, to "rest in stillness—to stop doing and focus on just being."

We need to live more in the moment. Living in the moment—also called mindfulness—is a state of active, open, intentional attention on the present. When you become mindful, you realize that you are not your thoughts; you become an observer of your thoughts from moment to moment without judging them. Mindfulness involves being with your thoughts as they are, neither grasping at them nor pushing them away. Instead of letting your life go by without living it, you awaken to experience.
Cultivating a nonjudgmental awareness of the present bestows a host of benefits. Mindfulness reduces stress, boosts immune functioning, reduces chronic pain, lowers blood pressure, and helps patients cope with cancer. By alleviating stress, spending a few minutes a day actively focusing on living in the moment reduces the risk of heart disease. Mindfulness may even slow the progression of HIV.

Mindful people are happier, more exuberant, more empathetic, and more secure. They have higher self-esteem and are more accepting of their own weaknesses. Anchoring awareness in the here and now reduces the kinds of impulsivity and reactivity that underlie depression, binge eating, and attention problems. Mindful people can hear negative feedback without feeling threatened. They fight less with their romantic partners and are more accommodating and less defensive. As a result, mindful couples have more satisfying relationships.

Mindfulness is at the root of Buddhism, Taoism, and many Native-American traditions, not to mention yoga. It's why Thoreau went to Walden Pond; it's what Emerson and Whitman wrote about in their essays and poems.

"Everyone agrees it's important to live in the moment, but the problem is how," says Ellen Langer, a psychologist at Harvard and author of Mindfulness. "When people are not in the moment, they're not there to know that they're not there." Overriding the distraction reflex and awakening to the present takes intentionality and practice.

Living in the moment involves a profound paradox: You can't pursue it for its benefits. That's because the expectation of reward launches a future-oriented mindset, which subverts the entire process. Instead, you just have to trust that the rewards will come. There are many paths to mindfulness—and at the core of each is a paradox. Ironically, letting go of what you want is the only way to get it. Here are a few tricks to help you along.

1: To improve your performance, stop thinking about it (unselfconsciousness).

I've never felt comfortable on a dance floor. My movements feel awkward. I feel like people are judging me. I never know what to do with my arms. I want to let go, but I can't, because I know I look ridiculous.

"Loosen up, no one's watching you," people always say. "Everyone's too busy worrying about themselves." So how come they always make fun of my dancing the next day?

The dance world has a term for people like me: "absolute beginner." Which is why my dance teacher, Jessica Hayden, the owner of Shockra Studio in Manhattan, started at the beginning, sitting me down on a bench and having me tap my feet to the beat as Jay-Z thumped away in the background. We spent the rest of the class doing "isolations"—moving just our shoulders, ribs, or hips—to build "body awareness."

But even more important than body awareness, Hayden said, was present-moment awareness. "Be right here right now!" she'd say. "Just let go and let yourself be in the moment."

That's the first paradox of living in the moment: Thinking too hard about what you're doing actually makes you do worse. If you're in a situation that makes you anxious—giving a speech, introducing yourself to a stranger, dancing—focusing on your anxiety tends to heighten it. "When I say, 'be here with me now,' I mean don't zone out or get too in-your-head—instead, follow my energy, my movements," says Hayden. "Focus less on what's going on in your mind and more on what's going on in the room, less on your mental chatter and more on yourself as part of something." To be most myself, I needed to focus on things outside myself, like the music or the people around me.
Indeed, mindfulness blurs the line between self and other, explains Michael Kernis, a psychologist at the University of Georgia. "When people are mindful, they're more likely to experience themselves as part of humanity, as part of a greater universe." That's why highly mindful people such as Buddhist monks talk about being "one with everything."

By reducing self-consciousness, mindfulness allows you to witness the passing drama of feelings, social pressures, even of being esteemed or disparaged by others without taking their evaluations personally, explain Richard Ryan and K. W. Brown of the University of Rochester. When you focus on your immediate experience without attaching it to your self-esteem, unpleasant events like social rejection—or your so-called friends making fun of your dancing—seem less threatening.

Focusing on the present moment also forces you to stop overthinking. "Being present-minded takes away some of that self-evaluation and getting lost in your mind—and in the mind is where we make the evaluations that beat us up," says Stephen Schueller, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania. Instead of getting stuck in your head and worrying, you can let yourself go.

2: To avoid worrying about the future, focus on the present (savoring).

In her memoir Eat, Pray, Love, Elizabeth Gilbert writes about a friend who, whenever she sees a beautiful place, exclaims in a near panic, "It's so beautiful here! I want to come back here someday!" "It takes all my persuasive powers," writes Gilbert, "to try to convince her that she is already here."

Often, we're so trapped in thoughts of the future or the past that we forget to experience, let alone enjoy, what's happening right now. We sip coffee and think, "This is not as good as what I had last week." We eat a cookie and think, "I hope I don't run out of cookies."

Instead, relish or luxuriate in whatever you're doing at the present moment—what psychologists call savoring. "This could be while you're eating a pastry, taking a shower, or basking in the sun. You could be savoring a success or savoring music," explains Sonja Lyubomirsky, a psychologist at the University of California at Riverside and author of The How of Happiness. "Usually it involves your senses."

When subjects in a study took a few minutes each day to actively savor something they usually hurried through—eating a meal, drinking a cup of tea, walking to the bus—they began experiencing more joy, happiness, and other positive emotions, and fewer depressive symptoms, Schueller found.

Why does living in the moment make people happier—not just at the moment they're tasting molten chocolate pooling on their tongue, but lastingly? Because most negative thoughts concern the past or the future. As Mark Twain said, "I have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened." The hallmark of depression and anxiety is catastrophizing—worrying about something that hasn't happened yet and might not happen at all. Worry, by its very nature, means thinking about the future—and if you hoist yourself into awareness of the present moment, worrying melts away.

The flip side of worrying is ruminating, thinking bleakly about events in the past. And again, if you press your focus into the now, rumination ceases. Savoring forces you into the present, so you can't worry about things that aren't there.

3: If you want a future with your significant other, inhabit the present (breathe).

Living consciously with alert interest has a powerful effect on interpersonal life. Mindfulness actually inoculates people against aggressive impulses, say Whitney Heppner and Michael Kernis of the University of...
of Georgia. In a study they conducted, each subject was told that other subjects were forming a group—and
taking a vote on whether she could join. Five minutes later, the experimenter announced the results—either
the subject had gotten the least number of votes and been rejected or she'd been accepted. Beforehand, half
the subjects had undergone a mindfulness exercise in which each slowly ate a raisin, savoring its taste and
texture and focusing on each sensation.

Later, in what they thought was a separate experiment, subjects had the opportunity to deliver a painful blast
of noise to another person. Among subjects who hadn't eaten the raisin, those who were told they'd been
rejected by the group became aggressive, inflicting long and painful sonic blasts without provocation. Stung
by social rejection, they took it out on other people.

But among those who'd eaten the raisin first, it didn't matter whether they'd been ostracized or embraced.
Either way, they were serene and unwilling to inflict pain on others—exactly like those who were given
word of social acceptance.

How does being in the moment make you less aggressive? "Mindfulness decreases ego involvement,"
explains Kernis. "So people are less likely to link their self-esteem to events and more likely to take things at
face value." Mindfulness also makes people feel more connected to other people—that empathic feeling of
being "at one with the universe."

Mindfulness boosts your awareness of how you interpret and react to what's happening in your mind. It
increases the gap between emotional impulse and action, allowing you to do what Buddhists call recognizing
the spark before the flame. Focusing on the present reboots your mind so you can respond thoughtfully
rather than automatically. Instead of lashing out in anger, backing down in fear, or mindlessly indulging a
passing craving, you get the opportunity to say to yourself, "This is the emotion I'm feeling. How should I
respond?"

Mindfulness increases self-control; since you're not getting thrown by threats to your self-esteem, you're
better able to regulate your behavior. That's the other irony: Inhabiting your own mind more fully has a
powerful effect on your interactions with others.

Of course, during a flare-up with your significant other it's rarely practical to duck out and savor a raisin.
But there's a simple exercise you can do anywhere, anytime to induce mindfulness: Breathe. As it turns out,
the advice my friend got in the desert was spot-on. There's no better way to bring yourself into the present
moment than to focus on your breathing. Because you're placing your awareness on what's happening right
now, you propel yourself powerfully into the present moment. For many, focusing on the breath is the
preferred method of orienting themselves to the now—not because the breath has some magical property,
but because it's always there with you.

4: To make the most of time, lose track of it (flow).

Perhaps the most complete way of living in the moment is the state of total absorption psychologists call
flow. Flow occurs when you're so engrossed in a task that you lose track of everything else around you.
Flow embodies an apparent paradox: How can you be living in the moment if you're not even aware of
the moment? The depth of engagement absorbs you powerfully, keeping attention so focused that distractions
cannot penetrate. You focus so intensely on what you're doing that you're unaware of the passage of time.
Hours can pass without you noticing.

Flow is an elusive state. As with romance or sleep, you can't just will yourself into it—all you can do is set
the stage, creating the optimal conditions for it to occur.

The first requirement for flow is to set a goal that's challenging but not unattainable—something you have to

...
not so difficult that you'll feel stressed, but not so easy that you'll get bored. In flow, you're firing on all cylinders to rise to a challenge.

To set the stage for flow, goals need to be clearly defined so that you always know your next step. "It could be playing the next bar in a scroll of music, or finding the next foothold if you're a rock climber, or turning the page if you're reading a good novel," says Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the psychologist who first defined the concept of flow. "At the same time, you're kind of anticipating."

You also need to set up the task in such a way that you receive direct and immediate feedback; with your successes and failures apparent, you can seamlessly adjust your behavior. A climber on the mountain knows immediately if his foothold is secure; a pianist knows instantly when she's played the wrong note.

As your attentional focus narrows, self-consciousness evaporates. You feel as if your awareness merges with the action you're performing. You feel a sense of personal mastery over the situation, and the activity is so intrinsically rewarding that although the task is difficult, action feels effortless.

5: If something is bothering you, move toward it rather than away from it (acceptance).

We all have pain in our lives, whether it's the ex we still long for, the jackhammer snarling across the street, or the sudden wave of anxiety when we get up to give a speech. If we let them, such irritants can distract us from the enjoyment of life. Paradoxically, the obvious response—focusing on the problem in order to combat and overcome it—often makes it worse, argues Stephen Hayes, a psychologist at the University of Nevada.

The mind's natural tendency when faced with pain is to attempt to avoid it—by trying to resist unpleasant thoughts, feelings, and sensations. When we lose a love, for instance, we fight our feelings of heartbreak. As we get older, we work feverishly to recapture our youth. When we're sitting in the dentist's chair waiting for a painful root canal, we wish we were anywhere but there. But in many cases, negative feelings and situations can't be avoided—and resisting them only magnifies the pain.

The problem is we have not just primary emotions but also secondary ones—emotions about other emotions. We get stressed out and then think, "I wish I weren't so stressed out." The primary emotion is stress over your workload. The secondary emotion is feeling, "I hate being stressed."

It doesn't have to be this way. The solution is acceptance—letting the emotion be there. That is, being open to the way things are in each moment without trying to manipulate or change the experience—without judging it, clinging to it, or pushing it away. The present moment can only be as it is. Trying to change it only frustrates and exhausts you. Acceptance relieves you of this needless extra suffering.

Suppose you've just broken up with your girlfriend or boyfriend; you're heartbroken, overwhelmed by feelings of sadness and longing. You could try to fight these feelings, essentially saying, "I hate feeling this way; I need to make this feeling go away." But by focusing on the pain—being sad about being sad—you only prolong the sadness. You do yourself a favor by accepting your feelings, saying instead, "I've just had a breakup. Feelings of loss are normal and natural. It's OK for me to feel this way."

Acceptance of an unpleasant state doesn't mean you don't have goals for the future. It just means you accept that certain things are beyond your control. The sadness, stress, pain, or anger is there whether you like it or not. Better to embrace the feeling as it is.

Nor does acceptance mean you have to like what's happening. "Acceptance of the present moment has nothing to do with resignation," writes Kabat-Zinn. "Acceptance doesn't tell you what to do. What happens
If you feel anxiety, for instance, you can accept the feeling, label it as anxiety—then direct your attention to something else instead. You watch your thoughts, perceptions, and emotions flit through your mind without getting involved. Thoughts are just thoughts. You don't have to believe them and you don't have to do what they say.

6: Know that you don't know (engagement).

You've probably had the experience of driving along a highway only to suddenly realize you have no memory or awareness of the previous 15 minutes. Maybe you even missed your exit. You just zoned out; you were somewhere else, and it's as if you've suddenly woken up at the wheel. Or maybe it happens when you're reading a book: "I know I just read that page, but I have no idea what it said."

These autopilot moments are what Harvard's Ellen Langer calls mindlessness—times when you're so lost in your thoughts that you aren't aware of your present experience. As a result, life passes you by without registering on you. The best way to avoid such blackouts, Langer says, is to develop the habit of always noticing new things in whatever situation you're in. That process creates engagement with the present moment and releases a cascade of other benefits. Noticing new things puts you emphatically in the here and now.

We become mindless, Langer explains, because once we think we know something, we stop paying attention to it. We go about our morning commute in a haze because we've trod the same route a hundred times before. But if we see the world with fresh eyes, we realize almost everything is different each time—the pattern of light on the buildings, the faces of the people, even the sensations and feelings we experience along the way. Noticing imbues each moment with a new, fresh quality. Some people have termed this "beginner's mind."

By acquiring the habit of noticing new things, says Langer, we recognize that the world is actually changing constantly. We really don't know how the espresso is going to taste or how the commute will be—or at least, we're not sure.

Orchestra musicians who are instructed to make their performance new in subtle ways not only enjoy themselves more but audiences actually prefer those performances. "When we're there at the moment, making it new, it leaves an imprint in the music we play, the things we write, the art we create, in everything we do," says Langer. "Once you recognize that you don't know the things you've always taken for granted, you set out of the house quite differently. It becomes an adventure in noticing—and the more you notice, the more you see." And the more excitement you feel.

Don't Just Do Something, Sit There

Living a consistently mindful life takes effort. But mindfulness itself is easy. "People set the goal of being mindful for the next 20 minutes or the next two weeks, then they think mindfulness is difficult because they have the wrong yardstick," says Jay Winner, a California-based family physician and author of Take the Stress out of Your Life. "The correct yardstick is just for this moment."

Mindfulness is the only intentional, systematic activity that is not about trying to improve yourself or get anywhere else, explains Kabat-Zinn. It is simply a matter of realizing where you already are. A cartoon from The New Yorker sums it up: Two monks are sitting side by side, meditating. The younger one is giving the older one a quizzical look, to which the older one responds, "Nothing happens next. This is it."

You can become mindful at any moment just by paying attention to your immediate experience. You can do it right now. What's happening this instant? Think of yourself as an eternal witness, and just observe the moment. What do you see. hear. smell? It doesn't matter how it feels—pleasant or unpleasant. good or bad—
you roll with it because it's what's present; you're not judging it. And if you notice your mind wandering, bring yourself back. Just say to yourself, "Now. Now. Now."

Here's the most fundamental paradox of all: Mindfulness isn't a goal, because goals are about the future, but you do have to set the intention of paying attention to what's happening at the present moment. As you read the words printed on this page, as your eyes distinguish the black squiggles on white paper, as you feel gravity anchoring you to the planet, wake up. Become aware of being alive. And breathe. As you draw your next breath, focus on the rise of your abdomen on the in-breath, the stream of heat through your nostrils on the out-breath. If you're aware of that feeling right now, as you're reading this, you're living in the moment. Nothing happens next. It's not a destination. This is it. You're already there.

By Jay Dixit, published on November 1, 2008 - last reviewed on June 9, 2016
How to Escape Being a Victim of Time & Truly Live in the Present Moment

The easiest way to explain living in the present is to start by explaining what it means to not be present, since this is the state we have become habitually used to.

When you aren’t being present you become a victim of time. Your mind is pulled into the past or the future, or both.

Your thoughts are of the past: what has been, what could have been, what you thought happened vs. what actually did happen. Or, your thoughts are of the future: what will be, what could be, what might be, if…

Of course, it’s natural to spend moments of thought in the past or in daydreams of the future. Identifying impending dangers through associations with things that have happened in the past is important for self-preservation. But when our lives become dictated by thoughts and emotions attached to past events and potential future outcomes, standing peacefully rooted in the present becomes increasingly rare.

Our routine, our habit, is to be off in our heads somewhere mulling over negativity and struggles of the past, or becoming anxious and fearful of the future. Seldom are we fully “here”; neutrally centered to see through life’s lens with clarity and naked awareness – a state that assists us in finding contentment and understanding in ourselves.

Habits quickly become the norm and, as we know from many of life’s other vices, just because we’re used to doing something regularly doesn’t mean it is good for us, or the right way to live.

An easy way to break this habit of being a victim of time is to identify time for what it is. Time is a human concept. The watch on your wrist and the clock on the wall mean nothing to Mother Nature. To her, life is one evolving moment – a perpetual cycle of interdependent impermanence. Time is a metric we use as a reference point for organizing our lives and documenting history. It doesn’t actually exist. Really, it doesn’t. Ask a scientist.

Time is an illusion, which makes being controlled by time somewhat delusional. The past doesn’t exist and neither does the future. The only true reference point we have to this moment in time, and to this thing we label “existence”, is a feeling of presence, of being here in this body, of seeing the world through these eyes.

This is all that can exist, because this is what you feel right now. You can’t feel the past or the future, but you can feel what it feels like to touch something right now, to see something, to hear something.

The concept of time deludes us into concerning ourselves with its passing and impending arrival. This stops us enjoying this “presence” we feel. We are duped into remaining in one of two states: The first, one of dwelling in the past and mulling over what has happened. The second, one of waiting and constantly anticipating what is to come, if and when…
– How often do you enjoy your work (school, sports, arts)? Or are you too busy thinking about getting it finished by the deadline to give yourself a chance to enjoy it?

– Are you so stressed out trying to do your best work to impress your boss (coach, teacher) that you prevent yourself being able to perform at your highest potential anyway?

– Are you so distracted by thoughts of Monday morning that you spoil the time spent with your friends and family on the weekend?

– Are you so caught up in regrets of the past that you prevent opportunity blossoming in the present?

– Are the opinions of others, formed through actions you took in the past, stopping you being who you (are) want to be in the present?

We are all unavoidably victims of time to some degree, because it has become the accepted state of norm in our fast-paced, highly motivated and highly-strung society. And for this reason it is important that we understand that to not be present is to be torn between two worlds, the past and the future, neither of which exist. To constantly reside in this state prevents us enjoying life and finding happiness.

If you allow yourself to be a victim of time – a victim of the past and a slave to a future that is yet to unravel – you will carry with you a sense of unease. You will be susceptible to stress, agitation and feel generally uncomfortable in life.

There is no redemption to be found in time.

So surrender to what is right now.

Wherever you are, commit to being there, completely. Life will take care of the rest.
An Antidote to the Age of Anxiety: Alan Watts on Happiness and How to Live with Presence by Maria Popova

Wisdom on overcoming the greatest human frustration from the pioneer of Eastern philosophy in the West.

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives,” Annie Dillard wrote in her timeless reflection on presence over productivity — a timely antidote to the central anxiety of our productivity-obsessed age. Indeed, my own New Year’s resolution has been to stop measuring my days by degree of productivity and start experiencing them by degree of presence. But what, exactly, makes that possible?

This concept of presence is rooted in Eastern notions of mindfulness — the ability to go through life with crystalline awareness and fully inhabit our experience — largely popularized in the West by British philosopher and writer Alan Watts (January 6, 1915–November 16, 1973), who also gave us this fantastic meditation on the life of purpose. In the altogether excellent 1951 volume The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for an Age of Anxiety (public library), Watts argues that the root of our human frustration and daily anxiety is our tendency to live for the future, which is an abstraction. He writes:

If to enjoy even an enjoyable present we must have the assurance of a happy future, we are “crying for the moon.” We have no such assurance. The best predictions are still matters of probability rather than certainty, and to the best of our knowledge every one of us is going to suffer and die. If, then, we cannot live happily without an assured future, we are certainly not adapted to living in a finite world where, despite the best plans, accidents will happen, and where death comes at the end.

What keeps us from happiness, Watts argues, is our inability to fully inhabit the present:

The “primary consciousness,” the basic mind which knows reality rather than ideas about it, does not know the future. It lives completely in the present, and perceives nothing more than what is at this moment. The ingenious brain, however, looks at that part of present experience called memory, and by studying it is able to make predictions. These predictions are, relatively, so accurate and reliable (e.g., “everyone will die”) that the future assumes a high degree of reality — so high that the present loses its value.
But the future is still not here, and cannot become a part of experienced reality until it is present. Since what we know of the future is made up of purely abstract and logical elements — inferences, guesses, deductions — it cannot be eaten, felt, smelled, seen, heard, or otherwise enjoyed. To pursue it is to pursue a constantly retreating phantom, and the faster you chase it, the faster it runs ahead. This is why all the affairs of civilization are rushed, why hardly anyone enjoys what he has, and is forever seeking more and more. Happiness, then, will consist, not of solid and substantial realities, but of such abstract and superficial things as promises, hopes, and assurances.

Watts argues that our primary mode of relinquishing presence is by leaving the body and retreating into the mind — that ever-calculating, self-evaluating, seething cauldron of thoughts, predictions, anxieties, judgments, and incessant meta-experiences about experience itself. Writing more than half a century before our age of computers, touch-screens, and the quantified self, Watts admonishes:

The brainy modern loves not matter but measures, no solids but surfaces.

[...]

The working inhabitants of a modern city are people who live inside a machine to be battered around by its wheels. They spend their days in activities which largely boil down to counting and measuring, living in a world of rationalized abstraction which has little relation to or harmony with the great biological rhythms and processes. As a matter of fact, mental activities of this kind can now be done far more efficiently by machines than by men — so much so that in a not too distant future the human brain may be an obsolete mechanism for logical calculation. Already the human computer is widely displaced by mechanical and electrical computers of far greater speed and efficiency. If, then, man’s principal asset and value is his brain and his ability to calculate, he will become an unsaleable commodity in an era when the mechanical operation of reasoning can be done more effectively by machines.

[...]

If we are to continue to live for the future, and to make the chief work of the mind prediction and calculation, man must eventually become a parasitic appendage to
To be sure, Watts doesn’t dismiss the mind as a worthless or fundamentally perilous human faculty. Rather, he insists that if we let its unconscious wisdom unfold unhampered — like, for instance, what takes place during the “incubation” stage of unconscious processing in the creative process — it is our ally rather than our despot. It is only when we try to control it and turn it against itself that problems arise: Working rightly, the brain is the highest form of “instinctual wisdom.” Thus it should work like the homing instinct of pigeons and the formation of the fetus in the womb — without verbalizing the process or knowing “how” it does it. The self-conscious brain, like the self-conscious heart, is a disorder, and manifests itself in the acute feeling of separation between “I” and my experience. The brain can only assume its proper behavior when consciousness is doing what it is designed for: not writhing and whirling to get out of present experience, but being effortlessly aware of it.

And yet the brain does writhe and whirl, producing our great human insecurity and existential anxiety amidst a universe of constant flux. (For, as Henry Miller memorably put it, “It is almost banal to say so yet it needs to be stressed continually: all is creation, all is change, all is flux, all is metamorphosis.”) Paradoxically, recognizing that the experience of presence is the only experience is also a reminder that our “I” doesn’t exist beyond this present moment, that there is no permanent, static, and immutable “self” which can grant us any degree of security and certainty for the future — and yet we continue to grasp for precisely that assurance of the future, which remains an abstraction. Our only chance for awakening from this vicious cycle, Watts argues, is bringing full awareness to our present experience — something very different from judging it, evaluating it, or measuring it up against some arbitrary or abstract ideal. He writes:

There is a contradiction in wanting to be perfectly secure in a universe whose very nature is momentariness and fluidity. But the contradiction lies a little deeper than the mere conflict between the desire for security and the fact of change. If I want to be secure, that is, protected from the flux of life, I am wanting to be separate from life. Yet it is this very sense of separateness which makes me feel insecure. To be secure means to isolate and fortify the “I,” but it is just the feeling of being an isolated “I” which makes me feel lonely and afraid. In other words, the more security I can get, the more I shall want.
To put it still more plainly: the desire for security and the feeling of insecurity are the same thing. To hold your breath is to lose your breath. A society based on the quest for security is nothing but a breath-retention contest in which everyone is as taut as a drum and as purple as a beet.

He takes especial issue with the very notion of self-improvement — something particularly prominent in the season of New Year’s resolutions — and admonishes against the implication at its root:

I can only think seriously of trying to live up to an ideal, to improve myself, if I am split in two pieces. There must be a good “I” who is going to improve the bad “me.” “I,” who has the best intentions, will go to work on wayward “me,” and the tussle between the two will very much stress the difference between them. Consequently “I” will feel more separate than ever, and so merely increase the lonely and cut-off feelings which make “me” behave so badly.

Happiness, he argues, isn’t a matter of improving our experience, or even merely confronting it, but remaining present with it in the fullest possible sense:

To stand face to face with insecurity is still not to understand it. To understand it, you must not face it but be it. It is like the Persian story of the sage who came to the door of Heaven and knocked. From within the voice of God asked, “Who is there” and the sage answered, “It is I.” “In this House,” replied the voice, “there is no room for thee and me.” So the sage went away, and spent many years pondering over this answer in deep meditation. Returning a second time, the voice asked the same question, and again the sage answered, “It is I.” The door remained closed. After some years he returned for the third time, and, at his knocking, the voice once more demanded, “Who is there?” And the sage cried, “It is thyself!” The door was opened.

We don’t actually realize that there is no security, Watts asserts, until we confront the myth of fixed selfhood and recognize that the solid “I” doesn’t exist — something modern psychology has termed “the self illusion.” And yet that is incredibly hard to do, for in the very act of this realization there is a realizing self. Watts illustrates this paradox beautifully:

While you are watching this present experience, are you aware of someone watching it? Can you find, in addition to the experience itself, an experiencer? Can you, at the same time, read this sentence and think about yourself reading it? You will find that, to think about yourself reading it, you must for a
brief second stop reading. The first experience is reading. The second experience is the thought, “I am reading.” Can you find any thinker, who is thinking the thought, I am reading?” In other words, when present experience is the thought, “I am reading,” can you think about yourself thinking this thought?

Once again, you must stop thinking just, “I am reading.” You pass to a third experience, which is the thought, “I am thinking that I am reading.” Do not let the rapidity with which these thoughts can change deceive you into the feeling that you think them all at once.

[...]

In each present experience you were only aware of that experience. You were never aware of being aware. You were never able to separate the thinker from the thought, the knower from the known. All you ever found was a new thought, a new experience.

What makes us unable to live with pure awareness, Watts points out, is the ball and chain of our memory and our warped relationship with time:
The notion of a separate thinker, of an “I” distinct from the experience, comes from memory and from the rapidity with which thought changes. It is like whirling a burning stick to give the illusion of a continuous circle of fire. If you imagine that memory is a direct knowledge of the past rather than a present experience, you get the illusion of knowing the past and the present at the same time. This suggests that there is something in you distinct from both the past and the present experiences. You reason, “I know this present experience, and it is different from that past experience. If I can compare the two, and notice that experience has changed, I must be something constant and apart.”

But, as a matter of fact, you cannot compare this present experience with a past experience. You can only compare it with a memory of the past, which is a part of the present experience. When you see clearly that memory is a form of present experience, it will be obvious that trying to separate yourself from this experience is as impossible as trying to make your teeth bite themselves.

[...]

To understand this is to realize that life is entirely momentary, that there is neither permanence nor security, and that there is no “I” which can be protected.
The real reason why human life can be so utterly exasperating and frustrating is not because there are facts called death, pain, fear, or hunger. The madness of the thing is that when such facts are present, we circle, buzz, writhe, and whirl, trying to get the “I” out of the experience. We pretend that we are amoebas, and try to protect ourselves from life by splitting in two. Sanity, wholeness, and integration lie in the realization that we are not divided, that man and his present experience are one, and that no separate “I” or mind can be found.

To understand music, you must listen to it. But so long as you are thinking, “I am listening to this music,” you are not listening.

*The Wisdom of Insecurity* is immeasurably wonderful — existentially necessary, even — in its entirety, and one of those books bound to stay with you for a lifetime.
Lesson: Living Deliberately – How do you spend your time?

Objective: Students will observe how they are using their time for an entire week and reflect if they are using their time deliberately.

Essential Question: What transcendentalist ideas are still relevant today?
What does it mean to live deliberately?

Situation: Recently your pet died. It was rather sudden and unexpected. It has really awoken you to the temporary nature of existence and has given you a taste of the preciousness of time. In this spirit, you decide to take a close look at how you are spending your time – spending your life. You decide to keep a detailed account of your activities using a time management app for an entire week – 24/7. You will then look at the data and decide if you are living your life deliberately.

Task/Procedure: Keep a detailed account of your activities using time management app for one week. You will post graph and reflection on what you find to your webpage.

Product: Graph and written reflection.

Materials: Phone, time management app, computer, weebly account

Assessment: Graph and reflection

Apps: iphone: Life tracker, hours tracker, atracker Android: Time sheet
# Reflective Writing Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth of reflection</td>
<td>Demonstrate a conscious and thorough understanding of the writing prompt and the subject matter. This reflection can be used as an example for other students.</td>
<td>Demonstrate a basic understanding of the writing prompt and the subject matter.</td>
<td>Demonstrate a limited understanding of the writing prompt and subject matter. This reflection needs revision.</td>
<td>Demonstrate little or no understanding of the writing prompt and subject matter. This reflection needs revision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of textual evidence and historical context</td>
<td>Use specific and convincing examples from the texts studied to support claims in your own writing, making insightful and applicable connections between texts.</td>
<td>Use examples from the text to support most claims in your writing with some connections made between texts.</td>
<td>Use incomplete or vaguely developed examples to only partially support claims with no connections made between texts.</td>
<td>No examples from the text are used and claims made in your own writing are unsupported and irrelevant to the topic at hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language use</td>
<td>Use stylistically sophisticated language that is precise and engaging, with notable sense of voice, awareness of audience and purpose, and varied sentence structure.</td>
<td>Use basic but appropriate language, with a basic sense of voice, some awareness of audience and purpose and some attempt to vary sentence structure.</td>
<td>Use language that is vague or imprecise for the audience or purpose, with little sense of voice, and a limited awareness of how to vary sentence structure.</td>
<td>Use language that is unsuitable for the audience and purpose, with little or no awareness of sentence structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Demonstrate control of the conventions with essentially no errors, even with sophisticated language.</td>
<td>Demonstrate partial control of the conventions, exhibiting occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension.</td>
<td>Demonstrate limited control of the conventions, exhibiting frequent errors that make comprehension difficult.</td>
<td>Demonstrate little or no control of the conventions, making comprehension almost impossible.</td>
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Lesson: Keeping a Nature Journal & Nature Writing

Objective: Students will learn how to keep a nature journal and how to turn notes into a finished piece of writing.

Essential Question: Why is it important to pay attention to the present moment? What transcendentalist ideas are still relevant today? What can nature teach us? What does it mean to live deliberately? Where can you find the true nature of things?

Situation: After learning about Henry David Thoreau and reading parts of Walden, you are inspired to keep a nature journal yourself and see what it has to offer. You feel up to the task to see and not just look at the world around you.

Task/Procedure: We will be keeping a nature journal throughout the year. You will learn how to make a proper nature journal entry (there are many methods). In addition to our ventures to the outdoor classroom, you will make entries in your journal about the natural world outside your home. It matters not if you live in the city – nature is all around us. There will be specific assignments and check points throughout the year. Each quarter you will use your journal to create a finished piece of writing. This can be an essay, a poem, mixed-media, a song, etc… You will have to hand in the notes that inspired the finished creation.

Product: The nature journal itself and a written/creative piece.


Assessment: Journal entries, finished piece (see rubric)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: _________________________</th>
<th>Nature Essay Rubric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Distinguished 6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose and Approach</strong></td>
<td>Lead/hook is interesting, vivid and original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme of essay is clear and creatively explored throughout the entire essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One can see and feel the writer’s strong relationship with nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Ideas are paragraphed skillfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All transitions between paragraphs are smooth, varied, and show the writer making clear connections from one paragraph to the next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details</strong></td>
<td>Uses details that are specific, relevant and interesting to support focus of the paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>Distinguished</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language and Expression</strong></td>
<td>Precise, concise, original and creative word choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence variety enhances flow of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imagery</strong></td>
<td>Writer has several examples of imagery through the essay.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writer uses at least four of the senses in their imagery examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
<td>Clearly displays positive relationship with nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Virtually no errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>Conclusion is elegant; brings everything together</td>
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Name: __________________________

Writing a Personal Nature Essay

Task: Write a 2-3 page, typed, double-spaced personal essay about one of your observations of nature.

What is a personal essay? A personal essay is a work of self-expression. You use the pronoun “I” in personal essays and you don’t hide your opinions. A personal essay is an organized way to reveal your thoughts on a specific topic.

Where does nature writing fit in? Your task is to write a personal essay based on your unique experience with nature. You may write your essay based on one of your nature journals, one of your experiences at Spa Park, or a new experience you may have tonight or tomorrow. A nature essay reveals a thought or philosophy through your observation of nature. Characteristics of a nature essay:

• Includes authentic (real) observation of your natural surroundings
• Includes your own personal thoughts and beliefs (not necessarily about what you’re observing, but rather where your thoughts take you based on what you’re observing)
• Is organized
• Is positive
• Contains vivid images (consider appealing to all five senses, use strong verbs, and make comparisons)

Tips for Writing a Personal Essay About Nature

• Review your notes from one of your observations or take notes on a new observation (don’t be afraid to take pictures, draw or sketch, or record sights or sounds)
• Locate a theme or larger idea that you think you could expand upon (this will be your purpose for writing, your philosophy or belief that you want to share with others)
  o Examples of themes you may be grappling with
    ▪ The raw power of nature
    ▪ The longevity of nature
    ▪ How nature/animals have evolved over time
    ▪ Man’s relationship to animals
    ▪ Man’s relationship to nature
    ▪ The role of nature in society today or how that role has changed over time
• Connect your observations to your theme. For example, if you want to share the joys you experience by walking a certain trail, recall some past experiences have you had to show that?
• Outline your essay
  o Intro—introduce your purpose and observations
  o Body paragraphs—organize your thoughts and observations into sub-categories
  o Conclusion—tie up loose ends and reveal what you have learned through your observations
• Write your essay—concentrate on evoking strong images through descriptive language, comparisons, and strong verbs.
• Revise and edit your essay. It always helps to have others look it over for you.
How To Use Your Nature Journals For Essay Ideas

---The following is an example from my own nature journal. This is an example of a journal NOT a personal essay. The annotations on the side provide ideas on how to turn the journal into an essay.

Late Morning 10/3
Cloudy, dark and rainy
Fairly warm. 70’s?

Bugs zipping past my ear. Mosquitos? One bites my cheek but I don’t really mind. There are crickets chirring. It’s strange to see the road and still feel like I’m so immersed in nature. Occasionally a car goes by. I can see a house in the distance. The rain falls from the top of the trees and pitter patters on the leaves as it falls down. I’m not sure if many of the drops even ever hit the ground. What happens to the water? I guess when the sun pushed its way through the clouds it evaporates the tiny puddles, turning them to steamy dissipations. I’m sure a lot of it is absorbed in the bark, that thick rough coat that houses the innards of the tree. The rain reminds me of this documentary I saw called microcosmos. It is a foreign film but there were no words so you couldn’t ever tell the difference. It had music that played to the tune of these insects that were being captured by a high-powered magnifying camera lens. You could see every part of those things, grotesque and gaudy, black, mangled and marred. But those things that despised me, that I was so afraid of, like the spiders and beetles, and bees looked strangely beautiful up close.

I don’t know if the music was influencing me, but I wondered what it would be like to live in such a tiny existence, like that movie “Honey I shrunk the kids”. Anyway, the documentary showed these rain drops that looked like whole ponds magnified and up close. These ladybugs were sipping and lapping the water up through these long snorkel looking things. They looked like some primitive bugle. I guess I can’t really believe the amount of diversity on this planet.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Locate the theme you think you have the most “ammunition” for (observations, opinions)
- Possibly go out and do some journaling with that theme in mind. This will help you gather observations for your theme.
- Write down some bullet-pointed notes about your personal opinions and previous experiences that relate to that theme
- Begin outlining your essay
Nature writing is not just any writing that happens to mention an animal or "the outdoors."

Nature writing is born out of love, respect, and awe. It finds its subject during days of close observation of the natural world. It finds its voice in the relationship with nature developed during those days.

Nature writing begins with observation. Nature writing records what the writer has seen and seen again. It may begin with a casual, serendipitous occurrence, but it moves far beyond the casual to record details noticeable only by those who have looked deeply. Nature writing often adds to personal observation the observations and experiences of others. Nature writing is concerned with what scientists have discovered, but the focus always returns to the personal observations of the writer. The writer is part of the natural world and draws the reader into that world, too.

Nature writing is about the writer as well as about nature. Nature writing is exploratory and reflective. The nature writer probes deep within and discovers how nature affects personal life. Nature writing seeks to learn not just about nature; it seeks to learn from nature. The nature writer approaches nature as a student approaches a respected and admired teacher. That attitude gives nature writing a positive, encouraging tone. The nature writer seeks to learn and communicate the wisdom of life found in nature.

Nature writing is relational. It is about the interconnections, the interrelationships, that form our world. Nature writing binds people to the natural world with words of understanding, respect, admiration, and love. These words may be formed in any literary type or style. The languages and forms of nature writing are many and varied, but each seeks to share what the writer has felt and known in times of living with nature.

Nature writing also must be positive. While it recognizes the challenges, difficulties, and tragedies in the world, nature writing presents the hope inherent in the world--the flower blooming in the crack of the sidewalk, the doves rebuilding yet another nest, the chickeree storing cones in the fall, gray whales migrating along the crowded California coast to their winter home in Baja. Nature writing puts the hope, and faith, and love of the world into words for the world.
The Summer Day

by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?
LIVING LIKE WEASELS by ANNIE DILLARD

I

A weasel is wild. Who knows what he thinks? He sleeps in his underground den, his tail draped over his nose. Sometimes he lives in his den for two days without leaving. Outside, he stalks rabbits, mice, muskrats, and birds, killing more bodies than he can eat warm, and often dragging the carcasses home. Obedient to instinct, he bites his prey at the neck, either splitting the jugular vein at the throat or crunching the brain at the base of the skull, and he does not let go. One naturalist refused to kill a weasel who was socketed into his hand deeply as a rattlesnake. The man could in no way pry the tiny weasel off, and he had to walk half a mile to water, the weasel dangling from his palm, and soak him off like a stubborn label.

And once, says Ernest Thompson Seton—once, a man shot an eagle out of the sky. He examined the eagle and found the dry skull of a weasel fixed by the jaws to his throat. The supposition is that the eagle had pounced on the weasel and the weasel swiveled and bit as instinct taught him, tooth to neck, and nearly won. I would like to have seen that eagle from the air a few weeks or months before he was shot: was the whole weasel still attached to his feathered throat, a fur pendant? Or did the eagle eat what he could reach, gutting the living weasel with his talons before his breast, bending his beak, cleaning the beautiful airborne bones?

II

I have been reading about weasels because I saw one last week. I startled a weasel who startled me, and we exchanged a long glance.

Twenty minutes from my house, through the woods by the quarry and across the highway, is Hollins Pond, a remarkable piece of shallowness, where I like to go at sunset and sit on a tree trunk. Hollins Pond is also called Murray's Pond; it covers two acres of bottomland near Tinker Creek with six inches of water and six thousand lily pads. In winter, brown-and-white steers stand in the middle of it, merely dampening their hooves; from the distant shore they look like miracle itself, complete with miracle's nonchalance. Now, in summer, the steers are gone. The water lilies have blossomed and spread to a green horizontal plane that is terra firma to plodding blackbirds, and tremulous ceiling to black leeches, crayfish, and carp.

This is, mind you, suburbia. It is a five-minute walk in three directions to rows of houses, though none is visible here. There's a 55-mph highway at one end of the pond, and a nesting pair of wood ducks at the other. Under every bush is a muskrat hole or a beer can. The far end is an alternating series of fields and woods, fields and woods, threaded everywhere with motorcycle tracks—in whose bare clay wild turtles lay eggs.

So, I had crossed the highway, stepped over two low barbed-wire fences, and traced the motorcycle path in all gratitude through the wild rose and poison ivy of the pond's shoreline up into high grassy fields. Then I cut down through the woods to the mossy fallen tree where I sit. This tree is excellent. It makes a dry, upholstered bench at the upper, marshy end of the pond, a plush jetty raised from the thorny shore between a shallow blue body of water and a deep blue body of sky.
The sun had just set. I was relaxed on the tree trunk, ensconced in the lap of lichen, watching the lily pads at my feet tremble and part dreamily over the thrusting path of a carp. A yellow bird appeared to my right and flew behind me. It caught my eye; I swiveled around—and the next instant, inexplicably, I was looking down at a weasel, who was looking up at me.

III

Weasel! I'd never seen one wild before. He was ten inches long, thin as a curve, a muscled ribbon, brown as fruitwood, soft-furred, alert. His face was fierce, small and pointed as a lizard's; he would have made a good arrowhead. There was just a dot of chin, maybe two brown hairs' worth, and then the pure white fur began that spread down his underside. He had two black eyes I didn't see, any more than you see a window.

The weasel was stunned into stillness as he was emerging from beneath an enormous shaggy wild rose bush four feet away. I was stunned into stillness twisted backward on the tree trunk. Our eyes locked, and someone threw away the key.

Our look was as if two lovers, or deadly enemies, met unexpectedly on an overgrown path when each had been thinking of something else: a clearing blow to the gut. It was also a bright blow to the brain, or a sudden beating of brains, with all the charge and intimate grate of rubbed balloons. It emptied our lungs. It felled the forest, moved the fields, and drained the pond; the world dismantled and tumbled into that black hole of eyes. If you and I looked at each other that way, our skulls would split and drop to our shoulders. But we don't. We keep our skulls. So.

He disappeared. This was only last week, and already I don't remember what shattered the enchantment. I think I blinked, I think I retrieved my brain from the weasel's brain, and tried to memorize what I was seeing, and the weasel felt the yank of separation, the careening splash-down into real life and the urgent current of instinct. He vanished under the wild rose. I waited motionless, my mind suddenly full of data and my spirit with pleadings, but he didn't return.

Please do not tell me about "approach-avoidance conflicts." I tell you I've been in that weasel's brain for sixty seconds, and he was in mine. Brains are private places, muttering through unique and secret tapes—but the weasel and I both plugged into another tape simultaneously, for a sweet and shocking time. Can I help it if it was a blank?

What goes on in his brain the rest of the time? What does a weasel think about? He won't say. His journal is tracks in clay, a spray of feathers, mouse blood and bone: uncollected, unconnected, loose leaf, and blown.

IV

I would like to learn, or remember, how to live. I come to Hollins Pond not so much to learn how to live as, frankly, to forget about it. That is, I don't think I can learn from a wild animal how to live in particular—shall I suck warm blood, hold my tail high, walk with my footprints precisely over the prints of my hands?—but I might learn something of mindlessness, something of the purity of living in the physical sense and the dignity of living without bias or motive. The weasel lives in necessity and we live in choice, hating necessity and dying at the last ignobly in its talons. I would like to live as I should, as the weasel lives as he should. And I suspect that for me the way is like the weasel's: open to time and death painlessly, noticing everything, remembering nothing, choosing the given with a fierce and pointed will.
V

I missed my chance. I should have gone for the throat. I should have lunged for that streak of white under the weasel's chin and held on, held on through mud and into the wild rose, held on for a dearer life. We could live under the wild rose wild as weasels, mute and uncomprehending. I could very calmly go wild. I could live two days in the den, curled, leaning on mouse fur, sniffing bird bones, blinking, licking, breathing musk, my hair tangled in the roots of grasses. Down is a good place to go, where the mind is single. Down is out, out of your ever-loving mind and back to your careless senses. I remember muteness as a prolonged and giddy fast, where every moment is a feast of utterance received. Time and events are merely poured, unremarked, and ingested directly, like blood pulsed into my gut through a jugular vein. Could two live that way? Could two live under the wild rose, and explore by the pond, so that the smooth mind of each is as everywhere present to the other, and as received and as unchallenged, as falling snow?

We could, you know. We can live any way we want. People take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience--even of silence--by choice. The thing is to stalk your calling in a certain skilled and supple way, to locate the most tender and live spot and plug into that pulse. This is yielding, not fighting. A weasel doesn't "attack" anything; a weasel lives as he's meant to, yielding at every moment to the perfect freedom of single necessity.

VI

I think it would be well, and proper, and obedient, and pure, to grasp your one necessity and not let it go, to dangle from it limp wherever it takes you. Then even death, where you're going no matter how you live, cannot you part. Seize it and let it seize you up aloft even, till your eyes burn out and drop; let your musky flesh fall off in shreds, and let your very bones unhinge and scatter, loosened over fields, over fields and woods, lightly, thoughtless, from any height at all, from as high as eagles.
To make way for modern tech terms such as BlackBerry, blog, voicemail and broadband, the latest edition of the Oxford Junior Dictionary has opted to *drop terms pertaining to old nature*. No longer can a child check this dictionary and learn more about the blackberry, dandelion, acorn, heron, otter, magpie, sycamore, or willow.

According to Vineeta Gupta, who heads children’s dictionaries at Oxford University Press, changes in the world are responsible for changes in the book. “When you look back at older versions of dictionaries, there were lots of examples of flowers for instance,” she said. “That was because many children lived in semi-rural environments and saw the seasons. Nowadays, the environment has changed.”

The 10,000 words and phrases in the junior dictionary were selected using several criteria, including how often words would be used by young children.

**Words taken out:**

Coronation, duchess, duke, emperor, empire, monarch, decade, carol, cracker, holly, ivy, mistletoe, dwarf, elf, goblin, abbey, aisle, altar, bishop, chapel, christen, disciple, minister, monastery, monk, nun, nunnery, parish, pew, psalm, pulpit, saint, sin, devil, vicar.

Adder, ass, beaver, boar, budgerigar, bullock, cheetah, colt, corgi, cygnet, doe, drake, ferret, gerbil, goldfish, guinea pig, hamster, heron, herring, kingfisher, lark, leopard, lobster, magpie, minnow, mussel, newt, otter, ox, oyster, panther, pelican, piglet, plaice, poodle, porcupine, porpoise, raven, spaniel, starling, stoat, stork, terrapin, thrush, weasel, wren.

Acorn, allotment, almond, apricot, ash, bacon, beech, beetroot, blackberry, blacksmith, bloom, bluebell, bramble, bran, bray, bridle, brook, buttercup, canary, canter, car, carnation, catkin, cauliflower, chestnut, clover, conker, county, cowslip, crocus, dandelion, diesel, fern, fungus, gooseberry, gorse, hazel, hazelnut, heather, holly, horse chestnut, ivy, lavender, leek, liquorice, manger, marzipan, melon, minnow, mint, nectar, nectarine, oats, pansy, parsnip, pasture, poppy, porridge, poultry, primrose, prune, radish, rhubarb, sheaf, spinach, sycamore, tulip, turnip, vine, violet, walnut, willow

**Words put in:**

Blog, broadband, MP3 player, voicemail, attachment, database, export, chatroom, bullet point, cut and paste, analogue.

Celebrity, tolerant, vandalism, negotiate, interdependent, creep, citizenship, childhood, conflict, common sense, debate, EU, drought, brainy, boisterous, cautionary tale, bilingual, bungee jumping, committee, compulsory, cope, democratic, allergic, biodegradable, emotion, dyslexic, donate, endangered, Euro.

Apparatus, food chain, incisor, square number, trapezium, alliteration, colloquial, idiom, curriculum, classify, chronological, block graph.

Via *EcoChildPlay*. Thanks *Ivo*.

[http://www.nextnature.net/2009/02/childrens-dictionary-dumps-nature-words/]
Lesson: Walking Map

Objective: Students will explore the joy of walking alone.

Essential Question: Why is it important to pay attention to the present moment? What transcendentalist ideas are still relevant today? What can nature teach us? What does it mean to live deliberately? Where can you find the true nature of things?

Situation: This past weekend you spent the entire time with a group of friends, binge watching 7 seasons of your favorite show. Though the experience was enjoyable, you feel as if you were drowned with technology and now you want to come up for a breath of fresh air. But how can you clear your head? You tried conscious breathing but you just can’t sit any longer after this weekend. What to do? Go for a walk! But where to? Nowhere! Let your feet and mind wander without any destination in mind. Just be in the moment and open to what arises.

Task/Procedure: After reading excerpts from “Walking” and watching the video poem “How to be Alone”, go on a walk (at least 30 minutes) all alone (not even your dog). You are not allowed to wear headphones and listen to music. You are highly encouraged to leave your phone at home. If you have to bring it due to a nervous mother, please keep it turned off. If you get kidnapped by clowns you can turn it on from the trunk of their car. You mom can find you using the Find My Phone app. Try to walk in the spirit that Henry suggested: “If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again; if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man; then you are ready for a walk.” Remember Bilbo’s words, “You step onto the road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there’s no knowing where you might be swept off to.” When you get home write for 15 minutes about your walk and experience (at least two pages). You will share your experience and insight with fellow travelers in class. Finally, you will make a map of your walk. Your map should include names of roads, landmarks, descriptions of what you saw, heard, felt, tasted, and touched. Be sure to include thoughts and insights on map.

Product: Create a map of your walk with anecdotal notes on the map about your experience.


Assessment: Journal entry. Map of walk (see rubric)
Map of My Walk Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neatness</td>
<td>The map is so messy it cannot be read!</td>
<td>The map is a bit messy.</td>
<td>The map is neat</td>
<td>The map is exceptionally neat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Nothing is labeled so it is impossible to tell what events happened where or even what each picture represents!</td>
<td>The map shows the location for a few (1-2) events.</td>
<td>The map shows the location and significance of several (3-4) of the events.</td>
<td>The map shows the location and significance of the location for 5 or more events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legend</td>
<td>Legend is missing. Scale and compass missing.</td>
<td>Legend is present. Includes scale or compass.</td>
<td>Legend is comprehensive. Includes scale and compass.</td>
<td>Legend is creative &amp; comprehensive. Includes scale and compass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Map is disappointing.</td>
<td>Map shows effort by use of pictures, color choices or word choice.</td>
<td>Map shows effort by use of pictures, color choices, word choice, and anything else that makes me grin.</td>
<td>Map shows great effort by use of pictures, color choices, word choice, and anything else that makes me smile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matters of Correctness</td>
<td>Several errors (5 or more) in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
<td>Many errors (3-4) in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
<td>A few errors (1-2) in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
<td>No errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson: The Lyceum

Objective: Students will be able to identify transcendentalist ideas that are still relevant today and that can help improve our society.

Essential Question: What transcendentalist ideas are still relevant today?
What changes would you make to improve American society?

Situation: A catastrophe has hit America leaving much of what you know destroyed. The surviving members of your community are trying to rebuild society. There has been much debate about what this new America should look like. One day while hiking in the woods you find a small simple cabin that is still in good shape. At first you only see a bed, a desk, and two chairs. But within the desk are a number of books by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Louisa May Alcott. As you sit and begin to read, you quickly recognize that there may be ideas in these works that can possibly be used to create a healthy and vibrant society. Your job is to collect the ideas from these works to share with the rest of your community.

Task/Procedure: After our class discussion of what changes you would like to make to America, choose a number of issues you would like to improve. Then, with each new day’s reading, you will collect quotes that offer guidance in recreating our society. You need to be able to explain why you chose each quote and how it connects to your chosen issue(s).

Product: Write and deliver a speech that blends in quotes from your readings that will attempt to persuade your community to adopt aspects of transcendentalism to avoid the “mistakes” of our current society. Be sure to use the rhetorical devices we studied in class. Your speech needs to be between 4-5 minutes long.

Materials: Transcendental Power Point/handout, Nature, Self-Reliance, excerpts from Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Walking, possibly Letter from a Birmingham Jail, notes/handout on rhetoric

Assessment: Speech – see rubric
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Diction &amp; Editing</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>*Skillfully attracts readers’ attention with engaging lead *Skillfully uses ethos, pathos, and logos *Skillfully uses at least 4 rhetorical devices *Skillful and creative closing</td>
<td>*Speech presents powerful arguments to support ideas. *Transcendental quotes chosen are insightful, surprising and from a wide range of texts *Speech effectively addresses opposing viewpoints and provides strong counter-arguments.</td>
<td>*Ideas are paragraphed skillfully and coherently *Transitions are seamless and varied *Narrative progresses smoothly &amp; logically toward resolution</td>
<td>*Language is clear, authentic &amp; imaginative *Word choice suggests purposeful revision and rewriting *Writing is generally free from errors</td>
<td>*Speech skillfully uses metaphor/simile, alliteration, and allusion *Speech meets length requirement *Student submits speech to newspaper (bonus) *Student speech published by newspaper (super bonus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>*Attracts readers’ attention with lead *Uses ethos, pathos, and logos *Skillfully uses 3 rhetorical devices *Skillful closing</td>
<td>*Speech presents effective arguments to support platform. *Transcendental quotes chosen are thoughtful and from a range of texts *Speech acknowledges opposing viewpoints and provides strong counter-arguments.</td>
<td>*Ideas are paragraphed logically *Transitions are appropriate and varied *Progression of narrative may contain abrupt events or details</td>
<td>*Language is clear and direct *Word choice is skillful *Few errors and none that are distracting</td>
<td>*Speech uses metaphor/simile, alliteration, and allusion *Speech almost meets length requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>*Attempts to attract readers’ attention with a lead *Uses ethos, pathos, or logos *Uses 2-3 of the rhetorical devices *Adequate closing</td>
<td>*Speech presents partially effective arguments to support platform. *Transcendental quotes chosen are appropriate and from at least one text *Speech addresses opposing viewpoints but does not provide strong counter-arguments.</td>
<td>*Most ideas are paragraphed correctly *Transitions are mechanical *Progression of narrative is choppy or illogical</td>
<td>*Language is generally clear with only occasional lapses into awkwardness or wordiness *Word choice is selective and generally strong *Some errors but no patterns of errors</td>
<td>*Speech uses metaphor/simile, alliteration, or allusion *Speech is too long or too short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>*Introduction does not attempt to attract readers’ attention *Does not use ethos, pathos, and logos *Does not use rhetorical devices *Missing closing</td>
<td>*Speech’s evidence and arguments are insufficient or irrelevant. *Transcendental quotes are missing, not from texts we read, or do not connect to ideas *Speech fails to address opposing viewpoints.</td>
<td>*Some ideas are paragraphed illogically *Inconsistent use of transitions *Narrative has no discernible resolution</td>
<td>*Language is frequently awkward or wordy, artificial or contrived *Word choice is often weak or incorrect *Many errors including careless ones</td>
<td>*Speech does not use metaphor/simile, alliteration, or allusion *Effort is not befitting an honor’s student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or lower</td>
<td>*Speech does not attempt to attract readers’ attention *Does not use ethos, pathos, and logos *Does not use rhetorical devices *Missing closing</td>
<td>*Speech’s evidence and arguments are insufficient or irrelevant. *Transcendental quotes are missing, not from texts we read, or do not connect to ideas *Speech fails to address opposing viewpoints.</td>
<td>*Some ideas are paragraphed illogically *Inconsistent use of transitions *Narrative has no discernible resolution</td>
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</table>
**Anaphora** is the repetition of the same word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences, commonly in conjunction with climax and with parallelism:

- To think on death it is a misery,;/ To think on life it is a vanity;/ To think on the world verily it is,/ To think that here man hath no perfect bliss. --Peacham
- In books I find the dead as if they were alive; in books I foresee things to come; in books warlike affairs are set forth; from books come forth the laws of peace. --Richard de Bury
- Finally, we must consider what pleasantness of teaching there is in books, how easy, how secret! How safely we lay bare the poverty of human ignorance to books without feeling any shame! --Ibid.
- Slowly and grimly they advanced, not knowing what lay ahead, not knowing what they would find at the top of the hill, not knowing that they were so near to Disneyland.
- They are the entertainment of minds unfurnished with ideas, and therefore easily susceptible of impressions; not fixed by principles, and therefore easily following the current of fancy; not informed by experience, and consequently open to every false suggestion and partial account. --Samuel Johnson

Anaphora can be used with questions, negations, hypotheses, conclusions, and subordinating conjunctions, although care must be taken not to become affected or to sound rhetorical and bombastic. Consider these selections:

- Will he read the book? Will he learn what it has to teach him? Will he live according to what he has learned?
- Not time, not money, not laws, but willing diligence will get this done.
- If we can get the lantern lit, if we can find the main cave, and if we can see the stalagmites, I'll show you the one with the bat skeleton in it. be used for

Adverbs and prepositions can anaphora, too:

- They are masters who instruct us without rod or ferule, without angry words, without clothes or money. --Richard de Bury
- She stroked her kitty cat very softly, very slowly, very smoothly.

**Antithesis** establishes a clear, contrasting relationship between two ideas by joining them together or juxtaposing them, often in parallel structure. Human beings are inveterate systematizers and categorizers, so the mind has a natural love for antithesis, which creates a definite and systematic relationship between ideas:

- To err is human; to forgive, divine. --Pope
- That short and easy trip made a lasting and profound change in Harold's outlook.
- That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind. --Neil Armstrong

Antithesis can convey some sense of complexity in a person or idea by admitting opposite or nearly opposite truths:

- Though surprising, it is true; though frightening at first, it is really harmless.
- If we try, we might succeed; if we do not try, we cannot succeed.
- Success makes men proud; failure makes them wise.

Antithesis, because of its close juxtaposition and intentional contrast of two terms or ideas, is also very useful for making relatively fine distinctions or for clarifying differences which might be otherwise overlooked by a careless thinker or casual reader:
• The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they
tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. --Matt. 23:2-3
(RSV)
• I agree that it is legal; but my question was, Is it moral?
• The advertisement indeed says that these shoes are the best, but it means that they
are equal; for in advertising "best" is a parity claim and only "better" indicates
superiority.

Note also that short phrases can be made antithetical:

• Every man who proposes to grow eminent by learning should carry in his mind, at
once, the difficulty of excellence and the force of industry; and remember that fame is
not conferred but as the recompense of labor, and that labor, vigorously continued, has
not often failed of its reward. --Samuel Johnson

Asyndeton consists of omitting conjunctions between words, phrases, or clauses. Normally
we say 'a, b, c, d and e' but asyndeton leaves out the 'and' (or another conjunction such as or / but
/ for / not / nor) and says instead 'a, b, c, d, e'.

• On his return he received medals, honors, treasures, titles, fame.

The lack of the "and" conjunction gives the impression that the list is perhaps not complete.
Compare:

• She likes pickles, olives, raisins, dates, pretzels.
• She likes pickles, olives, raisins, dates, and pretzels.

Sometimes an asyndetic list is useful for the strong and direct climactic effect it has, much
more emphatic than if a final conjunction were used. Compare:

• They spent the day wondering, searching, thinking, understanding.
• They spent the day wondering, searching, thinking, and understanding.

In certain cases, the omission of a conjunction between short phrases gives the impression of
synonymity to the phrases, or makes the latter phrase appear to be an afterthought or even a
substitute for the former. Compare:

• He was a winner, a hero.
• He was a winner and a hero.

It also gives a sense of equality to the things in the list. Take a famous example of asyndeton,
Julius Caesar's "I came, I saw, I conquered." and compare it with "I came, I saw, and I
conquered." The second statement isn't nearly as strong, merely listing three things and the
order in which they happened. The use of 'and' interrupts the flow, slowing down the reader
and finalizing the list (i.e. Caesar didn't do anything else).

When asyndeton is used, it clearly implies the ease with which he defeated his enemy. By giving
each of the sentences equal weight, it implies that the conquest was no more difficult and took no
longer than arriving or seeing.

Hypophora consists of raising one or more questions and then proceeding to answer
them, usually at some length. A common usage is to ask the question at the beginning of a
paragraph and then use that paragraph to answer it:
• There is a striking and basic difference between a man's ability to imagine something and an animal's failure. . . . Where is it that the animal falls short? We get a clue to the answer, I think, when Hunter tells us. . . . --Jacob Bronowski
• What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? . . . What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God. --Rom. 4:1,3 (NIV)

This is an attractive rhetorical device, because asking an appropriate question appears quite natural and helps to maintain curiosity and interest. You can use hypophora to raise questions which you think the reader obviously has on his mind and would like to see formulated and answered:

• What behavior, then, is uniquely human? My theory is this . . . . --H. J. Campbell
• But what was the result of this move on the steel industry? The annual reports for that year clearly indicate. . . .

Hypophora can also be used to raise questions or to introduce material of importance, but which the reader might not have the knowledge or thought to ask for himself:

• How then, in the middle of the twentieth century, are we to define the obligation of the historian to his facts?..... The duty of the historian to respect his facts is not exhausted by . . . . --Edward Hallett Carr
• But it is certainly possible to ask, How hot is the oven at its hottest point, when the average temperature is 425 degrees? We learned that the peak temperatures approached . . . .

And hypophora can be used as a transitional or guiding device to change directions or enter a new area of discussion:

• But what are the implications of this theory? And how can it be applied to the present problem?
• How and why did caveat emptor develop? The question presents us with mysteries never fully answered. --Ivan L. Preston

Notice how a series of reasonable questions can keep a discussion lively and interesting:

• How do we know the FTC strategy is the best, particularly in view of the complaints consumerists have made against it? Isn't there some chance that greater penalties would amount to greater deterrents? Why not get the most consumer protection simultaneously with the most punishment to offenders by easing the requirements for guilt without easing the punishment? . . . It happens that that's been tried, and it didn't work very well. --Ivan L. Preston

In the above example, the writer went on for several paragraphs to discuss the case which "didn't work very well." It would also be possible for a writer to ask several questions and then answer them in an orderly way, though that has the danger of appearing too mechanical if not carefully done.

**Metanoia** (correctio) qualifies a statement by recalling it (or part of it) and expressing it in a better, milder, or stronger way. A negative is often used to do the recalling:

• Fido was the friendliest of all St. Bernards, nay of all dogs.
• The chief thing to look for in impact sockets is hardness; no, not so much hardness as resistance to shock and shattering.
• And if I am still far from the goal, the fault is my own for not paying heed to the reminders, nay, the virtual directions, which I have had from above. --Marcus Aurelius
Even a blind man can see, as the saying is, that poetic language gives a certain grandeur to prose, except that some writers imitate the poets quite openly, or rather they do not so much imitate them as transpose their words into their own work, as Herodotus does. --Demetrius

Metanoia can be used to coax the reader into expanding his belief or comprehension by moving from modest to bold:

- These new textbooks will genuinely improve the lives of our children, or rather the children of the whole district.

Or it can be used to tone down and qualify an excessive outburst (while, of course, retaining the outburst for good effect):

- While the crack widens and the cliff every minute comes closer to crashing down around our ears, the bureaucrats are just standing by twiddling their thumbs--or at least they have been singularly unresponsive to our appeals for action.

The most common word in the past for invoking metanoia was "nay," but this word is quickly falling out of the language and even now would probably sound a bit strange if you used it. So you should probably substitute "no" for it. Other words and phrases useful for this device include these: rather, at least, let us say, I should say, I mean, to be more exact, or better, or rather, or maybe. When you use one of the "or" phrases (or rather, or to be more exact), a comma is fine preceding the device; when you use just "no," I think a dash is most effective.

**Metonymy** is another form of metaphor, very similar to synecdoche (and, in fact, some rhetoricians do not distinguish between the two), in which the thing chosen for the metaphorical image is closely associated with (but not an actual part of) the subject with which it is to be compared.

- The orders came directly from the White House.

In this example we know that the writer means the President issued the orders, because "White House" is quite closely associated with "President," even though it is not physically a part of him. Consider these substitutions, and notice that some are more obvious than others, but that in context all are clear:

- You can't fight city hall.
- This land belongs to the crown.
- In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread . . . . --Genesis 3:19
- Boy, I'm dying from the heat. Just look how the mercury is rising.
- His blood be on us and on our children. --Matt. 27:25
- The checkered flag waved and victory crossed the finish line.
- Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. --Psalm 100:1-2 (KJV)

The use of a particular metonymy makes a comment about the idea for which it has been substituted, and thereby helps to define that idea. Note how much more vivid "in the sweat of thy face" is in the third example above than "by labor" would have been. And in the fourth example, "mercury rising" has a more graphic, physical, and pictorial effect than would "temperature increasing." Attune yourself to such subtleties of language, and study the effects of connotation, suggestion, substitution, and metaphor.

**Parallelism** is recurrent syntactical similarity. Several parts of a sentence or several sentences are expressed similarly to show that the ideas in the parts or sentences are equal in
Parallelism also adds balance and rhythm and, most importantly, clarity to the sentence.

Any sentence elements can be paralleled, any number of times (though, of course, excess quickly becomes ridiculous). You might choose parallel subjects with parallel modifiers attached to them:

- Ferocious dragons breathing fire and wicked sorcerers casting their spells do their harm by night in the forest of Darkness.

Or parallel verbs and adverbs:

- I have always sought but seldom obtained a parking space near the door.
- Quickly and happily he walked around the corner to buy the book.

Or parallel verbs and direct objects:

- He liked to eat watermelon and to avoid grapefruit.

Or just the objects:

- This wealthy car collector owns three pastel Cadillacs, two gold Rolls Royces, and ten assorted Mercedes.

Or parallel prepositional phrases:

- He found it difficult to vote for an ideal truth but against his own self interest.
- The pilot walked down the aisle, through the door, and into the cockpit, singing "Up, Up, and Away."

Notice how paralleling rather long subordinate clauses helps you to hold the whole sentence clearly in your head:

- These critics--who point out the beauties of style and ideas, who discover the faults of false constructions, and who discuss the application of the rules--usually help a lot in engendering an understanding of the writer's essay.
- When, at the conclusion of a prolonged episode of agonizing thought, you decide to buy this car; when, after a hundred frantic sessions of begging stonefaced bankers for the money, you can obtain sufficient funds; and when, after two more years of impatience and frustration, you finally get a driver's license, then come see me and we will talk about a deal.
- After you corner the market in Brazilian coffee futures, but before you manipulate the price through the ceiling, sit down and have a cup of coffee with me (while I can still afford it).

It is also possible to parallel participial, infinitive, and gerund phrases:

- He left the engine on, idling erratically and heating rapidly.
- To think accurately and to write precisely are interrelated goals.
- She liked sneaking up to Ted and putting the ice cream down his back, because he was so cool about it.

In practice some combination of parts of speech or sentence elements is used to form a statement, depending as always on what you have to say. In addition, the parallelism, while it
• He ran up to the bookshelves, grabbed a chair standing nearby, stepped painfully on his tiptoes, and pulled the fifty-pound volume on top of him, crushing his ribs and impressing him with the power of knowledge.

Here are some other examples of parallelism:

• I shall never envy the honors which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardor to virtue, and confidence to truth. --Samuel Johnson
• They had great skill in optics, and had instructed him to see faults in others, and beauties in himself, that could be discovered by nobody else. . . . --Alexander Pope
• For the end of a theoretical science is truth, but the end of a practical science is performance. --Aristotle

**Procatalepsis**, by anticipating an objection and answering it, permits an argument to continue moving forward while taking into account points or reasons opposing either the train of thought or its final conclusions. Often the objections are standard ones:

• It is usually argued at this point that if the government gets out of the mail delivery business, small towns like Podunk will not have any mail service. The answer to this can be found in the history of the Pony Express . . . .
• To discuss trivialities in an exalted style is, as the saying is, like beautifying a pestle. Yet some people say we should discourse in the grand manner on trivialities and they think that this is a proof of outstanding oratorical talent. Now I admit that Polycrates [did this]. But he was doing this in jest, . - . and the dignified tone of the whole work was itself a game. Let us be playful..... [but] also observe what is fitting in each case . . . . --Demetrius

Sometimes the writer will invent probable or possible difficulties in order to strengthen his position by showing how they could be handled if they should arise, as well as to present an answer in case the reader or someone else might raise them in the course of subsequent consideration:

• But someone might say that this battle really had no effect on history. Such a statement could arise only from ignoring the effect the battle had on the career of General Bombast, who was later a principal figure at the Battle of the Bulge.
• I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and it was indeed the principal design in offering it to the world. --Jonathan Swift

Objections can be treated with varying degrees of seriousness and with differing relationships to the reader. The reader himself might be the objector:

• Yet this is the prime service a man would think, wherein this order should give proof of itself. If it were executed, you'll say. But certain, if execution be remiss or blindfold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter and in other books? --John Milton

Or the objector may be someone whose outlook, attitude, or belief differs substantially from both writer and reader—though you should be careful not to set up an artificial, straw-man objector:

• Men of cold fancies and philosophical dispositions object to this kind of poetry, [saying] that it has not probability enough to affect the imagination. But to this it may be answered that we are sure, in general, there are many intellectual beings in the world...
besides ourselves . . . who are subject to different laws and economies from those of mankind . . . --Joseph Addison

- Occasionally a person of rash judgment will argue here that the high-speed motor is better than the low-speed one, because for the same output, high speed motors are lighter, smaller, and cheaper. But they are also noisier and less efficient, and have much greater wear and shorter life; so that overall they are not better.

By mentioning the obvious, and even the imaginatively discovered objections to your argument, you show that (1) you are aware of them and have considered them and (2) there is some kind of reasonable response to them, whether given in a sentence or in several paragraphs. An objection answered in advance is weakened should your opponent bring it up, while an objection ignored, if brought up, may show you to be either ignorant or dishonest. Indeed, it might be better to admit an objection you cannot answer than to suppress it and put yourself on the side of darkness and sophistry:

- Those favoring the other edition argue that the same words in this text cost more money. This I admit, and it does seem unfortunate to pay twice the price for essentially the same thing. Nevertheless, this text has larger type, is made better, and above all has more informative notes, so I think it is worth the difference.

Finally, note that procatalepsis can be combined with hypophora, so that the objection is presented in the form of a question:

- I now come to the precepts of Longinus, and pretend to show from them that the greatest sublimity is to be derived from religious ideas. But why then, says the reader, has not Longinus plainly told us so? He was not ignorant that he ought to make his subject as plain as he could. For he has told us. . . . --John Dennis
- But you might object that, if what I say is actually true, why would people buy products advertised illogically? The answer to that lies in human psychology . . . .

I did not make this document. Someone from work shared. I don’t think they made it either.
### THE ART OF PERSUASION

#### Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle

- **Logos** (rational appeal)
  - Appeal to logical reasoning
  - Ability of readers
  - Facts
  - Case studies
  - Statistics
  - Experiments
  - Logical reasoning
  - Analogies
  - Anecdotes
  - Voices of authority

- **Pathos** (emotional appeal)
  - Appeal to beliefs and feelings
  - Higher emotions: Belief in fairness, Love, Pity
  - Lower emotions: Greed, Lust, Revenge, Avarice

- **Ethos** (ethical appeal)
  - The sense the author gives as being competent/fair/authoritative
  - Trustworthiness
  - Credibility
  - Reliability
  - Expert testimony
  - Reliable sources
  - Fairness
What is Materialism?

Michael Philips on the shaky foundations of the most popular philosophical theory of modern times.

Most academic philosophers these days will tell you, without hesitation, that they are materialists. Materialism asserts that everything is or can be explained in relation to matter. This would be straightforward enough if we had a clear and stable idea of matter. But do we?

Unfortunately, we don’t. There have been big changes since Descartes introduced his version of the mind/body problem in the 17th century. Descartes argued that the essence of matter is extension, or to put it another way, that what makes something material is having a shape at some particular position in space. Mass and energy don’t enter his account at all. After a number of important intermediate stages, we have arrived at a picture that takes mass and energy to be central, that makes shape unnecessary, and makes position in space problematic. Since Einstein, many physicists have regarded matter as a ‘lumpy’ form of energy. And quantum physics, with its Uncertainty Principle and probability waves, severs any necessary connection between being material and having some particular shape at some definite location. A materialist influenced by Cartesian physics offers us a very different picture of the world than a materialist influenced by quantum mechanics. The point is that the laws of physics (or, rather, our versions of them) are open to change. This means that our current concepts of matter (mass and energy) may change as well.

If physics imposed logical constraints on these concepts — if it in some way limited their meaning or content — the problem might be solved. Materialism would then be the view that nothing exists which falls outside those constraints. But there are no such constraints. Or, rather, what seem to constrain physicists at one time are abandoned in another. After Einstein, no physicist thought that matter required a position in absolute space (as the Newtonians did). After quantum mechanics, few physicists thought that matter must be deterministic (as Einstein did). Now some physicists are seriously suggesting that matter can move backwards in time (as almost no one previously believed). The laws of physics get stranger every day and the only thing certain about the future of physics is that it will be decided by physicists. The physics of the future will not be bound by the physics of the present and certainly not by its metaphysics. As always, the physics of the future will let the philosophical chips fall where they may.

Perhaps we could say that matter is whatever physicists finally decide it is. But this reduces materialism to a blank check to be filled in when physics finally closes its book. To advocate materialism is now simply to pledge allegiance to physics’ final words (if any). Materialism is no longer a metaphysical doctrine. It is now the epistemological position that the methods of physics are such that they will finally map the structure of the universe.

Thus far we’ve been trying to understand what materialism asserts by looking for a clear and stable concept of matter. Maybe this is the wrong place to look. We might get further by thinking about all those spooky, ephemeral and esoteric things that materialism denies. What are these things? Over the years, the targets have expanded. The main target of 17th century materialism was Descartes’ mental substance. Eighteenth and 19th century materialism was more ambitious, attacking both the supernatural in general (e.g., ghosts and magic), and religion in particular (e.g., immortal souls and divine intervention). The main targets of 20th century materialism expanded still further to include consciousness. These targets are very different but they have one important thing in common. In one way or another, they all challenge the idea that science is capable of producing a complete causal account of the universe. That is, they all claim that something outside the system of nature...
explain what we are and what will become of us. Let’s call the former ‘interventionism’ and the latter ‘exemptionism’.

The commitment to interventionism and exemptionism are obvious in the case of supernatural and religious phenomena. Gods, ghosts, witches and magicians intervene in the physical world by summoning forces and energy unknown to physics. Neither can immortal souls can be understood in terms described by science. The case of consciousness is less obvious but also strong. Despite nearly fifty years of concerted effort, states of consciousness have resisted all attempts at physical description. The difficulty isn’t hard to understand. The sensation of warmth, the taste of coffee, the sound of my voice in my head, have no quantifiable mass or energy and no actual location in physical space (we can’t open my head and find my headache). It is easy to think that they may be caused by the brain, but it is hard to think that they are the very same thing as what causes them. But if they are not identical, if experiences (as such) have causal power, they intervene in the material world just as gods and ghosts do. If a sensation of pain, considered just as such, just as an experience, can cause me to jump and shout, the laws of physics do not by themselves explain my jumping and shouting. That is why 20th century materialism takes consciousness to be a problem — especially the idea that conscious states can be causes of anything.

Where does this leave us? We tried to understand what materialism asserts by understanding what matter is. After all was said and done, we were left with the epistemological doctrine that matter is whatever physicists finally say it is. This appeared to rob materialism of all content as a metaphysical doctrine. So instead we tried to understand it in relation to what it denies. But our efforts have taken us nearly full circle. The only common features of the processes and entities that materialists have denied is that they are interventionist or exemptionist. That is, they challenge the view that physics can provide a complete picture of the world and our place in it. So our second attempt to understand what materialism asserts leads us to nearly the same place as our first. Materialism is just the epistemological view that the methods of physics can provide us with a complete account of how things are.

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Chapter I NATURE by Ralph Waldo Emerson

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, -- he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods, is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a deaconry and conclave reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not.
faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, -- no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, -- my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, -- all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, -- master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm, is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For, nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.
**Basic Assumption:** The intuitive faculty, instead of the rational or sensical, became the means for a conscious union of the individual psyche (known in Sanskrit as *Atman*) with the world psyche also known as the Oversoul, life-force, prime mover and God (known in Sanskrit as *Brahma*).

**Basic Premises:**

1. **Intuition:** Favoring intuition over reason/heart over mind. Every person (regardless of wealth, status, or education) possesses "intuition," an essential understanding of right and wrong (moral action). Since people are basically good, their gut instincts will lead them to God.

2. **Self-Reliance/Individualism/Nonconformity:** lies at the heart of Transcendentalism. Every individual needs to be self-reliant and thus not depend upon others if he or she is to be free and to live life fully. Self-empowerment is attained by defying the authority (church, government, peer groups, etc.) of "empty" conventions and senseless rules.

3. **Importance of Nature:** We should live close to nature, for it is our greatest teacher. Nature is emblematic, and understanding its "language" can bring us closer to God. All of us can find enlightenment or true self or “God” in nature; thus we should preserve nature.

4. **God in all of us:** God can be found in both nature and human nature. God is not superhuman being but a spirit in us all (regardless of wealth, status, race, gender, or education). Think of equality, public education, workers’ rights, healthcare for all, etc.)

5. **Simplified Life:** “Simplify, Simplify.” Slow down and take it easy. Create space in your life to you can breathe. Anti-materialism – we don’t need lots of shiny things to be happy.

6. **Civil-Disobedience:** It is the right of men and women to act with their conscience even if it breaks the law. Think – peaceful protests.

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**Closely Read Essay (may have to read twice)**

“**Self-Reliance**” by *Ralph Waldo Emerson* from *Essays: First Series* (1841)

"Ne te quaesiveris extra."

"Man is his own star; and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man,
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
Nothing to him falls early or too late.
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

_Epilogue to Beaumont and Fletcher's Honest Man's Fortune_

Cast the bantling on the rocks,
Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat;
Wintered with the hawk and fox,
Power and speed be hands and feet.

**ESSAY II Self-Reliance**

1. I read the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not...
such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment
they instil is of more value than any thought they may
contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that
what is true for you in your private heart is true for all
men, — that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and
it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time
becomes the outmost,— and our first thought is
rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last
Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each,
the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton
is, that they set at naught books and traditions, and
spoke not what men but what they thought. A man
should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light
which flashes across his mind from within, more than
the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he
dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his.
In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected
thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated
majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting
lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our
spontaneous impression with good-humored
inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on
the other side. Else, to-morrow a stranger will say with
masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and
felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with
shame our own opinion from another.

2. There is a time in every man's education when he
arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that
imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better,
for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe
is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to
him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground
which is given to him to till. The power which resides in
him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that
is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.
Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes
much impression on him, and another none. This
sculpture in the memory is not without preestablished
harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall,
that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half
express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea
which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as
proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully
imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest
by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put
his heart into his work and done his best; but what he
has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace. It is
a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his
genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no

Fully Annotate and Respond
3. Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predomina\nting in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort, and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

4. What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text, in the face and behaviour of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces, we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody: all conform to it, so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold, then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

5. The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlour what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests: he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him: he does not court you. But the man is, as it were, clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with eclat, he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections
Who can thus avoid all pledges, and having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, un bribable, unaffrighted innocence, must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private, but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men, and put them in fear.

6. These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

7. Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser, who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within? my friend suggested, — "But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition, as if every thing were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways...

8. What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know
solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he
who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect
sweetness the independence of solitude.

9. The objection to conforming to usages that have
become dead to you is, that it scatters your force. It loses
your time and blurs the impression of your character. If
you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-
society, vote with a great party either for the
government or against it, spread your table like base
housekeepers,—under all these screens I have difficulty
to detect the precise man you are. And, of course, so
much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do
your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you
shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a
blindman's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know
your sect, I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher
announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of
the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand
that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous
word? Do I not know that, with all this ostentation of
examining the grounds of the institution, he will do no
such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself
not to look but at one side,—the permitted side, not as
a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained
attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest
affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with
one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves
to some one of these communities of opinion. This
conformity makes them not false in a few particulars,
authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their
every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real
two, their four not the real four; so that every word they
say chagrins us, and we know not where to begin to set
them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in
the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We
come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by
degrees the gentlest asinine expression.

10. For nonconformity the world whips you with its
displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to
estimate a sour face...
The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our
consistency; a reverence for our past act or word,
because the eyes of others have no other data for
computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loath
to disappoint them...
But why should you keep your head over your shoulder?
Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you
contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that
11. A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day. — 'Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.' — Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

12. I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom, and trade, and office...

13. Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say 'I think,' 'I am,' but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied, and it satisfies nature, in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time...

14. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the travelling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are
tastes, our faculties, lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought, and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also. ..

15. Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous, half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakspeare will never be made by the study of Shakspeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much...

16. So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God. In the Will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shalt sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick, or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event, raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.
Excerpt from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau
Found in McDougal Littell’s *The Language of Literature: American Literature* (California Edition)

(from) “Where I Lived and What I lived For”

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence day, or the fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defense against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them....

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there by degrees, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal convexiticler. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains....

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 no 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. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily concluded that is the chief end of man here to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.”

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. 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 thumbnail. 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, be 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....
Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine tomorrow. As for work, we haven’t any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus’ dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known did not set it on fire, -- or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were a parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half hour’s nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, “What’s the news?” as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night’s sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. “Pray tell me any thing new that has happened to a man any where on this globe,” – and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life – I wrote this some years ago – that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or on house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -- we never need read of another. One is enough....

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito’s wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry, -- determined to make a day of it....

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with start. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore-paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

From “Solitude”
This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself. As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt sleeves, though it is cool as well as cloudy and windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me. The bullfrogs trump to usher in the night, and the note of the whippoorwill is borne on the rippling wind from over the water. Sympathy with the fluttering alder and poplar leaves almost takes away my breath; yet, like the lake, my serenity is rippled but not ruffled. These small waves raised by the evening wind are as remote from storm as the smooth reflecting surface. Though it is now dark, the wind still blows and roars in the wood, the waves still dash, and some creatures lull the rest with their notes. The repose is never complete. The wildest animals do not repose, but seek their prey now; the fox, and skunk, and rabbit, now roam the fields and woods without fear. They are Nature’s watchmen, -- links which connect the days of animated life....

Men frequently say to me, “I should think you would feel lonesome down there, and want to be nearer to folks, rainy and snowy days and nights especially.” I am tempted to reply to such, -- This whole earth which we inhabit is but a point in space. How far apart, think you dwell the two most distant inhabitants of yonder star, the breadth of whose disk cannot be appreciated by our instruments? Why should I feel lonely? Is not our planet in the Milky Way? This which you put seems to me not to be the most important question. What sort of space is that which separates a man from his fellows and makes him solitary? I have found that no exertion of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another....

From “The Pond in Winter”

Every winter the liquid and trembling surface of the pond, which was so sensitive to every breath, and reflected every light and shadow, becomes solid to the depth of a foot or a foot and a half, so that it will support the heaviest teams, and perchance the snow covers it to and equal depth, and it is not to be distinguished from any level field. Like the marmots in the surrounding hills, it closes its eye-lids and becomes dormant for three months or more. Standing on the snow-covered plain, as if in a pasture amid the hills, I cut my way first through a foot of snow, and the a foot of ice, and open a window under my feet, where, kneeling to drink, I look down into the quiet parlor of the fished, pervaded by a softened light as through a window of ground glass, with its bright sanded floor the same as in summer; there a perennial waveless serenity reigns as in the amber twilight sky, corresponding to the cool and even temperament of the inhabitants. Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads....

From “Spring”

One attraction in coming to the woods to live was that I should have leisure and opportunity so see the spring come in. The ice in the pond at length begins to be honey-combed, and I can set my heel in it as I walk. Fogs and reins and warmer suns are gradually melting the snow; the days have grown sensibly longer; and I see how I shall get through the winter without adding to my woodpile, for large fires are no longer necessary. I am on the alert for the first signs of spring, to hear the chance note of some arriving bird, or the striped squirrel’s chirp, for his stores must be now nearly exhausted, or see the woodchuck venture out of his winter quarters....

The change from storm and winter to serene and mild weather, from dark and sluggish hours to
instantaneous at last. Suddenly and influx of light filled my house, though the evening was at hand, and the clouds of winter still overhung it, and the eaves were dripping with sleety rain. I looked out the window, and lo! where yesterday was cold gray ice there lay the transparent pond already clam and full of hope as in a summer evening, reflecting a summer evening sky in its bosom, though none was visible overhead, as if it had intelligence with some remote horizon....

From “Conclusion”

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impresible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now. I learned this, at least, by my experiment; that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them....

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an appletree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?...

However mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard times. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling glorious hours, even in a poorhouse. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the almshouse as brightly as from the rich man’s abode; the snow melts before its door as early in the spring. I do not see but a quiet mind may live as contentedly there, and have as cheering thoughts, as in a palace. The town’s poor seem to me often to live the most independent lives of any. May be they are simply great enough to receive without misgiving. Most think that they are above being supported by the town; but it oftener happens that they are not above supporting themselves by dishonest means, which should be more disreputable. Cultivate poverty like a garden herb, like sage. Do not trouble
do not change; we change. Sell your clothes and keep your thoughts. God will see that you do not want society. If I were confined to a corner of a garret all my days, like a spider, the world would be just as large to me while I had my thoughts about me. The philosopher said: “From an army of three divisions one can take away its general, and put it in disorder; from the man the most abject and vulgar one cannot take away his thought.” Do not seek so anxiously to be developed, to subject your self to many influences to be played on; it is all dissipation. Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights. The shadows of poverty and meanness gather around us, “and lo! creation widens to our view.” We are often reminded that if there were bestowed on us the wealth of Croesus, our aims must still be the same, and our means essentially the same. Moreover, if your are restricted in your range by poverty, if you cannot buy books and newspaper, for instance, you are but confined to the most significant and vital experiences; you are compelled to deal with the material which yields the most sugar and the most starch. It is life near the bone where it is sweetest. You are defended from being a trifler. No man loses ever on a lower level by magnanimity on a higher. Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessity of the soul.

The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed, before science began to record its freshets. Every one had heart the story which has gone the rounds of New England, of a strong and beautiful bug which came out of the dry leaf of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer’s kitchen for sixty years, first in Connecticut, and afterward in Massachusetts, -- from an egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it; which was heard gnawing out for several weeks, hatched perchance by the heat of an urn. Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing of this? Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society, deposited at first in the alburnum of the green and living tree, which has been gradually converted into the semblance of its well-seasoned tomb, -- heard perchance gnawing out now for years by the astonished family of man, as the sat round the festive board, -- may unexpectedly come forth from amidst society’s most trivial and handselled furniture, to enjoy its perfect summer life at last!

I don not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of rime can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.
I.

I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil—to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society. I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilization: the minister and the school committee and every one of you will take care of that.

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks—who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering, which word is beautifully derived "from idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretense of going a la SainteTerre," to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, "There goes aSainte-Terrer," a Saunterer, a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean. Some, however, would derive the word from sans terre without land or a home, which, therefore, in the good sense, will mean, having no particular home, but equally at home everywhere. For this is the secret of successful sauntering. He who sits still in a house all the time may be the greatest vagrant of all; but the saunterer, in the good sense, is no more vagrant than the meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea. But I prefer the first, which, indeed, is the most probable derivation. For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels.

It is true, we are but faint-hearted crusaders, even the walkers, nowadays, who undertake no persevering, never-ending enterprises. Our expeditions are but tours, and come round again at evening to the old hearthside from which we set out. Half the walk is but retracing our steps. We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return, prepared to send back our embalmed hearts only as relics to our desolate kingdoms. If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again—if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man—then you are ready for a walk.

II.

I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements. You may safely say, A penny for your thoughts, or a thousand pounds. When sometimes I am reminded that the mechanics and shopkeepers stay in their shops not only all the forenoon, but all the afternoon too, sitting with crossed legs, so many of them—as if the legs were made to sit upon, and not to stand or walk upon—I think that they deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago. I, who cannot stay in my chamber for a single day without acquiring some rust, and when sometimes I have stolen forth for a walk at the eleventh hour, or four o'clock in the afternoon, too late to redeem the day, when the shades of night were already beginning to be mingled with the daylight, have felt as if I had committed some sin to be atoned for—I confess that I am astonished at the power of endurance, to say nothing of the moral insensibility, of my neighbors who confine themselves to shops and offices the whole day for weeks and months, aye, and years almost together. I know not what manner of stuff they are of, sitting there now at three o'clock in the afternoon, as if it were...
III.

The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the World. Every tree sends its fibers forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plow and sail for it. From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind. Our ancestors were savages. The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a meaningless fable. The founders of every state which has risen to eminence have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a similar wild source. It was because the children of the Empire were not suckled by the wolf that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the northern forests who were.

I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows. We require an infusion of hemlock, spruce or arbor vitae in our tea. There is a difference between eating and drinking for strength and from mere gluttony. The Hottentots eagerly devour the marrow of the koodoo and other antelopes raw, as a matter of course. Some of our northern Indians eat raw the marrow of the Arctic reindeer, as well as various other parts, including the summits of the antlers, as long as they are soft. And herein, perchance, they have stolen a march on the cooks of Paris. They get what usually goes to feed the fire. This is probably better than stall-fed beef and slaughterhouse pork to make a man of. Give me a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure—as if we lived on the marrow of koodoos devoured raw.

Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him. One who pressed forward incessantly and never rested from his labors, who grew fast and made infinite demands on life, would always find himself in a new country or wilderness, and surrounded by the raw material of life. He would be climbing over the prostrate stems of primitive forest-trees.

In short, all good things are wild and free. There is something in a strain of music, whether produced by an instrument or by the human voice—take the sound of a bugle in a summer night, for instance—which by its wildness, to speak without satire, reminds me of the cries emitted by wild beasts in their native forests. It is so much of their wildness as I can understand. Give me for my friends and neighbors wild men, not tame ones. The wildness of the savage is but a faint symbol of the awful ferity with which good men and lovers meet.
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Henry David Thoreau

I heartily accept the motto,—"That government is best which governs least"; and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe,—"That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government,—what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. It does not keep the country free. It does not settle the West. It does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of India-rubber, would never manage to bounce over the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and, if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

1. When Thoreau first delivered the essay as a lecture before the Concord Lyceum on January 26, 1848, he entitled it “On the Relation of the Individual to the State.” When it was first printed, in Elizabeth Peabody’s Aesthetic Papers in May, 1849, it was entitled “Resistance to Civil Government.” It did not receive its present title of “Civil Disobedience” until it was published in Thoreau’s A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers in 1866, four years after his death. Professor Tokihiko Yamasaki of Osaka City University has pointed out to me the pun in the tide—not only does it imply disobedience of civil authority, but also a civil (i.e., a courteous) form of disobedience.

2. The motto is not from Thomas Jefferson, as many have supposed, but is rather from the masthead of the Democratic Review, a periodical to which Thoreau several times contributed articles. (Lee A. Pederson, “Thoreau’s Source of the Motto in ‘Civil Disobedience,’” Thoreau Society Bulletin, 67.)

3. The war with Mexico was not declared until 1846, whereas Thoreau had refused to pay his tax as early as 1843. In citing the war, he was simply taking advantage of the fact that the war was a particularly unpopular one in the North. (John C. Broderick, “Thoreau, Alcott, and the Poll Tax,” Studies in Philology, LIII, 1956, 612-26.)

4. The Aesthetic Papers version at this point adds: “and, if ever they should use it in earnest as a real one against each other, it will surely split.”
But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule, is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience? — in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said, that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, aye, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy-Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts,— a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniments, though it may be,—

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his course to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried."  

The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, posse comitatus, &c. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others,—as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders,— serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the Devil, without intending it, as God. A very few, as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and men, serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. A wise man

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5. The 1840's, when "Civil Disobedience" was written, was a period of intense interest in social reform in the United States, which included a number of philosophical anarchists who advocated the dissolution of all government.

6. Thoreau is apparently thinking of Sir Edward Coke's "Corporations... have no souls" from his Case of Sutton's Hospital.

7. Those who transport gunpowder from the magazines to the guns during battle.


9. The entire body of inhabitants who may be summoned by the police in the event of a riot.
will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be “clay,” and “stop a hole to keep the wind
away,”¹⁰ but leave that office to his dust at least:—

“I am too high-born to be propertied,
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument
To any sovereign state throughout the world.”¹¹

He who gives himself entirely to his fellow-men appears to them useless and selfish; but he
who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist.

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer, that
he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political
organization as my government which is the slave’s government also.

All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist,
the government, when its tyranny and 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 ‘75.¹² 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. At
any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine,
and oppression and robbery are organized, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer. In
other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of
liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and
subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize.
What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact, that the country so overrun is not our own, but
ours is the invading army.

Paley,¹³ a common authority with many on moral questions, in his chapter on the “Duty of
Submission to Civil Government,” resolves all civil obligation into expediency; and he proceeds to
say, “that so long as the interest of the whole society requires it, that is, so long as the established
government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconvenience, it is the will of God that
the established government be obeyed, and no longer.... This principle being admitted, the justice of
every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger and
grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other.” Of
this, he says, every man shall judge for himself. But Paley appears never to have contemplated
those cases to which the rule of expediency does not apply, in which a people, as well as an
individual, must do justice, cost what it may. If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning
man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself.¹⁴ This, according to Paley, would be
inconvenient. But he that would save his life, in such a case, shall lose it.¹⁵ This people must cease
to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people.

In their practice, nations agree with Paley; but does any one think that Massachusetts does
exactly what is right at the present crisis?

“A drab of state, a cloth-o’-silver slut,
To have her train borne up, and her soul trail in the dirt.”¹⁶

¹⁰. “Imperious Caesar, dead and turn’d to clay, Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.”—Shakespeare, Hamlet, V. i.
236-37.
¹¹. Shakespeare, King John, V. ii. 79-82.
¹². The American Revolution, which began in Concord on April 19, 1775. ¹³ James Paley (1743-1805), Moral and Political Philosophy, VI.
ii.
¹⁴. “If a fool should snatch a plank from a wreck, shall a wise man wrest it from him if he is able?”—Cicero, De officiis,
III. xxiii.
¹⁵. “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it.”—Matt. x. 39.
 Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, cost what it may. I quarrel not with far-off foes, but with those who, near at home, co-operate with, and do the bidding of, those far away, and without whom the latter would be harmless. We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared; but improvement is slow, because the few are not materially wiser or better than the many. It is not so important that many should be as good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere; for that will leaven the whole lump. There are thousands who are in opinion opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them; who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that they know not what to do, and do nothing; who even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free-trade, and quietly read the prices-current along with the latest advices from Mexico, after dinner, and, it may be, fall asleep over them both. What is the price-current of an honest man and patriot to-day? They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for others to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret. At most, they give only a cheap vote, and a feeble countenance and God-speed, to the right, as it goes by them. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. But it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it.

All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions; and betting naturally accompanies it. The character of the voters is not staked. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting for the right is doing nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority. There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men. When the majority shall at length vote for the abolition of slavery, it will be because they are indifferent to slavery, or because there is but little slavery left to be abolished by their vote. They will then be the only slaves. Only his vote can hasten the abolition of slavery who asserts his own freedom by his vote.

I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore, or elsewhere, for the selection of a candidate for the Presidency, made up chiefly of editors, and men who are politicians by profession; but I think, what is it to any independent, intelligent, and respectable man what decision they may come to? Shall we not have the advantage of his wisdom and honesty, nevertheless? Can we not count upon some independent votes? Are there not many individuals in the country who do not attend conventions? But no: I find that the respectable man, so called, has immediately drifted from his position, and despairs of his country, when his country has more reason to despair of him. He forthwith adopts one of the candidates thus selected as the only available one, thus proving that he is himself available for any purposes of the demagogue. His vote is of no more worth than that of any unprincipled foreigner or hireling native, who may have been bought. O for a man who is a man, and, as my neighbor says, has a bone in his back which you cannot pass your hand through! Our statistics are at fault: the population has been returned too large. How many men are there to a square thousand miles in this country? Hardly one. Does not America offer any inducement for men to settle here? The American has dwindled into an Odd Fellow, — one who may be known by the development of his organ of gregariousness, and a manifest lack of intellect and cheerful

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17. Much of the resistance against the abolition of slavery at the time came from Northerners who feared that such a move would damage the economy of the nation and cut their own profits.

18. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaventh the whole lump?" — 1 Cor. v. 6.

19. The Democratic Party held its 1848 convention in Baltimore. Trying to walk the fence between North and South, they avoided any discussion of slavery.

20. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is a secret fraternal order which still exists throughout the United States.
self-reliance; whose first and chief concern, on coming into the world, is to see that the
Almshouses are in good repair; and, before yet he has lawfully donned the virile garb, to collect a
fund for the support of the widows and orphans that may be; who, in short, ventures to live only by
the aid of the Mutual Insurance Company, which has promised to bury him decently.

It is not a man’s duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the
most enormous wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty,
at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his
support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do
not pursue them sitting upon another man’s shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue
his contemplations too. See what gross inconsistency is tolerated. I have heard some of my
townsmen say, “I should like to have them order me out to help put down an insurrection of the
slaves, or to march to Mexico;— see if I would go”; and yet these very men have each, directly by
their allegiance, and so indirectly, at least, by their money, furnished a substitute. The soldier is
applauded who refuses to serve in an unjust war by those who do not refuse to sustain the unjust
government which makes the war; is applauded by those whose own act and authority he disregards
and sets at naught; as if the State were penitent to that degree that it hired one to scourge it while it
sinned, but not to that degree that it left off sinning for a moment. Thus, under the name of Order
and Civil Government, we are all made at last to pay homage to and support our own meanness.
After the first blush of sin comes its indifference; and from immoral it becomes, as it were, unmoral,
and not quit unnecessary to that life which we have made.

The broadest and most prevalent error requires the most disinterested virtue to sustain it. The
slight reproach to which the virtue of patriotism is commonly liable, the noble are most likely to
incur. Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it
their allegiance and support, are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently
the most serious obstacles to reform. Some are petitioning the State to dissolve the Union, to
disregard the requisitions of the President. Why do they not dissolve it themselves,— the union
between themselves and the State,— and refuse to pay their quota into its treasury? Do not they
stand in the same relation to the State, that the State does to the Union? And have not the same
reasons prevented the State from resisting the Union, which have prevented them from resisting the
State?

How can a man be satisfied to entertain an opinion merely, and enjoy it? Is there any
enjoyment in it, if his opinion is that he is aggrieved? If you are cheated out of a single dollar by
your neighbor, you do not rest satisfied with knowing that you are cheated, or with saying that you
are cheated, or even with petitioning him to pay you your due; but you take effectual steps at once to
obtain the full amount, and see that you are never cheated again. Action from principle, the
perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary,
and does not consist wholly with anything which was. It not only divides states and churches, it
divides families; aye, it divides the individual, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and
obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under
such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to
alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is
the fault of the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil. It makes it worse. Why is
it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority?
Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the
alert to point out its faults, and do better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify

21. An allusion to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s famous essay of that
name. 22 Roman boys assumed the toga virilis upon attaining
puberty. 23 Some of the more radical Abolitionists, believing that it would be impossible ever to force the abolition of slavery
through Congress, advocated the Northern states’ withdrawal from the Union rather than obedience to laws which endorsed slavery.
Christ, and excommunicate Copernicus\textsuperscript{24} and Luther,\textsuperscript{25} and pronounce Washington and Franklin\textsuperscript{26} rebels?

One would think, that a deliberate and practical denial of its authority was the only offence never contemplated by government; else, why has it not assigned its definite, its suitable and proportionate penalty? If a man who has no property refuses but once to earn nine shillings for the State, he is put in prison for a period unlimited by any law that I know, and determined only by the discretion of those who placed him there; but if he should steal ninety times nine shillings from the State, he is soon permitted to go at large again.

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth,—certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.

As for adopting the ways which the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man’s life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to. I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do everything, it is not necessary that he should do something wrong. It is not my business to be petitioning the Governor or the Legislature any more than it is theirs to petition me; and, if they should not hear my petition, what should I do then? But in this case the State has provided no way: its very Constitution is the evil. This may seem to be harsh and stubborn and unconciliatory; but it is to treat with the utmost kindness and consideration the only spirit that can appreciate or deserves it. So is all change for the better, like birth and death, which convulse the body.

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.\textsuperscript{27}

I meet this American government, or its representative, the State government, directly, and face to face, once a year—no more—in the person of its tax-gatherer; this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it; and it then says distinctly, Recognize me; and the simplest, the most effectual, and, in the present posture of affairs, the indispensablest mode of treating with it on this head, of expressing your little satisfaction with and love for it, is to deny it then. My civil neighbor, the tax-gatherer, is the very man I have to deal with,—for it is, after all, with men and not with parchment that I quarrel,—and he has voluntarily chosen to be an agent of the government. How shall he ever know well what he is and does as an officer of the government, or as a man, until he is obliged to consider whether he shall treat me, his neighbor, for whom he has respect, as a neighbor and well-disposed man, or as a maniac and disturber of the peace, and see if he can get over this obstruction to his neighborliness without a ruder and more impetuous thought or speech corresponding with his action. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name,—if ten honest men only,—aye, if one honest man, in this State of Massachusetts, ceasing to hold slaves, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever. But we love

\textsuperscript{24} Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) escaped excommunication for the dissertation on the solar system only because he was on his deathbed when it was published.

\textsuperscript{25} Martin Luther (1483-1546) was excommunicated by Pope Leo X in 1520.

\textsuperscript{26} Washington and Franklin were, of course, leaders of the American Revolution against British authority. \textsuperscript{27} Cf., “A Man with God is always in the majority”—John Knox (1505-72).
better to talk about it: that we say is our mission. Reform keeps many scores of newspapers in its service, but not one man. If my esteemed neighbor, the State’s ambassador,28 who will devote his days to the settlement of the question of human rights in the Council Chamber, instead of being threatened with the prisons of Carolina, were to sit down the prisoner of Massachusetts, that State which is so anxious to foist the sin of slavery upon her sister,— though at present she can discover only an act of inhospitality to be the ground of a quarrel with her,— the Legislature would not wholly waive the subject the following winter.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place to-day, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less desponding spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, and the Indian29 come to plead the wrongs of his race, should find them; on that separate, but more free and honorable ground, where the State places those who are not with her, but against her,— the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor. If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voices no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy within its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectively he can combat injustice who has experienced a little in his own person. Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible. If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, “But what shall I do?” my answer is, “If you really wish to do anything, resign your office.” When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished. But even suppose blood should flow. Is there not a sort of blood shed when the conscience is wounded? Through this wound a man’s real manhood and immortality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death. I see this blood flowing now.

I have contemplated the imprisonment of the offender, rather than the seizure of his goods,— though both will serve the same purpose,— because they who assert the purest right, and consequently are most dangerous to a corrupt State, commonly have not spent much time in accumulating property. To such the State renders comparatively small service, and a slight tax is wont to appear exorbitant, particularly if they are obliged to earn it by special labor with their hands. If there were one who lived wholly without the use of money,30 the State itself would hesitate to demand it of him. But the rich man,— not to make any invidious comparison,— is always sold to the institution which makes him rich. Absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue; for money comes between a man and his objects, and obtains them for him; and it was certainly no great virtue to obtain it. It puts to rest many questions which he would otherwise be taxed to answer; while the only new question which it puts is the hard but superfluous one, how to spend it. Thus his moral ground is taken from under his feet. The opportunities of living are diminished in proportion as what are called the “means” are increased. The best thing a man can do for his culture when he is rich is to endeavor to carry out those schemes which he entertained when he was poor. Christ answered the Herodians according to their condition. “Show me the tribute-money,” said he;— and one took a penny out of his pocket; — if you use money which has the image of

28. Samuel Hoar (1778-1856), Thoreau’s neighbor and father of his close friend Edward Hoar, was sent to South Carolina by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1844 to protest the arrest of Negro seamen on Massachusetts ships in South Carolina waters. He was forcibly evicted from the state by action of its legislature.

29. Thoreau was one of the few in his day to protest the ruthless treatment of the American Indian.

30. Edward Palmer, one of Thoreau’s contemporaries, renounced the use of money entirely, and tried to pay his living costs with copies of the Herald of Holiness, a little paper he printed on New York’s Bowery.
Caesar on it, and which he has made current and valuable, that is, if you are men of the State, and gladly enjoy the advantages of Caesar’s government, then pay him back some of his own when he demands it; “Render therefore to Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and to God those things which are God’s,”— leaving them no wiser than before as to which was which; for they did not wish to know.

When I converse with the freest of my neighbors, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their regard for the public tranquility, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences to their property and families of disobedience to it. For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax-bill, it will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably, in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property; that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said: “If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame,” No; until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant Southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State, than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergymen whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. “Pay,” it said, “or be locked up in the jail.” I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster; for I was not the State’s schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the Lyceum should not present its tax-bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well as the Church. However, at the request of the selectmen, I condescended to make some such statement as this in writing:— “Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined.” This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made a like demand on me since; though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find a complete list.

32. The word order of this sentence has been slightly changed from that of the Aesthetic Papers version. 33  The Analects. VIII. xiii.
34. In Thoreau’s day, the church taxed each member of its congregation, and the taxes were billed and collected by the town officials. The First Parish Church (Unitarian) of Concord assumed that since Thoreau’s parents attended the church, he himself wished to be considered a member and accordingly had him sent a tax bill in 1840. Because of his protest the bill was never sent again.
35. The Lyceum movement sponsored lecture series in many American towns in the period from 1830 to the Civil War. Thoreau not only lectured frequently from their platform both in Concord and elsewhere, but was for a time curator of the Concord Lyceum.
I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night;\footnote{36} and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone,\footnote{37} two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through, before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and they were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

Thus the State never intentionally confronts a man’s sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law\footnote{38} than I. They force me to become like themselves. I do not hear of men being forced to live this way or that by masses of men. What sort of life were that to live? When I meet a government which says to me, “Your money or your life,” why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do: I cannot help that. It must help itself; do as I do. It is not worth the while to snivel about it. I am not responsible for the successful working of the machinery of society. I am not the son of the engineer. I perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and grow and flourish as best they can, till one, perchance, overshadows and destroys the other. If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man.

The night in prison was novel and interesting enough. The prisoners in their shirt-sleeves were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the doorway, when I entered. But the jailer\footnote{39} said, “Come, boys, it is time to lock up”; and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their steps returning into the hollow apartments. My room-mate was introduced to me by the jailer, as “a first-rate fellow and a clever man.” When the door was locked, he showed me where to hang my hat, and how he managed matters there. The rooms were whitewashed once a month; and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably the neatest apartment in the town. He naturally wanted to know where I came from, and what brought me there; and, when I had told him, I asked him in my turn how he came there, presuming him to be an honest man, of course; and, as the world goes, I believe he was. “Why,” said he, “they accuse me of burning a barn; but I never did it.” As near as I could discover, he had probably gone to bed in a barn when drunk, and smoked his pipe there; and so a barn was burnt. He had the reputation of being a clever man, had been there some three months waiting for his trial\footnote{40} to come on, and would have to wait as much

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{36} It is not certain now just what night Thoreau did spend in the Concord jail, but it was probably either the 23rd or 24th of July, 1846.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{37} The Concord jail was not a small-town lockup, but the Middlesex County Jail, a massive granite structure three stories high.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{38} A favorite phrase with the Transcendentalists, referring to one’s conscience or “the voice of God within.” Thoreau had a chapter by this title in \textit{Walden}.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{39} The local jailer, constable, and tax collector at the time was Sam Staples, a personal friend of Thoreau. In later years Thoreau often hired Staples as an assistant when he did surveying.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{40} Thoreau later learned that his cellmate was acquitted when he came up for trial.
longer; but he was quite domesticated and contented, since he got his board for nothing, and thought that he was well treated.

He occupied one window, and I the other; and I saw, that, if one stayed there long, his principal business would be to look out the window. I had soon read all the tracts that were left there, and examined where former prisoners had broken out, and where a grate had been sawed off, and heard the history of the various occupants of that room; for I found that even here there was a history and a gossip which never circulated beyond the walls of the jail. Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, which are afterward printed in a circular form, but not published. I was shown quite a long list of verses which were composed by some young men who had been detected in an attempt to escape, who avenged themselves by singing them.

I pumped my fellow-prisoner as dry as I could, for fear I should never see him again; but at length he showed me which was my bed, and left me to blow out the lamp.

It was like traveling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town-clock strike before, nor the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating. It was to see my native village in the light of the Middle Ages, and our Concord was turned into a Rhine stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me. They were the voices of oldburghers that I heard in the streets. I was an involuntary spectator and auditor of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village-inn, — a wholly new and rare experience to me. It was a closer view of my native town. I was fairly inside of it. I never had seen its institutions before. This is one of its peculiar institutions; for it is a shire town. I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about.

In the morning, our breakfasts were put through the hole in the door, in small oblong-square tin pans, made to fit, and holding a pint of chocolate, with brown bread, and an iron spoon. When they called for the vessels again, I was green enough to return what bread I had left; but my comrade seized it, and said that I should lay that up for lunch or dinner. Soon after he was let out to work at haying in a neighboring field, whither he went every day, and would not be back till noon; so he bade me good-day, saying that he doubted if he should see me again.

When I came out of prison,— for some one interfered, and paid that tax,— I did not perceive that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth, and emerged a tottering and gray-headed man; and yet a change had to my eyes come over the scene,— the town, and State, and country,— greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends; that their friendship was for summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right; that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices and superstitions, as the Chinenam and Malays are; that, in their sacrifices to humanity, they ran no risks, not even to their property; that, after all, they were not so noble but they treated the thief as he had treated them, and hoped, by a certain outward observance and a few prayers, and by walking in a particular straight though useless path from time to time, to save their souls. This may be to judge my neighbors harshly; for I believe that many of them are not aware that they have such an institution as the jail in their village.

It was formerly the custom in our village, when a poor debtor came out of jail, for his acquaintances to salute him, looking through their fingers, which were crossed to represent

41. The Middlesex Hotel, no longer extant.
42. At that time Concord shared with Cambridge the honor of being county seat of Middlesex County.
43. Although the person who paid Thoreau's tax has never been positively identified, it is generally agreed that it was probably his Aunt Maria Thoreau.
44. "Like summer friends, Flies of estate and sunshine" — George Herbert, The Answer.
45. Thoreau was obviously thinking of the many Biblical references (such as Heb. xii: 13) to a "straight path" through life.
I have never declined paying the highway tax, because I am as desirous of being a good neighbor as I am of being a bad subject; and, as for supporting schools, I am doing my part to educate my fellow-countrypeople now. It is for no particular item in the tax-bill that I refuse to pay it. I simply wish to refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually. I do not care to trace the course of my dollar, if I could, till it buys a man or a musket to shoot one with,— the dollar is innocent,— but I am concerned to trace the effects of my allegiance. In fact, I quietly declare war with the State, after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases.

If others pay the tax which is demanded of me, from a sympathy with the State, they do but what they have already done in their own case, or rather they abet injustice to a greater extent than the State requires. If they pay the tax from a mistaken interest in the individual taxed, to save his property, or prevent his going to jail, it is because they have not considered wisely how far they let their private feelings interfere with the public good.

This, then, is my position at present. But one cannot be too much on his guard in such a case, lest his action be biased by obstinacy, or an undue regard for the opinions of men. Let him see that he does only what belongs to himself and to the hour.

I think sometimes, Why, this people mean well; they are only ignorant; they would do better if they knew how: why give your neighbors this pain to treat you as they are not inclined to? But I think again, this is no reason why I should do as they do, or permit others to suffer much greater pain of a different kind. Again, I sometimes say to myself, When many millions of men, without heat, without ill will, without personal feeling of any kind, demand of you a few shillings only, without the possibility, such is their constitution, of retracting or altering their present demand, and without the possibility, on your side, of appeal to any other millions, why expose yourself to this overwhelming brute force? You do not resist cold and hunger, the winds and the waves, thus obstinately; you quietly submit to a thousand similar necessities. You do not put your head into the fire. But just in proportion as I regard this as not wholly a brute force, but partly a human force, and consider that I have relations to those millions as to so many millions of men, and not of mere brute or inanimate things, I see that appeal is possible, first and instantaneously, from them to the Maker of them, and, secondly, from them to themselves. But, if I put my head deliberately into the fire, there is no appeal to fire or to the Maker of fire, and I have only myself to blame. If I could convince myself that I have any right to be satisfied with men as they are, and to treat them accordingly, and not according, in some respects, to my requisitions and expectations of what they and I ought to be, then, like a good Mussulman and fatalist, I should endeavor to be satisfied with things as they are, and say it is the will of God. And, above all, there is this difference between

46. Young Georgie Bartlett of Concord has said that he thought from the excitement stirred up over Thoreau's jailing he was seeing a Siberian exile or John Bunyan himself. (Walter Harding, The Days of Henry Thoreau, New York: Knopf, 1965, p. 205.)
47. Silvio Pellico (1789-1854), the Italian revolutionary, wrote an autobiography with this title that was popular in the 1840's.
48. I.e., a Mohammedan.
resisting this and a purely brute or natural force, that I can resist this with some effect; but I cannot expect, like Orpheus, to change the nature of the rocks and trees and beasts.

I do not wish to quarrel with any man or nation. I do not wish to split hairs, to make fine distinctions, or set myself up as better than my neighbors. I seek rather, I may say, even an excuse for conforming to the laws of the land. I am but too ready to conform to them. Indeed, I have reason to suspect myself on this head; and each year, as the tax-gatherer comes round, I find myself disposed to review the acts and position of the general and State governments, and the spirit of the people, to discover a pretext for conformity.

“We must affect our country as our parents;
And if at any time we alienate
Our love or industry from doing it honor,
We must respect effects and teach the soul
Matter of conscience and religion,
And not desire of rule or benefit.”

I believe that the State will soon be able to take all my work of this sort out of my hands, and then I shall be no better a patriot than my fellow-countrymen. Seen from a lower point of view, the Constitution, with all its faults, is very good; the law and the courts are very respectable; even this State and this American government are, in many respects, very admirable and rare things, to be thankful for, such as a great many have described them; but seen from a point of view a little higher, they are what I have described them; seen from a higher still and the highest, who shall say what they are, or that they are worth looking at or thinking of at all?

However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. It is not many moments that I live under a government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which is not never for a long time appearing to be to him, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him.

I know that most men think differently from myself; but those whose lives are by profession devoted to the study of these or kindred subjects, content me as little as any. Statesmen and legislators, standing so completely within the institution, never distinctly and nakedly behold it. They speak of moving society, but have no resting-place without it. They may be men of a certain experience and discrimination, and have no doubt invented ingenious and even useful systems, for which we sincerely thank them; but all their wit and usefulness lie within certain not very wide limits. They are wont to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. Webster never goes behind government, and so cannot speak with authority about it. His words are wisdom to those legislators who contemplate no essential reform in the existing government; but for thinkers, and those who legislate for all time, he never once glances at the subject. I know of those whose serene and wise speculations on this theme would soon reveal the limits of his mind’s range and hospitality. Yet, compared with the cheap professions of most reformers, and the still cheaper wisdom and eloquence of politicians in general, his are almost the only sensible and valuable words, and we thank Heaven for him. Comparatively, he is always strong, original, and, above all, practical. Still his 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. His leaders are the men of ’87.

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49. Orpheus, son of the Muse Calliope, according to Greek mythology, played his lyre with such a masterly hand that rivers ceased to flow, beasts forgot their wildness, and even the mountains were moved to listen.

50. George Pele, The Battle of Alcazar (1588-89), II. ii. Thoreau has slightly reworded and modernized the text and, as John T. Onuska, Jr. has pointed out (New York Times Book Review, February 6, 1966, p.47), has wrenched its meaning from its original context. These lines were not included in the Aesthetic Papers version.

51. Daniel Webster (1782-1852), famed Massachusetts senator. I.e., those who framed the American Constitution.
effort,” he says, “and never propose to make an effort; I have never countenanced an effort, and never mean to countenance an effort, to disturb the arrangement as originally made, by which the various States came into the Union.” Still thinking of the sanction which the Constitution gives to slavery, he says, “Because it was a part of the original compact,—let it stand.” Notwithstanding his special acuteness and ability, he is unable to take a fact out of its merely political relations, and behold it as it lies absolutely to be disposed of by the intellect,—what, for instance, it behooves a man to do here in America to-day with regard to slavery, but ventures, or is driven, to make some such desperate answer as the following, while professing to speak absolutely, and as a private man,—from which what new and singular code of social duties might be inferred? “The manner,” says he, “in which the governments of those States where slavery exists are to regulate it, is for their own consideration, under their responsibility to their constituents, to the general laws of propriety, humanity, and justice, and to God. Associations formed elsewhere, springing from a feeling of humanity, or any other cause, have nothing whatever to do with it. They have never received any encouragement from me, and they never will.”

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.

No man with a genius for legislation has appeared in America. They are rare in the history of the world. There are orators, politicians, and eloquent men, by the thousand; but the speaker has not yet opened his mouth to speak, who is capable of settling the much- vexed questions of the day. We love eloquence for its own sake, and not for any truth which it may utter, or any heroism it may inspire. Our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of free-trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation. They have no genius or talent for comparatively humble questions of taxation and finance, commerce and manufactures and agriculture. If we were left solely to the wordy wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and the effectual complaints of the people, America would not long retain her rank among the nations. For eighteen hundred years, though perchance I have no right to say it, the New Testament has been written; yet where is the legislator who has wisdom and practical talent enough to avail himself of the light which it sheds on the science of legislation?

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to,—for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well,—is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of-man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose, if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare

53 Speech on the Texas question, delivered by Webster on December 22, 1845. *Writings, IX*, 57.
54 These extracts have been inserted since the Lecture was read. [Thoreau’s Footnote.]
55 Speech on the bill to exclude slavery from the territories, delivered by Webster on August 12, 1848. *Writings, X*, 38.
56 “Let your loins be girded about.”—Luke xii: 35.
57 Confucius. This sentence was not included in the Aesthetic Papers version.
the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.58

58. Note that this essay, like all of Thoreau’s, ends on an essentially optimistic note.
I

One evening late in July of 1846, probably the 23rd or 24th, Thoreau walked in to Concord village from Walden Pond to pick up a shoe he had left at the cobbler’s shop to be repaired. He was stopped on the street by Sam Staples, the local constable, tax collector, and jailer, and asked to pay his poll tax for the last several years. “I’ll pay your tax, Henry, if you’re hard up,” Staples said. He also offered to try to persuade the selectmen to reduce the tax if Thoreau thought it too high, but Thoreau replied that he had not paid it as a matter of principle and didn’t intend to pay it now. When Staples asked what he should do about it, Thoreau suggested that if he didn’t like it, he could resign his office. But Staples, not taking kindly to that suggestion, replied, “Henry, if you don’t pay, I shall have to lock you up pretty soon.” “As well now as any time, Sam,” was the answer. “Well, come along then,” said Staples, and took him to jail.

Thoreau was not the first to be arrested in Concord for nonpayment of his poll taxes. More than three years before, on January 17, 1843, Staples had arrested Thoreau’s friend, Bronson Alcott, on the same charge. The Massachusetts poll tax (not a voting tax, but a head tax imposed on every male between the ages of twenty and seventy) had long been unpopular, and the Abolitionists seized upon protesting against paying it as a dramatic way of demonstrating their abhorrence of a government that supported slavery. Although Alcott was arrested, he was never jailed, for Squire Hoar, the town’s leading citizen, paid Alcott’s taxes himself rather than permit such a blot on the town escutcheon. And in the succeeding years, despite his pleas for “the privilege of non-payment of taxes,” Alcott’s wife’s family paid his taxes in advance to avoid the embarrassment of having a relative in jail. In December 1843 Alcott’s English friend, Charles Lane, also refused to pay his poll tax in Concord and was arrested. Again Squire Hoar paid the tax, and Lane was quickly released.

The examples of Alcott and Lane set Thoreau to thinking. The agitation against slavery had grown in recent years from the work of a few rare individuals to that of the beginnings of a mass movement. William Lloyd Garrison was beginning to become a household name. Ex-President John Quincy Adams, through his constant barrage of petitions and speeches in the national House of Representatives, was slowly making more and more people aware of the vast gap between the democratic principles the country vocally avowed and the slavery legally practiced in the South. The antislavery movement had by no means attained respectability (ironically it was not to attain that until after the Civil War when the need for its activities no longer existed), and Garrison could still be dragged through the streets of Boston with a noose around his neck. But at least it was causing twinges in the American conscience.

Thoreau himself was made particularly aware of the issues involved by the antislavery activities of the members of his own household—his mother and sisters—by the antislavery periodicals they regularly subscribed to, and by the fact that the antislavery agitators who visited Concord invariably put up for the night in his mother’s boarding house. It is safe to say that there was probably hardly a single prominent New England abolitionist of those times that Thoreau did not meet at least once across his mother’s dining table.

The abolitionists had, in recent years, split, philosophically at least, into two groups. Those led by William Lloyd Garrison were activists. They denounced loudly and vehemently those institutions such as the church, the state, and the press which they felt were the most ardent defenders of the status quo on the slavery question. Feeling their only weapon against these institutions to be mass action, they stressed the development of larger and more aggressive antislavery societies. The other group, which until his recent death had been led by Nathaniel P. Rogers, believed the only possible solution was the reformation of mankind. They feared that Garrison’s plans would lead to the institutionalizing of the antislavery societies themselves and argued that a utopian society could be achieved only through self-reformation of each individual in a society. This kind of a philosophy was inevitably attractive to a Transcendentalist such as Thoreau. He had already endorsed Rogers’ principles in the pages of The Dial. Now that he felt called to action himself, he quite naturally took the individualistic rather than the organizational approach, and adopting the ideas and actions of Lane and Alcott, he refused to pay his own poll tax.
Unfortunately for Thoreau’s principles, Staples for several years simply ignored Thoreau’s tax resistance. Although Staples, like many of the “more practical” townspeople, was pretty skeptical of the “Transcendentalist crowd” (he used to say of Emerson, “I suppose there’s a great many things that Mr. Emerson knows that I couldn’t understand; but I know that there’s a damn sight of things that I know that he don’t know anything about”), he always had a high opinion of Thoreau. Therefore, if Thoreau chose to ignore paying his taxes, Staples chose to ignore his non-payment.

Why Staples suddenly decided to take action in the summer of 1846 is not known for certain. He was about to give up his position as tax collector and so might have been faced with the prospect of paying Thoreau’s taxes himself to clear the books. Or it might have been that the recent declaration of war against Mexico had inflamed a patriotism that demanded the collection of all taxes. At any rate, he gave Thoreau several warnings before finally arresting him and said afterwards that he was not worried about Thoreau’s running off; he knew he could get him when he wanted to.

The Concord jail, now long since torn down, was no small-town lockup. Concord was the shire town of Middlesex County and this was the county jail. It stood just off the Mill Dam, behind the stores, near the present site of the Roman Catholic rectory, and was built of granite, three stories high, sixty-five feet long, thirty-two feet wide, and surrounded with a brick wall about ten feet high, mounted with iron pickets. It had eighteen cells, each twenty-six feet long and eight and a half feet high. Each cell had two double-grated windows. A formidable jail indeed.

The prisoners were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the prison yard when Thoreau and Staples entered. Staples told the men it was time to return to their cells and introduced Thoreau to his cellmate. When the door was locked, he showed Thoreau where to hang his hat and how to manage matters there. After inquiring about Thoreau’s arrest, he explained that he had been accused of burning down a barn and had been waiting three months for his trial—although since he was given free board and room and was permitted to go out and work in the hayfields by the day, he thought he was being well treated and was contented.

Thoreau made the most of what he thought to be a rare opportunity and pumped his cellmate for all he was worth about the history of the jail and its occupants and its gossip, which he realized never circulated outside, but eventually his informant tired of the inquisition and went to bed, leaving Thoreau to blow out the lamp. Thoreau, however, was much too excited to sleep and stood at the window for some time, looking out through the grating and listening to the activities in the nearby hotel. Later in the night a prisoner in a nearby cell began calling out with painful monotony, “What is life? So this is life!” Finally tiring of the repetition, Thoreau put his head to the window bars and called out in a loud voice, “Well, what is life, then?” His only answer was silence and his reward a quiet night’s sleep.

Meanwhile, word of Thoreau’s arrest had rapidly spread through the village. When his mother heard of it, she rushed to the jail to ascertain the truth of the rumor and then back home to tell the family the news. Sam Staples had gone out for a while that evening, and on his return his daughter Ellen informed him that someone had knocked at the door in his absence and, passing in a package, had said, “Here is the money to pay Mr. Thoreau’s tax.” Staples had taken off his boots and was sitting by the fire when his daughter told him, and he declared that he wasn’t going to take the trouble to put them back on. Thoreau could just as well spend the night in jail and be released in the morning.

Just who the person was who knocked on Staples’ door and handed in the package has never been absolutely ascertained. Some have claimed that it was Emerson; others, Aunt Jane Thoreau, Elizabeth Hoar, Rockwood Hoar, or Samuel Hoar. Staples, himself, told so many stories in later years— that it was a man, a young woman, an old woman, two women—that his word, as he readily admitted to one of his inquisitors, was not to be depended on. As a matter of fact, neither he nor his daughter probably ever knew, for tradition has it that the person was heavily veiled. But the preponderance of evidence points to Aunt Maria Thoreau. And Eben J. Loomis, who was an old friend of the Thoreau family, was almost certain in his old age that Aunt Maria had once admitted to him that she was the one.
Probably what happened is that when Thoreau’s mother returned home with the news, Aunt Maria was understandably upset to learn that her nephew was in jail. It seems likely that Thoreau had extracted a promise from his mother not to interfere with his plans. But Aunt Maria was bound by no such promise and so stepped in and paid the tax. And regularly thereafter, possibly even until the time of Thoreau’s death, she or others paid his tax in advance so that the incident could not occur again.

When morning came, the prisoners were fed their breakfast of bread and a pint of chocolate, and Thoreau’s cellmate, leaving for his day’s stint in the hayfields, bade him goodbye, saying that he doubted if he would see Thoreau again. (Later Thoreau was to find out that when his cellmate came to trial, he was found innocent of the charges and released. Apparently he had fallen asleep in the barn while smoking and so had inadvertently burned it down.)

When Staples came to release Thoreau, he was astounded to discover that Thoreau was not willing to leave the jail, the only prisoner he ever had who did not want to leave as soon as he could. In fact, said Staples, Thoreau was “as mad as the devil” at being released. It had been the whole purpose of his refusal to pay taxes to get arrested and so to call dramatically to the attention of his fellow citizens the cause of abolitionism that he had espoused. When Aunt Maria paid his taxes, she had destroyed the whole point of his campaign, and, to put it mildly, he was not pleased. Since he himself had not paid those taxes, he felt he had the right to stay in jail and said so. But Staples said, “Henry, if you will not go of your own accord I shall put you out, for you cannot stay here any longer.” Capitulating, Thoreau finally went on his way, picked up his shoe at the cobbler’s, and within a half an hour was picking huckleberries on a hill two miles off where, as he said rejoicingly, “the State was nowhere to be seen.”

Word of his arrest and release had, of course, spread rapidly throughout the town. Many stared at him, he noticed, as though he had been on a long journey. And little Georgie Bartlett said that he thought from the excitement he was seeing a Siberian exile or John Bunyan himself. Many of his townsmen of course did not agree with or approve of Thoreau’s action. James Garty, who readily admitted that Thoreau “was a good sort of man” and “would pay every cent he owed to any man,” complained at the time that “it wouldn’t do to have everybody like him, or his way of thinking.” Emerson complained to Bronson Alcott that Thoreau’s action was “mean and skulking, and in bad taste”; but Alcott, in reply, defended it as a good example of “dignified noncompliance with the injunction of civil powers.” Emerson then sputtered in his journal: “The State is a poor, good beast who means the best: it means friendly. A poor cow who does well by you,—do not grudge it its hay... As long as the state means you well, do not refuse your pistareen. You have a tottering cause: ninety parts of the pistareen it will spend for what you think also good: ten parts for mischief... In the particular, it is worth considering that refusing payment of the state tax does not reach the evil so nearly as many other methods within your reach... The prison is one step to suicide.” And when Emerson next met Thoreau, he asked him why he had gone to jail, only to have Thoreau aptly reply, “Why did you not?” Emerson, on further thought, finally admitted in his journal that Thoreau’s position was at least stronger than the Abolitionists who denounce the war and yet pay the tax.

As for Sam Staples, his relations with Thoreau continued as amiable as ever. There is a legend that Alcott once, when pestered by Staples for his taxes, picked all the potato bugs off his own vines and dumped them into Staples’ garden in retaliation. But Thoreau carried no such grudge. In later years he often hired Staples as his assistant when he was surveying. And Staples, in his turn, often boasted that Thoreau was his most distinguished prisoner.

So many of Thoreau’s townsmen expressed a curiosity about his actions and wanted to know the rationale for his trying to go to jail that Thoreau finally wrote out an explanation and delivered it as a lecture on “the relation of the individual to the State” at the Concord Lyceum on January 26, 1848. He found an attentive audience, and Alcott, at least, “took great pleasure” in the lecture. Three weeks later, by request, he gave the same lecture again so others of his townsmen could hear.

In the spring of 1849 Elizabeth Peabody suddenly wrote to ask Thoreau for permission to publish that lecture. She was establishing a new periodical to be called Aesthetic Papers to carry
along the Transcendentalist message where The Dial had dropped it, and wanted to include his lecture in the first (and what later turned out to be the only) issue. Thoreau at the moment was busy correcting proofs of his first book and replied that he hardly had time left for bodily exercise, let alone copying out an old lecture. Nonetheless he promised to send the manuscript along within a week, but he cautioned her that it was offered for use in her first volume only. He had had enough of delaying actions on the part of editors.

Miss Peabody, however, kept her word. Six weeks later, on May 14, 1849, she published her magazine containing pieces by Emerson and Hawthorne along with Thoreau’s essay, now entitled “Resistance to Civil Government.” (It did not receive its more widely known title of “Civil Disobedience” until it was collected into his Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers in 1866, four years after his death.)

At the time of its publication, however, the essay produced scarcely a ripple. Although Aesthetic Papers was noticed here and there, the reviewers generally ignored Thoreau’s contribution. They were more interested in the essays by the better known Emerson and Hawthorne in the same issue. The one exception was a review by Sophia Dobson Collet in the People’s Review in London, England. She quoted several of the meatiest paragraphs and prefaced them with the comment that “as it is not likely to be much known in England, we give the following extracts, premising that it ought to be read as a whole to be thoroughly appreciated.” But except for Miss Collet’s comment the essay was ignored.
II

The central points of Thoreau’s essay are these:

1. There is a “higher law” than the law of one’s land. That is the law of the conscience, the “inner voice,” the “oversoul”—call it what you will.

2. On those rare occasions when this “higher law” and the law of the land come in conflict, it is one’s duty to obey that “higher law” and deliberately violate the law of the land.

3. If one deliberately violates the law of the land, he must be willing to take the full consequences of that action, even to the point of going to jail.

4. However, going to jail is not necessarily the negative act it might seem, for it will serve to draw the attention of men of good will to the evil law and thus help to bring about its repeal. Or, if enough men go to jail, their acts will serve to clog the machinery of the state and thus make the evil law unenforceable.

These theories are not original with Thoreau. Socrates in drinking the cup of hemlock and Antigone in sprinkling dust on the body of Polyneices were both committing acts of civil disobedience. Boethius many centuries ago expounded the philosophy in western culture and Mencius in eastern. But the important fact is that it was Thoreau who popularized the idea, though it was half a century after the essay appeared in print before anyone paid any serious attention to it.

About 1900 the Russian novelist and philosopher Count Leo Tolstoy somewhere, somehow, ran across the essay and was struck with its implications concerning his own attempts to better the conditions of the Russian serfs under Czarist domination. But so far as I have been able to find out, the only direct action he ever took with Thoreau’s ideas was to write a letter to the North American Review asking the American people why they did not pay more attention to the voice of Thoreau than to that of their financial and industrial millionaires and their successful generals and admirals.

True credit for the rediscovery of Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” should go to a young Hindu law student by the name of Mohandas K. Gandhi who was studying at Oxford University in England about 1900. Gandhi, because of his religion, was a vegetarian. Having difficulty finding food proper to his diet on the university campus, he quite naturally got in touch with some of the English vegetarians—one Henry Stephens Salt in particular. Salt was, by chance, the author of an excellent biography of Thoreau and the editor of several collections of Thoreau’s works. Gandhi caught some of Salt’s enthusiasm for Thoreau and began to read whatever of his works he could lay hold of. After his graduation from Oxford, Gandhi established himself as a lawyer in South Africa, devoting himself primarily to the defense of violators of the discriminatory laws passed against the members of his own race. To unite the Indian residents of South Africa he established a newspaper entitled Indian Opinion. And therein, in the issue of October 26, 1907, he printed Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience,” later reprinting it in pamphlet form for wider distribution. He accompanied the essay with editorials advocating the use of civil disobedience against the offensive legislation. He offered prizes for student essays on the most effective methods of passive resistance. And he led direct action against the laws, deliberately violating them to bring about mass arrest. Progress was at first slow, but the movement gradually gained momentum, and eventually the government was forced to choose between enforcing the laws and glutting the jails with hundreds and even thousands of violators. The laws were one by one repealed or became dead letters. Civil disobedience had triumphed.

Word of the effectiveness of Gandhi’s Thoreauvian methods soon spread to his native land, where a movement to free the country from British domination was getting under way. Gandhi, at the strong request of his native countrymen, returned to India to lead the movement. For thirty years he conducted civil disobedience campaigns the length and breadth of the country. When the British government, wishing to establish a lucrative monopoly, forbade the manufacture of salt, Gandhi led followers to the seashore, there to symbolically violate the law by producing salt through sea-water evaporation a cupful at a time. As he fully expected, he was immediately arrested and jailed. But the government found it had not solved its problem. In the eyes of his countrymen
Gandhi had become a martyr to their own cause, and they rushed forward by the hundreds and thousands to join his movement and to duplicate his violation of the law. In prison Gandhi went on a hunger strike protesting what he considered his illegal arrest. As he sank lower and lower, more and more sympathy was aroused for him, not only in India but around the world. Rather than risk having him die on their hands, the government freed him. As soon as he was physically able, he violated the salt law once again and was once again put into prison. It was a cat-and-mouse game, but eventually public opinion forced the government to abandon the law. Gandhi then turned his attention to other unjust laws. The action and the reaction were repeated again and again. To make a long story short, India under Gandhi’s leadership and using Thoreau’s techniques of civil disobedience eventually won complete freedom in 1945.

Gandhi directed his techniques not only against unjust governmental laws but also against equally unjust religious codes. The social structure of Hinduism was based upon a caste system. The lowest group, but the largest numerically, was the so-called Untouchables. Over and over again they found the religious codes turned against them. Let us take a single striking example. The only source of water for many Indian villages was a single well. Since the upper-caste Hindus used the well, the lower caste Untouchables were forbidden to go near it. They were forced to resort to the open streams and pools. Because of the vast overpopulation of India, all of these sources of water were badly polluted. The Untouchables quite understandably died off like the proverbial flies. When Gandhi found that pleas as to the inhumanity of the religious codes went unheeded, he led the Untouchables to the wells and joined them in filling jars of water. Civil police were called in to enforce the religious laws, and the violators were at first attacked unmercifully. When local police, sickened by the violence used on the passive resisters, refused to enforce the laws, special military police recruited from a notoriously bloodthirsty tribe on the Himalayan border were brought in. But they too eventually found their sympathies won by the martyrdom of the Untouchables and refused to continue their violence. The laws became unenforceable and the Untouchables won their right to use the village wells. Once again Gandhi’s Thoreauvian civil disobedience had won.

Some years ago Roger Baldwin, then the director of the American Civil Liberties Union, told me that he once took a long train journey with Gandhi. When Gandhi learned that Mr. Baldwin had been born and brought up in Massachusetts near Thoreau’s Concord, he plied him with questions about Thoreau’s life and showed him that he was carrying a copy of “Civil Disobedience” in his luggage. He said he never went anywhere— not even to jail— without a copy of the pamphlet because it epitomized the whole spirit of his life.

But we need not confine ourselves to India. “Civil Disobedience” has had a world-wide influence. Let us turn to Denmark for another example. Henry David Thoreau is virtually a folk-hero in Denmark today. Why? Because “Civil Disobedience” was used as a manual of arms by the resistance movement against the Nazi invasion during World War II. It was circulated surreptitiously throughout the war years among the Danes as a means of encouraging them to further acts of resistance. What was the result? Well, let me give a few examples. When the Nazis invoked a law requiring all Jews to wear a large six-pointed yellow star on the back of each article of clothing— the obvious purpose being to single out the Jews for further persecution— virtually every citizen in Denmark, Jew or Gentile, including even King Christian, appeared in the streets wearing the yellow star. The law was thus nullified.

When the King took part in numerous such actions, the Nazis felt obliged to retaliate. But they did not dare to execute or even to arrest the King. They took what they thought was the easiest way out by confining the King to his palace and announcing simply that he was ill. But the Danish people quickly caught on, and citizens from all over the country decided to “say it with flowers.” Going to their local florists, they ordered bouquets to be sent to the King— what could seemingly be more harmless? But what was the result? Every road leading into Copenhagen, the capital city, and every street within the city was soon blocked with florists delivering flowers to the King. Traffic could not move. Business could not be conducted. The entire city came to a standstill. Yet people obviously could not be punished for sending flowers. The Nazis were forced to announce that the King had suddenly miraculously recovered and to give him complete freedom of his country for the rest of the years of the invasion. These are only two of many examples of the
influence of Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” in Denmark, but they give some idea of why the Nazis thought the Danes to be the most recalcitrant of all their subjects during the war.

But now let us return to the United States. Has “Civil Disobedience” had any influence here? First you may be surprised to learn of the amount of official resistance there has been to the essay in this our democratic country. Upton Sinclair, the novelist; Norman Thomas, the perennial candidate of the Socialist Party; and Emma Goldman, the anarchist editor of *Mother Earth*, have each been arrested for reading Thoreau’s essay from the public platform—Sinclair during a labor strike in California in the early 1930’s; Thomas during a protest against the machine rule of Frank (“I am the law”) Hague of Jersey City in the late 1930’s; and Emma Goldman during protest rallies against the conscription act of 1917. Or again, in the 1930’s, the entire edition of one issue of *Heresia*, an Italian-language newspaper in New York City, was confiscated and destroyed by the New York City police because it included a translation of “Civil Disobedience”—this despite the fact that at that very time anyone could go into any bookstore in New York City and purchase an edition of “Civil Disobedience” in English without the least difficulty. To cite still another example of official resistance, when, in the mid-1950’s, the United States Information Service included as a standard book in all their libraries around the world a textbook of American literature which reprinted Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience,” the late Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin succeeded in having that book removed from the shelves of each of those libraries—specifically because of the Thoreau essay.

But despite the occasional official opposition—and I in all fairness must stress that the opposition has only been very, very occasional—“Civil Disobedience” has had a continuing influence in this country. I have never been able to discover a direct connection between Thoreau’s essay and the famous sit-down strikes led by the C.I.O. during the depression years, but certainly it would be difficult to discover any more practical application of the ideas that Thoreau advocated than those were.

For many years the pacifist movement in this country (and incidentally in England, France, and South America, too), although very small and comparatively uninfluential, has stimulated the publication and distribution of Thoreau’s essay. I have in my files numerous editions of “Civil Disobedience” printed by such groups. Many of the conscientious objectors who were imprisoned during World War II quoted Thoreau’s essay in defense of their actions. And I know of at least one who took a copy of “Civil Disobedience” to prison with him.

I understand that there is a small group of pacifists who even now each year file a copy of “Civil Disobedience” in lieu of an income tax report, implying by the action that they refuse to underwrite our military budget. I might add that I understand in such cases the Federal Income Tax Bureau, acting as did Thoreau’s Aunt Maria, steps in and pays the tax—but with the significant difference that the Income Tax Bureau then confiscates that sum out of the individual’s bank account or salary. But the objectors feel that at least the protest has been made. A few years ago when a number of pacifists were protesting the construction of nuclear submarines at New London, Connecticut, they conducted their protest in a rowboat named “Henry D. Thoreau.”

A more striking example of Thoreau’s influence in our country today however is that of the anti-segregation movement throughout the South. The refusal of Negroes to ride segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama; the boycotting by Negroes of segregated stores in Albany, Georgia; the kneel-ins of Negroes in the white churches of Nashville, Tennessee; the “Freedom” riders in Alabama and Mississippi—each and every one of these is a very specific example of the influence of Thoreau. And let me cite as proof of that, the words of two of the outstanding leaders of the movement. First, the Rev. James Robinson, former pastor of the Church of the Master in Harlem, now director of “Operation Crossroads” (the International Voluntary Work Camps) for the United States in Africa, and one of the most influential Negroes in this country, said in an article on “Civil Disobedience” twenty years ago, that was addressed to the group who later founded CORE (the Committee on Racial Equality):

Thoreau’s Civil Disobedience was not used much by the Abolitionists for whom it was written; probably no one before Gandhi realized its significance for a new type of social movement based
upon group discipline and personal conscience. As one reads this essay, it is impossible not to notice that almost every sentence is loaded with meaning for us today… Substitute the economic, political, and social persecution of American Negroes today where Thoreau condemns Negro slavery— and you will scarcely find half a dozen sentences in the entire essay which you cannot apply to your own actions in the present crisis.

I have no doubt but his article led in part at least to the establishment of CORE.

And second, Rev. Martin Luther King, who is universally recognized as the leader of the current struggles for human rights in the South today, tells us in his autobiography, *Stride Toward Freedom*:

When I went to Atlanta’s Morehouse College as a freshman in 1944 my concern for racial and economic justice was already substantial. During my student days at Morehouse I read Thoreau’s “Essay on Civil Disobedience” for the first time. Fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system, I was so deeply moved that I reread the work several times. This was my first intellectual contact with the theory of nonviolent resistance.

And then, speaking of the boycott he organized against segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama, he says:

At this point I began to think about Thoreau’s “Essay on Civil Disobedience.” I remembered how, as a college student, I had been moved when I first read this work. I became convinced that what we were preparing to do in Montgomery was related to what Thoreau had expressed. We were simply saying to the white community, “We can no longer lend our cooperation to an evil system.”

Something began to say to me, “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetuate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.” When oppressed people willingly accept their oppression they only serve to give the oppressor a convenient justification for his acts. Often the oppressor goes along unaware of the evil involved in his oppression so long as the oppressed accepts it. So in order to be true to one’s conscience and true to God, a righteous man has no alternative but to refuse to cooperate with an evil system. This I felt was the nature of our action. From this moment on I conceived of our movement as an act of massive non-cooperation.

Unquestionably, then, Thoreau’s century-old essay has had and is having a powerful influence on the fight for Negro rights in our country today… an influence as profound as it had in South Africa fifty years ago or India of thirty years ago or Denmark of twenty years ago. Its influence has traveled around the world and now has returned home.

No stronger evidence is needed that the civil disobedience that Thoreau advocated has become a part of the American way of life than the opposition to the war in Vietnam. The widespread appearance of protesters from the college campus to the New York Stock Exchange, along the major avenues of cities and at major industrial and military sites, at the White House and the Pentagon— as well as the public burning of draft cards by young men— all attest to the fact that, though it took a century, the American people have become aware of the usefulness and validity of Thoreau’s theory.
A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” exists in two slightly differing versions—that entitled “Resistance to Civil Government,” which was first published in Elizabeth Peabody’s *Aesthetic Papers* in the spring of 1849; and that entitled “Civil Disobedience,” which was first published in his *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1866), four years after his death. Except for numerous (but trivial) differences in capitalization and punctuation—which were probably editorial rather than authorial changes—they vary only in a few sentences. I have chosen the 1866 version as my text on the assumption that it was based on a corrected copy made by Thoreau, but I have indicated in my annotations all additions and deletions of words from the 1849 text.

I am grateful to Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., for permission to include in my introduction excerpts from my biography *The Days of Henry Thoreau* (New York, 1965) and to J. Golden Taylor and the Utah State University Press for permission to include excerpts from my “The Influence of Civil Disobedience” published in Professor Taylor’s *The Western Thoreau Centenary* (Utah State University Press Monograph Series, X, 1963).
Letter from Birmingham Jail: Analysis

On April 12, 1963 King was arrested for breaking an Alabama injunction against demonstrations in Birmingham. He was placed in solitary confinement and on April 16th he read a letter from Alabama clergymen published in the New York Times in which they criticized King and the Birmingham Movement for inciting civil disturbances. King wrote his response along the margin of the paper.

Directions: Be an active reader looking for examples of rhetoric (ethos, logos, pathos), devices (anaphora, antithesis, hypophora, parallelism, procatalepsis) and literary elements (metaphor/simile, alliteration, allusion) in the margin.

Group 1

16 April 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea.
Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

**Group 2**

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants--for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained.

As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the byproduct of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoral election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct action program could be delayed no longer.
Group 3

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

Group 4

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter.
Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his
terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

**Group 5**

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.

Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country
where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

Group 6

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber.

I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two
thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

**Group 7**

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle.

If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies--a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and
the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides - and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist.
Lesson: Curating a Museum Exhibit

Objective: Students will explore and share what they have taken away from the transcendental unit.

Essential Question: What changes would you make to improve American society? Why is it important to pay attention to the present moment? What transcendentalist ideas are still relevant today? What can nature teach us? What does it mean to live deliberately? Where can you find the true nature of things?

Situation: Your college professor has selected you and four other top students in your class to help curate a museum exhibit about transcendentalism and the transcendentalists.

Task/Procedure: This is the final culminating activity for this unit. We have “sucked deeply” from the well of the transcendentalists. It is now time for you to show what you learned, what you understand, what you found worthy, and what you found superfluous. As a team, you will create a museum exhibit that has 5 sections. It is up to your team how you create the 5 sections. You can decide if everyone will work on each section or if each person will be responsible for only one section. You have to decide before you begin and will be graded accordingly. Your exhibit will be a combo of pictures, artifacts, quotes, and your own writing. The more pictures you take on our class trip the more you will have to work with.

Product: A museum exhibit that explores transcendentalism and the transcendentalists.

Materials: Everything from this unit.

Assessment: The exhibit. Group work & individual work. See rubric.
### Curating a Transcendental Museum Exhibit Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D or Lower</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pictures/Artifacts Quotes</strong></td>
<td>Chosen pictures and artifacts show skill, creativity, and insight. Chosen quotes show skill, creativity, and insight.</td>
<td>Pictures and artifacts are chosen with skill and creativity. Chosen quotes show skill and insight.</td>
<td>Pictures and artifacts are chosen with skill. Chosen quotes show skill.</td>
<td>Pictures and artifacts are randomly chosen. Quotes missing or randomly chosen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categories</strong></td>
<td>Categories are creative, insightful, and enhance the viewers understanding of the exhibit.</td>
<td>Categories are skillful and help the viewers understand the exhibit.</td>
<td>Categories make sense and do not hinder the viewers understanding the exhibit.</td>
<td>Categories are random and do hinder the viewers understanding the exhibit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Writing reveals a deep understanding of transcendentalism and the transcendentalists. Written with creativity, clarity, and conciseness.</td>
<td>Writing reveals a clear understanding of transcendentalism and the transcendentalists. Written with clarity and conciseness.</td>
<td>Writing reveals a basic understanding of transcendentalism and the transcendentalists. Written with clarity.</td>
<td>Writing reveals a confused understanding of transcendentalism and the transcendentalists. Written haphazardly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information</strong></td>
<td>All information is accurate. Information is wide ranging, relevant and interesting.</td>
<td>A few minor discrepancies. Information is specific, relevant and interesting.</td>
<td>A number of mistakes that should have been avoided. Information is specific &amp; relevant.</td>
<td>Much of the information is inaccurate. Information is a bit random.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Virtually no errors</td>
<td>No careless errors</td>
<td>Has errors but which do not interfere with communication</td>
<td>Multiple errors or patterns of errors that tend to distract the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Footnotes</strong></td>
<td>All items and quotes are correctly footnoted.</td>
<td>Most items and quotes are correctly footnoted.</td>
<td>A few items and quotes are correctly footnoted.</td>
<td>Footnotes largely missing or inaccurate.</td>
</tr>
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