

Perceptions of American Dreams and How or If We Live Them



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American Literature – Honors
Grade 11
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Unit Plan Cover Page

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Unit Title: Perceptions of American Dreams and How or If We Live Them

Abstract: The honors American Literature course is organized thematically around four visions of the American Dream: Exceptionalism, Prosperity, Equality, and Self-Determination and the Essential Question for each vision: How do American authors extol and/or question the American Dream of _____. Because these visions are related and overlap, the distinction affords a convenient method of text organization and is not intended to be a rigid divide among these ideas. Transcendentalist ideas and texts weave through the last three units, providing both support and criticism of these dreams. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau’s writings (excerpts from *Nature* and “Self-Reliance,” chapters of *Walden*, and “Civil Disobedience”) will help to attune students to their own views of country and their place in it.

The readings and lessons will take place throughout the year and are connected under the big idea of the individual’s relationship to self and country. Individual lessons will focus on developing reverence for place, being present/simplifying, , examining views about race and potential for change in our society, and personal responsibility. Assignments will range from formative journaling assignments to a culminating personal essay.

Duration: seven lessons spread throughout the year

List of Reading Materials in order of Lessons:

PAL: Perspectives in American Literature – A Research and Reference Guide. Chapter 4: American Transcendentalism: A Brief Introduction,” “Key Concepts,” “Reasons for the Rise of American Transcendentalism,” and “Transcendental Legacy” by Paul P. Reuben. URL: <http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap4/4intro.html>. June 15, 2011. (included in this packet.

“What is Transcendentalism” from *A Teacher’s Guide to Transcendentalism* by Michael F. Crim , Leonardtown High School, Leonardtown, MD. (included in this packet)

Prentice Hall Literature: The American Experience, Volume 1. Harvey Daniels, et al. New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2012. Print.

- Excerpt from Emerson’s *Nature* — page 366-368
- Henry David Thoreau’s biographical notes, p. 377
- Ralph Waldo Emerson biographical notes, p. 365

Selected chapters from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau: "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," "House-Warming," "The Pond in Winter," "Ponds," "Spring," "Solitude," "Sounds," "The Bean Field"

"Black Folks Can't Breathe" by Jason Whitlock, Dec. 8, 2014. (ESPN.com)
<http://espn.go.com/espn/print?id=11984741&type=story> (included in this packet)

From *Responding to Literature, American Literature* by Julie West Johnson, Boston: McDougal Littell/Houghton Mifflin, 1992. Print.

- Excerpt from "Civil Disobedience" pages 190-194.
- Excerpt from "Self-Reliance," pages 185-188

Montagne, Renee. "James Geary Captures "The World in a Phrase." November 1, 2005. WCRB, National Public Radio.
<http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=4983562&m=4983565>. Radio Broadcast.

List of Materials Needed:

- SMART board for projecting prompts, taking class notes, etc.
- Chart paper, markers

Lesson plan 1 - Abstract:

After having read Walt Whitman's "Preface to *Leaves of Grass*" and his poem "Pioneers, O Pioneers," which begin the unit of the American Dream of Prosperity, students will be introduced to concepts of Transcendentalism by reading a biography of Ralph Waldo Emerson, a selection on the key beliefs of Transcendentalists by Michael Crim and Paul Reuben, and an excerpt from *Nature*.

Essential Question: How do American writers extol/question the American Dream of Prosperity?

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify key tenets of Transcendentalism.
- Students will be able to contrast these beliefs with their American forbearers, the Puritans.
- Students will be able to describe how the Transcendentalists view the relationship between humans and Nature and then extrapolate about likely views of American Prosperity (the land is a resource to be used for the advancement and happiness of the American people).

Massachusetts DESE State Standards: Reading Informational Texts, 11-12

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Lesson Plan Activities (60-minutes):

Note: Students will have read the “What is Transcendentalism?” article, Key Beliefs and Legacy, Emerson’s biography and the excerpt from *Nature* for homework. They will also have answered the questions on the accompanying handout for *Nature*

- Do now: list as many tenets of Transcendentalism as you can without looking at the text. Star those beliefs that confuse you. (5 minutes)
- Students share their lists – create a notebook on the SMART board, making note of confusing concepts. (5 minutes)
- Typically, students have trouble with the idea of the Over-Soul or Universal Being.
- Explain that before souls come to earth, they are all dipped into a “God-vat,” retaining the drop of divinity within them. We are all divine. Through that universal dipping in the “God vat,” we are all connected. Carl Jung would later call a version of this connection, the Collective Unconscious. Questions and Answers (5 minutes)
- Tell class that now that they understand the basics of Transcendentalism, we will take a few minutes to discuss the life of the man who introduced these ideas to America, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Take out bio. Ask students to pair up and discuss events in Emerson’s life that might have led him to this belief system. Pairs share to whole class. They should list his early ministry and resignation from the church, his belief in the innate goodness of people, his first wife’s death, his realization that the same divine spirit connects people and nature, his rejection of the concept of Nature as a machine. (10 minutes)
- Ask a student to read the excerpt from *Nature*, pg. 366 in Prentice Hall textbook. Class closes eyes and listens. Class takes out questions they answered from the night before (5 minutes).
- Discussion of questions; clarify any misunderstandings. (25 minutes)
- Exit ticket: Compare Transcendentalist beliefs about human nature to those espoused by the Puritans (studied in previous unit). (5 minutes)

"We are limited without, but unlimited within."

What is Transcendentalism?

Transcendentalism is an extremely important element in our American culture. Some of the greatest intellects and writers that America has produced have been Transcendentalists, and their ideas and writings have had a profound influence on the way Americans look at themselves and the world around them. While the roots of Transcendentalism reach all the way back to the Ancient World and stretch from Europe to India, in both its expression and application it is very American.

Transcendentalism holds that the world we perceive with our senses is not all of existence and reality. There is a *transcendent* reality that lies beyond sensual experience. It is in this transcendent reality that the Truth about humanity's place in the universe, humanity's relationship with God, and the nature of God can be revealed. According to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, anything that is transcendent lies outside human experience. If that is the case, how can we connect with transcendent reality and find the Truth?

The Transcendentalists had an answer. They maintained that each individual had an innate ability to transcend, or go beyond, ordinary sensory experience. They called this ability *intuition*. Conscience and morality were also present at birth. The Transcendentalists claimed that everyone experiences intuitive insights, but they are mostly unrecognized or disregarded. The person seeking a deeper understanding of his or her existence should be open to these *transcendental experiences*, and while these experiences cannot be precipitated, they can be anticipated. One way to experience an intuitive insight is to clear the mind of all the petty details of everyday life and concentrate on the significant and the important. One of the best ways to do this is by returning to God's direct creation: Nature. The transcendentalists felt that contemplation and study of Nature would cleanse the individual of the accoutrements of the man-made and enable the person's intuition to make its connection with transcendent reality.

The Transcendentalists believed that God was the Universal Being, or Over-Soul, present throughout Nature and in each individual human being. They maintained that each human being had a "spark of the divine" within, and that all people were connected to each other and Nature through the Over-Soul. As a result, Transcendentalists asserted that each individual was not only equal in the eyes of God, but should also be so in the eyes of humankind; further, each individual was important and had the potential for greatness. It is easy to see how they could readily conclude that slavery was therefore evil, women should not be subservient to men, all forms of labor were dignified and all workers should be treated with dignity, that education was a necessity, and that Nature had to be preserved and cherished.

Philosophical Background

American Transcendentalism is generally agreed to date from the 1836 publication of Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Nature*, in which he wrote, "The noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it....Three problems are put by nature to the mind; *What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto?*" (R. W. Emerson, *Essays and Lectures*, The Library of America, page 40) Transcendentalism, then, attempts to define the nature of existence, the nature of God, and the nature of man's relationship with God.

Basic Tenets of American Transcendentalism

Note : This list must not be considered to be a creed common to all transcendentalists. It is merely a grouping of certain important concepts shared by many of them.

1. Transcendentalism, essentially, is a form of idealism.
2. The transcendentalist "transcends" or rises above the lower animalistic impulses of life (animal drives) and moves from the rational to a spiritual realm.
3. The human soul is part of the Oversoul or universal spirit to which it and other souls return at death.
4. Therefore, every individual is to be respected because everyone has a portion of that Oversoul (God).
5. This Oversoul or Life Force or God can be found everywhere - travel to holy places is, therefore, not necessary
6. Power of the Individual
7. We must rely on intuition, which has the ability to perceive beyond the realm of our senses.
8. Nature reflects spiritual truth.
9. Self-reliance
10. Live in the now. Be awake.
11. Simply; simplify
12. Resist unjust laws.
13. The world is a school. We learn by experience.
14. Nonconformity

Reasons for the Rise of Transcendentalism

There was no *one* precise "cause" for the beginning of Transcendentalism. According to Paul Boller, chance, coincidence and several independent events, thoughts and tendencies seemed to have converged in the 1830s in New England. Some of these were:

1. The steady erosion of Calvinism.
2. The progressive secularization of modern thought under the impact of science and technology.
3. The emergence of a Unitarian intelligentsia with the means, leisure, and training to pursue literature and scholarship.
4. The increasing insipidity and irrelevance of liberal religion to questing young minds - lack of involvement in women's rights and abolitionism.
5. The intrusion of the machine into the New England garden and the disruption of the old order by the burgeoning industrialism.
6. The impact of European ideas on Americans traveling abroad.
7. The appearance of talented and energetic young people like Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau on the scene.
8. The imperatives of logic itself for those who take ideas seriously - the impossibility, for instance, of accepting modern science without revising traditional religious views.

Transcendental Legacy

1. Professed post-Civil war Transcendentalist: Samuel Johnson, John Weiss, Samuel Longfellow, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, David A. Wasson, Moncure Conway, and Octavius B. Frothingham.

2. The influence on contemporary writers: Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, and Dickinson.
3. The Concord School of Philosophy founded by A. Bronson Alcott and William T. Harris in 1879.
4. The Movements: Mind Cure through Positive Thinking - Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy) and New Thought (Warren F. Evans).
5. William James and his ideas on the "subconscious."
6. The influence on Mahatma Gandhi, Rev. M. L. King, Jr. and others who protested using civil disobedience.
7. The influence on the "beat" generation of the 1950s and the "young radicals" of the '60s and '70s who practised dissent, anti-materialism, anti-war, and anti-work ethic sentiments.
8. The influence on Modernist writers like: Frost, Stevens, O'Neill, Ginsberg.
9. The popularity of Transcendental Meditation, Black Power, Feminism, and sexual freedoms.

Reuben, Paul, p. "Chapter 4: American Transcendentalism: A Brief Introduction.
PAL: Perspectives in American Literature - A Research and Reference Guide.
<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap4/4intro.html>. June 15, 2011

Nature questions to prepare for class discussion:

1. What genre is this excerpt from *Nature*? Justify your answer below.
2. How are fear and gladness comparable?
3. Why does Emerson think the state of childhood is desirable?
4. Why does Emerson invest the woods with such power?
5. How might distancing from other humans be beneficial? Do you think that contradicts the concept of the Over-Soul? If so why?
6. Which tenets of Transcendentalism can you identify? In what lines?

Lesson Plan #2 Abstract:

Students will examine, analyze and discuss the contemporaneous cartoon “Transparent Eyeball” in order to deepen their understanding of Emerson’s relationship to nature. After this discussion, students will be introduced to writing about their own views of nature through writing about a chosen place in each of the four seasons.

Essential Question: How do American writers extol/question the American Dream of Prosperity?

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain the correlation between the cartoon and the values articulated in *Nature*.
- Students will examine their own relationship with nature by choosing a place to visit that they will journal about throughout the year.
- Students will write reflective journals that describe a sense of place as well as their personalities.

Massachusetts DESE State Standards:**Reading Informational Texts, 11-12**

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Writing Standards, 11-12

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Lesson Plan #2 Activities (55 minutes):

- Project the cartoon Transparent eyeball
- Do now: analyze the cartoon. What does it mean to you? What values does it convey? (5 minutes).
- Discussion of student analysis (they will notice the lack of torso, direction of gaze, distance from town, length of legs, hat, bare feet, etc.) (15 minutes)
- Question: What commentary does this cartoon make on *Nature*? Does this artist respect and/or critique Emerson’s views? (5 minutes)
- Think, Pair, Share: How does the Transcendentalist view of nature connect to the American Dream of prosperity? (5 minutes)
- Pairs share and class discusses. How should nature be “used?” What views have been articulated so far this year? (Winthrop, Whitman, Emerson...) (15 minutes)
- Tell students it is now time for them to explore their own relationship with Nature, remembering that the sensory experience of it is only the beginning, that perception is a springboard to understanding their true natures.

- Remind students that Emerson wrote, “Nature always wears the colors of the spirit” from *Nature*.
- Define sense of place: location, locale (actual setting – what is there), and sense of place (emotional attachment) (Resor: “Place-Based Education” p. 186). (5 minutes)
- Pass out “Four-Season Journal” assignment. Review requirements and rubric (5 minutes)
- HW: Read Thoreau’s biography and “Where I Lived and What I Lived For” from *Walden*. Annotate and be ready to discuss how Thoreau’s nature observations lead to personal reflection. Provide specific quotes and page numbers. Consider possible locations for Four-Season Journal.

The Transparent Eyeball by Christopher Cranch



Cranch, Christopher. “Emerson as a Transparent Eyeball. *Emerson at Middlebury*. July 27, 2015. “<http://middigital.middlebury.edu/emerson/works/cartoon.htm>. Web.

The Transparent Eyeball

Observations about cartoon	Support and/or critique of <i>Nature</i>
What Transcendentalist views are depicted?	How do these views about nature support or contradict views about how nature should be used as articulated by Winthrop and Whitman?

Annotating Chapters from *Walden*

As you learned from reading Henry David Thoreau's biography, Henry built a simple one-room house in the woods at Walden Pond to use as a quiet place to write and to reflect. As you read this chapter from *Walden*, notice how smoothly the descriptions of his environment lead to observations about life. **Make note of at least five examples of descriptions that lead to observations, providing an analysis of importance. Be sure to take down the page numbers.** Have ready for class discussion and then submit along with your Four-Season journal.

Example:

Quote: As Henry planned his new home at Walden Pond, he observed, "An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage, and I let it lie, fallow perchance, **(Observation)** for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone" (263-264).

N.B. Henry's observation may not immediately follow his description.

Analysis: Even as Henry contemplates the positioning of his new home to best advantage, he considers how to disturb the landscape the least. Contrary to the idea of "using" the land for the prosperity of man, Henry believes that disturbing it the smallest amount will lead to "personal wealth," perhaps emotional prosperity.

The Four-Season Journal

Premise: As you learned from reading “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” Henry David Thoreau acted on Ralph Waldo Emerson’s idea that we can learn about the universe and ourselves from observing nature. As Emerson put it, “The world globes itself in a drop of dew.” Even the smallest bit of nature can reveal universal truths.

Assignment: Choose a place outdoors that you enjoy and/or feel at peace, has special significance, or you have always wanted to spend time. You will visit this spot multiple times each season. Each session will be accompanied by selections from *Walden* to inspire observations.

Notes: During the course of each seasonal week, you will visit your chosen outdoor place, at least three times, spending a minimum of thirty minutes there. Your written notes will include:

- Sensory descriptions of your place: sight, smell, feel, taste, sound
- Beginnings of musings – where do your sensory observations lead you?

Formal journal entry: includes detailed sensory descriptions and expanded musings about yourself and life that your place inspires. Your notes will provide the fodder for this journal.

****Henry himself often found that the important reflection occurred not during the event itself but when writing about it afterwards.

Format for Submission:

- Quotes/observations/analyses of assigned section of *Walden* (20 points) (submit in hard copy in class)
- Notes from each of the three days you spent at your chosen place (submit in hard copy in class) (20 points)
 - May be handwritten, but must be legible.
 - At least two pages per entry – college notebook sized paper.
- One formal journal entry based on your notes (60 points), which will include:
 - MLA Format heading and header
 - Title that includes the place and time(s) of day
 - Two pages, 12-point font, Arial or Times New Roman, detailed sensory descriptions and musings about yourself and life.
 - **Submit on Turnitin.com**

Selections from *Walden*

Journal Week #1 – Third week of October, “Where I Lived and What I Lived For”

Journal Week #2 – Second week of January, “House-Warming,” “The Pond in Winter”

Journal Week #3 – Second week of March, “Ponds,” “Spring”

Journal Week #4 – Second week of May, “Solitude,” “Sounds,” “The Bean Field”

Rubric for Four-Season Journal

Journal Elements	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Walden Annotations 20%	At least five quotes from each assigned chapter that clearly identify how description leads to reflection, along with original analysis of importance	Five quotes from each assigned chapter that identify how description leads to reflection, along with original analysis of importance	Four quotes from each assigned chapter that mostly identify how description leads to reflection, along with attempted analysis of importance	Three or fewer quotes from each assigned chapter that sometimes identify how description leads to reflection. Analysis may be missing, a misinterpretation, or too scant.
Journal Notes 20%	Three days of notes about three separate visits to chosen outdoor place. Detailed sensory description may contain seeds of reflection. Two pages per visit	Three days of notes about three separate visits to chosen outdoor place. Sensory description may contain seeds of reflection. Two pages per visit	Two days of notes about two separate visits to chosen outdoor place. Vague sensory description may or may not contain seeds of reflection. At least one page per visit	One or two days of notes about one or two separate visits to chosen outdoor place. Little and/or vague sensory description. Shorter than one page per visit.
Formal Journal Entry 60%	MLA format heading and header Title includes place and time(s) of day Two pages of detailed sensory description and vivid imagery lead to reflections that reveal personal feelings, values, world view, i.e. a window into your personality	MLA format heading and header Title includes place and time(s) of day Two pages of sensory description and imagery lead to reflections that sometimes reveal personal feelings, values, world view, i.e. a window into your personality	May use MLA format heading and header and Title that includes place and time(s) of day Two pages or under of sometimes vague sensory description and imagery (voice) sometimes lead to reflections that reveal personal feelings, values, world view, i.e. a window into your personality	Format is incomplete or incorrect. Under or over two pages of vague description that do not lead to personal reflections or reflections that reveal little of your personality.

Lesson Plan #3 Abstract: For this lesson, students learn a selection of vocabulary they will encounter in our Transcendentalist readings and will bring in their annotations to share from “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” to provide practice for future annotation assignments and opportunity for clarification.

Essential Question: How do American writers extol/question the American Dream of Prosperity?

Lesson #3 Objectives:

- Students will learn vocabulary to enhance reading comprehension and to add depth to their own writing.
- Students will be able to identify descriptions that inspire personal reflection in *Walden*.
- Students will be able to analyze how these reflections develop Thoreau’s personal and world views.

Massachusetts DESE State Standards:

Reading Informational Texts, 11-12

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Writing Standards, 11-12

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Speaking and Listening Standards, 11-12

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

Language Standards, 11-12

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Lesson #3 Activities (60 minutes):

- Do now: Take our “Where I Lived and What I Lived For.” Flip through the chapter and write down three words you did not know. Look up and write down definitions – phone dictionary ok. (5 minutes)
- Ask class to share words they didn’t know with definitions. Note to class: look up words you don’t know, as you read. (5 minutes)
- Tell class that we will have a vocabulary lesson of words taken from Transcendentalist readings. They will try to figure out the meaning from the context of the sample sentence. **N.B.** The original PPT is animated so that sample sentences using the word appear alone first, to provide students an opportunity to hypothesize a definition.
- PPT of 20 words (15 minutes)
- Ask students to take out their annotations from “Where I Lived and What I Lived For.” Tell them that each student will volunteer a quote and provide identification of

the reflection that arises from description as well as what that reflection reveals about Henry.

- As each student provides a quote/reflection/analysis, invite comment from the class. Ask clarifying questions if identification is vague or incomplete. (30 minutes)

N.B. This activity is formative and designed to build confidence so that students can do this activity on their own with subsequent chapters.

- HW: Write a sentence using each of the first five words on the vocab list. Expect to share your sentences with the class tomorrow. Reassure students that trying is the goal; corrections will be provided to help them cement their understanding of the words. Quiz will ask them to write **new** sentences for the words provided.
- Before the quiz, teacher will collect the **20 sentences** from each student (**10 points for completion**).

Transcendentalism

Vocabulary List

Absolve

The new government *absolved* all its followers of any crimes committed during the rebellion.

Part of speech:

Definition: set or declare free from blame, guilt, or responsibility

Suffrage

Women did not gain *suffrage* in the United States until the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920.

Part of speech:

Definition: the right to vote in political elections

Importune

In *Oliver Twist*, Oliver *importuned* the cook for more food because he was starving on the rations provided.

Related word: importunate, adj.

Part of speech:

Definition: to ask pressingly and persistently, to beg

Capitulate

Most of the world hopes that Gaddafi will *capitulate* to the rebels' demands to leave office, but that seems unlikely.

Related word: capitulation, n.

Part of speech:

Definition: to stop resisting an opponent or unwelcome demand; surrender

Titular

The Queen of England's power is mostly *titular* at this point in history, but centuries ago, the king or queen wielded considerable power.

Definition: holding or constituting a purely formal position or title without any real authority

Philanthropy

Bill Gates is known for his *philanthropy*; he donates vast amounts of money for education through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Related words: philanthropic, adj.

Part of speech:

Definition: the desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed esp. by the generous donation of money to promote good causes

Affinity

Tina feels an *affinity* for those who work at the MSPCA, because her father is a veterinarian.

Part of speech:

Definition: a spontaneous or natural liking or sympathy for someone or something; a similarity of characteristics suggesting a relationship.

Churlish

A *churlish* waiter won't keep his job long, as those in the service businesses must project politeness and warmth in order to succeed.

Related words: churl, n.

Part of speech:

Definition: rude in a mean-spirited and surly way

Affectation

Tara's feigned French accent was an *affectation* that her friends found silly and embarrassing.

Related words: affected, adj.

Part of speech:

Definition: behavior, speech, or writing that is artificial and designed to impress; a studied display or real or intended feeling

Spurious

Infomercials advertising weight-loss miracles make *spurious* claims about the products' results.

Part of speech:

Definition: not being what it purports to be; false or fake, apparently but not valid

Rout

Mrs. Cohen loves when the Celtics *rout* their opponents.

Last night's game was a total *rout*.

Definition: a decisive defeat;

Pygmies

Because my husband is very tall, I feel like a *pygmy* unless I wear high heels.

Part of speech:

Definition: a member of certain peoples of very short stature in equatorial Africa and parts of Southeast Asia.

Clout

Warren Buffet will have a lot of *clout* in the Bank of America corporation because of his recent large stock acquisition.

Part of speech:

Definition: influence or power, esp. in politics or business; a heavy blow with the hand or hard object.

Assiduous

An *assiduous* student completes all of her work on time and thoroughly.

Related words: assiduously, adv.

Part of speech:

Definition: showing great care and perseverance

Piety

Puritans required their community members to live lives of *piety* or risk shunning or expulsion.

Related words: pious, adj.

Part of speech:

Definition: the quality of being religious, reverent, or dutiful

Pertinacity

Prospective politicians must exhibit *pertinacity* in pursuing office, because the path is difficult, expensive, and long.

Part of speech: pertinacious, adj.

Definition: act of holding firmly to an opinion or course of action

Hoary

The *hoary* old black lab really couldn't be called black anymore.

Part of speech:

Definition: having gray or white hair; aged

Dissipation

The *dissipation* of his supporters back to their hotel rooms disheartened the candidate on election night.

The drug addict lived a life of *dissipation*, squandering his fortune and contributing nothing to society.

Part of speech:

Definition: scattering or dispersal or wasteful or intemperate living

Obsequious

The employee's *obsequious* attempts to impress his boss by bringing him coffee and donuts each morning irritated his colleagues who spent their early morning hours toiling to meet company deadlines.

Part of speech:

Definition: obedient or attentive to an excessive or servile degree.

Scrupulous

A surgeon must pay *scrupulous* attention to cleanliness so that her patient does not develop a post-operative infection.

Part of speech:

Definition: very concerned to avoid doing wrong; diligent, thorough, and extremely attentive to detail.

Vocabulary Quiz, Transcendentalism (14 points)

Name: _____

Use the following words in contextually rich sentences that make the definitions clear. **Do not repeat sentences said in class or written for homework:**

1. Obsequious

2. Pertinacity

3. Assiduous

4. Dissipation

5. Scrupulous

6. Churlish

7. Capitulate

Lesson Plan # 4 Abstract:

This lesson skips ahead into quarter three when students study the American Dream of Equality. In order to encourage students to consider of concepts equality and their “place” in society, they will undertake a week of self-observation and experiment with Thoreau’s ideas of “being present.” Attuning to themselves, i.e. quieting their minds, will enhance their ability to listen to others and to consider whether we are all enjoy equal opportunity to be “heard” in our country. In this unit, students will read Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience,” as well as a several other “in the news” articles in preparation for reading *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison.

Essential Question: How do American writers extol/question the American Dream of Equality?

Lesson 4 Objectives:

- Students will assess the practical application of Transcendentalist beliefs as they practice “being present” throughout the week.
- Students will write an analysis of their experience based on the week’s notes.
 - Students will analyze how their concept of “place” is affected by “being present.”
 - Students will analyze how their perceptions of others are affected by “being present.”

Massachusetts DESE State Standards:**Writing Standards, 11-12**

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Lesson #4 Activities (55 minutes):

- Students will pick up a sheet of Thoreau quotes on their way in to class.
- Do Now: Choose a quote and write a paragraph about how this quote applies (or doesn’t) to your life. Be as specific as possible. (15 minutes).
- Students share their chosen quotes and reflections on it. (30 minutes)
- Introduce “Being Present” assignment, allowing time for questions (10 minutes)
 - Ask students what they are thinking about right now...In addition to being focused on class (of course), are you also thinking about your test next class, what is for lunch, your after-school meeting...?
 - Acknowledge that it is common for our brains to run on multiple tracks at once. Ask them how often during a conversation have they focused on their own response rather than what the person is actually saying? Has anyone had the experience of conversing with someone who intently focused on what is being said?

Directions: Read through these quotes from “Economy” and “Where I Lived...” Choose one that you think either applies or does not apply to your life. Write a paragraph that describes specifically how the quote applies or does not to your own life. You will share these answers.

1. “It is never too late to give up our prejudices” (203).
2. “It is an interesting question how far men would retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothing” (215).
3. “This spending of the best part of one’s life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part of it reminds me of the Englishman who went to India to make a fortune first, in order that he might return to England and live the life of a poet. He should have gone up garret at once.” (240).
3. “An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage, and I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone” (263-264).
4. “To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?” (270).
5. “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.”
6. “Our life is frittered away by detail...Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!” (271).
7. “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 to-day to save nine to-morrow. As for *work*, we haven’t any of consequence” (273).
7. “I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be” (275).

Being Present Experiment

Objective:

Evaluate your own life according to Thoreau's ideas in *Walden*.

Directions:

This week, I want you to try "being present" and "living deliberately" as described by Thoreau. Consider how you might need to simplify your life in order to reduce distractions. What "noise-makers" in your life might you eliminate to help you *be*?

Over the course of the week, make an effort to experience each moment fully. **Take notes** and observe yourself in various settings. Are some places or people more conducive to being present? Why? How does it feel to live completely in the moment?

Assignment: In a well-written reflection, evaluate the effect of being fully present.

- In your opening paragraph, describe how you went about creating the conditions that allowed you to *be present*. Did you simplify your life or change some set routines? Did you visit your chosen outdoor place for your Four-Season Journal? Describe.
- In your body paragraphs, describe your experience and feelings using specific examples from your life (your notes will come in handy) and quotes (at least two) from any chapter in *Walden* to support your observations.
- Conclude with an explanation of how successful you were living in the moment and why. Assess how place and people affected your success.

Format: MLA. Introduction, two well-developed body paragraphs and conclusion, typed and double-spaced using Arial or Times New Roman 12 point font.

Points: Reflection = 30 points (see rubric); five days of notes = 20 points (completion grade).

Rubric for “Being Present” Reflection

Criteria/Grade	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Topic Development 60%	Responds clearly and thoroughly to prompt using ample examples or evidence.	Responds clearly to prompt using some evidence.	Responds in a generic way to the prompt using scant evidence.	Does not address the prompt and/or lacks evidence to support ideas.
Language 30%	Uses highly specific vocabulary and sophisticated sentence structure. Ideas flow smoothly.	Uses appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structure, and some sentence variety. Writing is coherent.	Uses mostly appropriate vocabulary. May have usage or homophone errors. Sentences are correct but lack variety. Writing lacks flow.	Uses inadequate, incorrect or inappropriate vocabulary. Sentences are unsophisticated and/or incoherent.
Mechanical Correctness 10%	Writing is polished and has no mechanical errors.	Writing has few mechanical and/or typographical errors.	Writing has several mechanical and/or typographical errors.	Abundant mechanical and/or typographical errors

Adapted from C. Conlon

Lesson #5: Abstract: As students spend the week outside of class experimenting with the places and situations where they can be most present, we will spend time in class, exploring the nature of prejudice and examining our roles in ignoring/perpetuating it and or combatting it. The Question Formulation Technique (<http://rightquestion.org/education/>), will be used to help students generate questions that will frame the discussion. For homework students will read “Black Folks Can’t Breathe” by Jason Whitlock, (ESPN.com) and “Civil Disobedience” by Thoreau to continue their thinking about prejudice and equality.

Essential Question: How do American writers extol/question the American Dream of Equality?

Lesson #5 Objectives:

- Students will be able to respond to a provocative statement (Question Focus) and develop questions that will promote critical thinking.
- Students will evaluate the current status of the American Dream of Equality and consider methods to effect progress.

Massachusetts DESE State Standards:

Reading Informational Texts, 11-12

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Speaking and Listening Standards, 11-12

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

Lesson #5 Activities (55 minutes):

- As students enter, they will see projected on the SMART board the Question Focus: Prejudice is a part of human nature.
- Divide the students into groups of four for the purpose of devising questions that respond to the Question Focus. Each group must produce at least 12 questions.
- Remind students of the Question Formulation Technique Process before they begin
 - Ask as many questions as you can
 - Do not stop to answer, judge or to discuss the questions
 - Write down every question exactly as it is stated
 - Change any statement into a question
 - Number your questions (5 minutes to move and to remind)
- Students formulate questions, then choose one question to open and one to close.
- Each group will choose two priority questions from their list. (These questions may function as possible prompts for summative essays on our Equality unit). (35 minutes)
- Create a master list of questions, which will be posted on class website. (10 minutes)
- Pass out article “Black Folks Can’t Breathe” by Jason Whitlock and excerpt from “Civil Disobedience” by Thoreau (5 minutes to explain HW)
- HW: Read article and annotate for responses to prejudice questions generated in class today.

12/11/2014

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Friday, December 5, 2014
Updated: December 8, 1:28 PM ET

Why black folks can't breathe

By Jason Whitlock
ESPN.com

Order rooted in and maintained and restored by fear, intimidation, brutality and incarceration is immoral and untenable. Justice is order's intended soul mate. But serving justice is twice as hard as serving fear.



Derrick Rose wears an "I Can't Breathe" T-shirt before a recent game.

The twice-as-hard spirit -- which birthed our melting-pot experiment, envisioned a Fourth Estate informing the masses, unlocked slavery's chains, loosened Jim Crow's grip, and propelled us to the moon and back -- has sadly succumbed, once again, to the predatory nature of greed and lust for power.

America, it appears, lost the resolve to follow the road less traveled, the never-ending, obstacle-ridden path to perfection. Just six short years after a historic election, the promise and hope of President Obama leading the third leg of our racial relay race has been remade into a finish line.

If so, we lose.

The recent legal proceedings and maneuverings that sparked unrest in Ferguson and New York and across our nation expose our monumental failure to build on and protect the gains won during the civil rights era.

We failed to heed Martin Luther King Jr.'s advice. He conceptualized a Poor People's Campaign -- a connection between African-Americans' twice-as-hard journey and the struggle of the working poor -- designed to defend civil-rights gains from inevitable backlash. He visualized the poor, the vulnerable, the working class of all races coming together to uproot the political seeds planted to grow income inequality. He died before his campaign could take hold. Most of us are unaware that the Poor People's Campaign was the essential Phase 2 of the civil rights movement.

12/11/2014

ESPN.com - Why black folks can't breathe

We're even less aware that Barry Goldwater's emphasis -- Law and Order -- formed Phase 1 of the backlash to civil rights.

Law and Order -- the American political strategy of choice the last 50 years -- did not put Goldwater in the White House in 1964, but Richard Nixon rode it there in '68 and Ronald Reagan used it to move into the California governor's mansion the same year.

L&O justified Nixon's drug war, harsh sentencing guidelines, the demonization of black offenders, and the preference for order rooted in fear and punishment. Law and Order spawned America's mass incarceration.

As a result, a decade-long era of organized civil disobedience in objection to legalized segregation and inequality produced a handful of useful laws that have been thwarted by a half-century of legalized mass incarceration and inequality.



Although Barry Goldwater lost the 1964 presidential election, his campaign premise of "law and order" was adopted by Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan.

It's segregation by incarceration. The great author and law professor Michelle Alexander calls it "The New Jim Crow."

Segregation by incarceration (SBI) has pitted the African-American community vs. the police. Segregation has never been a shadowy, impossible-to-pin-down conspiracy. It's been an American way of life. The people who opposed the civil rights movement and the end of segregation did not hold a news conference, concede defeat and pledge support for racial equality. They hatched a new strategy.

Segregation by incarceration removes the offensive, in-your-face, whites-only signs and replaces them with strategic enforcement of criminal laws that: (1) segregate poor people behind bars; (2) segregate ex-cons and their loved ones outside the traditional pathways to the American dream, aka, upward mobility.

SBI is much worse and more corrosive than Jim Crow.

Jim Crow had unintended benefits. It forced blacks to build and rely on their own economic, educational and social systems. SBI is a silent killer with no benefit. It extinguishes hope.

It's a virus that attacks the un-incarcerated with a ferocity that is nearly equal to its assault on the incarcerated. The media rarely examine and calculate the financial and emotional expenses of supporting the incarcerated. Our discomfort with mass incarceration stops at regret for warehousing more than 2 million human beings. The toll extracted from the roughly 20 million human beings who care about and/or depend on those 2 million doesn't even enter our minds.

Non-offenders suffer the consequences of incarceration, too. The examples of this collateral damage are littered throughout the sports world and our entire society. Derrick Rose and Reggie Bush -- who donned "I Can't Breathe" T-shirts supporting Eric Garner's family -- can see, feel and testify to what we in the media have ignored for too long. Yeah, they realized the so-called American dream, but many of the people they love have not.

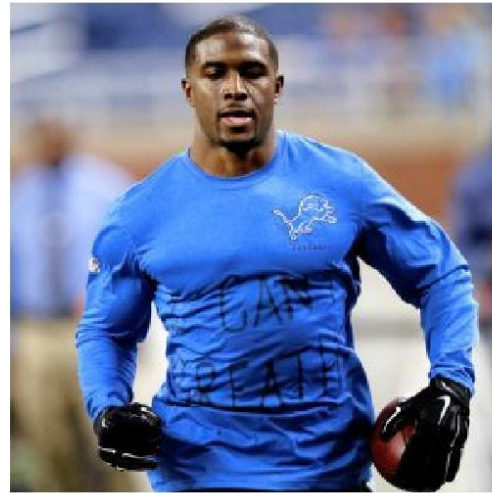
12/11/2014

ESPN.com - Why black folks can't breathe

Making it financially does not protect you, though. Genetic gifts and a gigantic professional contract do not shield athletes from the effect of damaged childhoods. You think a father in prison didn't contribute to the stunted intellectual evolution that led Adrian Peterson to father multiple children with multiple women and physically abuse at least one of those kids with slavery/prison-style punishment?

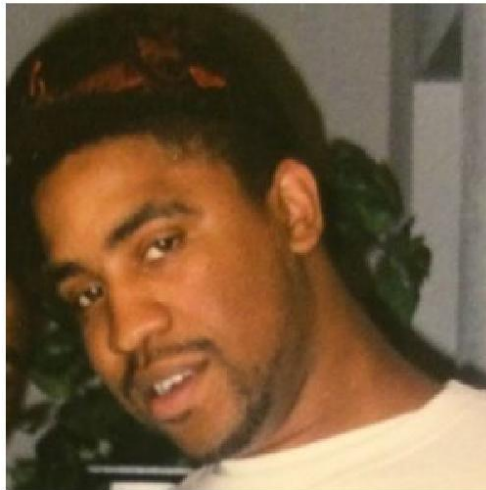
That's just one example. There are millions of unreported and undiagnosed negative repercussions of mass incarceration.

Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice -- God rest their souls -- are symptoms of a far more insidious crime. At this point, Brown, Garner, et al are more media distraction than useful symbols. Capitalism and television can be quite undignified. They routinely transform victims into props, ratings-driving talking points for Bill O'Reilly, Wolf Blitzer, Rachel Maddow and Charles Barkley and megaphones for opportunists masquerading as heirs to Dr. King.

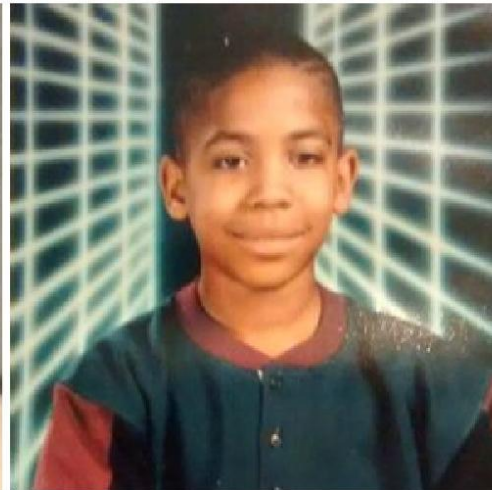


Lions running back Reggie Bush wore a shirt with "I Can't Breathe" written on it before Sunday's game.

Before



Jason Whitlock's cousin Anton Butler died at 28 after being subdued via stun gun by law enforcement.



Jason Whitlock's cousin Anton Butler died after an attempted arrest. For the Whitlock family, and countless others, deaths such as Eric Garner's at the hands of the police are personal.

continuing, I must state that the issue of law-enforcement brutality is personal for my family and me. In 2012,

Indianapolis sheriffs tasered and killed Anton Butler, the greatest child my family ever produced, while he stood unarmed and posing no threat. To those outside my family, to the people who did not know Anton's backstory, a 28-year-old ex-con got what he deserved. Police allege he died because he had cocaine in his system. To me, to my family, to the people who knew Anton's story in full, a 28-year-old, kindhearted, lovable goofball died brutally on rain-soaked pavement without life ever giving him the chance to properly blossom.

Born in a different circumstance and zip code, Anton, a natural bookworm, would've been an accountant, an engineer, a doctor, a scientist, a sports columnist. Instead, he dabbled in a neighborhood trade --

<http://espn.go.com/espn/print?id=11984741&type=story>

3/7

12/11/2014

ESPN.com - Why black folks can't breathe

hustling -- he had no real qualifications for, showed up one too many times at the wrong place at the wrong time, and was left with little choice but to plead guilty to several serious felony charges related to guns and drugs. The rap sheet with no context made his unwarranted death easy to dismiss for those who learned his story in the local newspaper. The pain is in the details and the context. The pain is immense and inescapable. I loved him. As a child, he and my other little cousins spent summers with me in Kansas City, Missouri.

Anton's picture sits on my living-room table. I look at it every day.

Police brutality is a real issue for me and my family, so I don't say what comes next lightly.

There is no widespread epidemic of cops shooting and/or killing unarmed black men. That's a false flag waved by the uninformed, the lazy and the crowd that needs Ebola and ISIS and disappearing airplanes for traction. Police killing unarmed men of any color is a man-bites-dog tragedy. It's rare, which is what makes the occurrence so television titillating. Of course, every instance is one too many, and as a society we should do everything we can to prevent it. But all this talk about "the talk" that black parents must have with their sons about interacting with police is slightly misguided.

Have "the talk" with your child about drinking and/or texting while driving, things far more likely to physically harm a child or adult than the police.

If you want to give additional substance to the activist/protest energy fomenting America, talk to lawmakers about the instructions and priorities they've given to law enforcement.

Talk about the real plague -- segregation by incarceration.

SBI is why the African-American community is distrustful of law enforcement. SBI decimated the black family structure, leaving our communities fatherless and leaderless. SBI fertilized the cultural rot that makes us believe prison culture is African-American culture.

SBI is why black and brown folks feel they can't breathe.

You grow the jail/prison population from about 400,000 to 2.5 million in a 40-year period and there are bound to be drastic ramifications. You place more black men under government, penal supervision than were enslaved before the Civil War -- as Alexander's groundbreaking book, "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," revealed -- and there are bound to be damaging repercussions.

The marriage of capitalism to incarceration is as destructive as Ike and Tina, as unethical as Bonnie and Clyde, as immoral as Woody and Soon Yi, and as stupid as Bobby and Whitney.

The front lines of our drug war feel like occupied territories. Citizens are stopped, frisked, followed, profiled and made to feel as inmates locked in their own neighborhoods by a heavily armed occupying force. The tension is thick, palpable and suffocating. Our politicians have authorized rules of engagement that mirror those in Iraq and Afghanistan. That's why grand juries refuse to indict.

The drug war reconstructed poor neighborhoods and schools into minimum-security prisons and prison yards, governed by the same gangs and no-sitch policies commonplace in penal institutions.

Why did the proliferation of street gangs accelerate with astonishing quickness in California in the 1970s and '80s? Why was gangsta rap born in Los Angeles?

12/11/2014

ESPN.com - Why black folks can't breathe

Because Ronald Reagan planted the flag of Law and Order and mass incarceration in California first.

There are millions of unreported and undiagnosed negative ramifications from segregation by incarceration.

Eric Garner hustled loose cigarettes/contraband. Our Law and Order culture dictated that correctional officers repeatedly harass and arrest Garner for this minor offense. But Law and Order does not extend to the suburbs, white-collar crimes and Wall Street. The drug war isn't being waged in suburbia, where drugs are used and sold by white kids at the same frequency as people of color.

The bankers and brokers who fleeced the working class with predatory loans and brought the country to near collapse have never been targeted as Public Enemy No. 1 and tagged as the enemies of a war on corruption. There is no occupying force policing the activities of Wall Street. Bankers and brokers do not get stopped and frisked. They almost never go to jail. They looted 401(k) accounts and burned this country to the ground with impunity.

But a man lost his life over loose cigarettes. Has one Wall Street thug lost his life at the hands of overzealous law enforcement?

This dichotomy is at the heart of the criminal-justice cynicism pervasive throughout black culture. The dichotomy is not unintentional. Neither is segregation. The opponents of desegregation anticipated the impact of Law and Order. L&O was Goldwater's sales pitch to white voters afraid of the end of American apartheid. Nixon doubled down on L&O and won the presidency, and three years later labeled the scourge of drugs the biggest threat to American freedom and focused law enforcement on cleaning up the poor communities that rioted in the 1960s.

Bill Clinton persuaded Southern whites to vote for him by jumping on the Law and Order bandwagon. The original "first black president" instituted draconian three-strikes and mandatory-minimum sentencing guidelines, removing a judge's discretion from our criminal courts.

It took a bipartisan, power-hungry village to completely erase rehabilitation and compassion from our criminal justice system.

It happened because Law and Order is evil but brilliant politics. It's the primary tool separating working-class/poor white people and working-class/poor black people. The criminalization and demonization of black people appeal to inherent biases and seduce working-class whites to vote against their self-interest. In matters not involving life or death, racial protectionism trumps self-interest. Poor and working-class whites take one for "their" team.

Unfortunately, many African-Americans help their natural allies overlook an abundance of common concerns and interests by framing inequality discussions in the most extreme, distorted and polarizing manner.

Dumbed-down, irresponsible Twitter hashtags won't stop segregation by incarceration. They empower it. They keep the national conversation steered away from the real problem and real solutions.

Sensitivity training and body cameras for law enforcement treat segregation-by-incarceration symptoms. Body cameras will have no impact on the fast-growing, multibillion-dollar prison industrial complex that recruits new inmates in poor minority zip codes and then swindles an inmate's family and friends with court fees, calling-card fees, commissary fees, clothing fees and fee fees.

What do taxpayers get in return? Our prisons spit out men broken and scarred by a barbaric system. We're

12/11/2014

ESPN.com - Why black folks can't breathe

stuck caring for their abandoned children who have been infected with the virus that makes them predisposed for incarceration. We're stuck with the cultural decay that undermines the integrity necessary to maintain a civilized society.

You want to curb police brutality? You have to seek order through justice, not fear and punishment. You have to feed the poor hope, not hopelessness.

You want to curb police brutality? The American media have to prioritize discussing complicated issues in a nuanced, informed and transparent fashion.

Our republic fails without an informed public. We're not informed. We're entertained.

Charles Barkley, whose inflammatory and pandering comments about Ferguson made national news last week, is a too-easy target. Truth is, he's no more or less informed/credible on the issues surrounding Ferguson than most of the other opinion-makers babbling on television. Cable TV demands pandering to a base and irresponsible commentary.



Kenny Smith (left) wrote an open letter to co-analyst Charles Barkley about their differing views on the situation in Ferguson, Missouri.

Barkley's labeling of rioters and looters as "scumbags" and "not real black people" is less offensive than the left-wing intellectuals who condoned the rioting and looting from the comfort of a TV studio. Baiting and/or suggesting to the poor, vulnerable and hopeless that they take risks you would not is cowardly, exploitive and narcissistic. It's a tactic of a demagogue. Demagoguery fuels TV.

It's unfair to single out television media. Print media gave up analyzing race and culture as a serious endeavor decades ago. Newspapers and magazines used to cover race as a beat. Reporters and editors specialized in the topic. We turned away from that kind of pervasive and measured coverage in the aftermath of the civil rights movement, especially once the best black journalists fled black media outlets to work for mainstream publications. African-Americans gutted their most powerful and effective voice: black-owned newspapers.

And as mainstream print publications lost their advertising financial monopolies and became reliant on a handful of major corporations, while the right wing demonized any discussion of race and inequality issues, serious coverage of difficult subjects virtually disappeared from print.

Internet journalism has mostly disappointed so far. Traditional media repurposed for the Internet are trapped between being too concerned with clicks and too fearful of irritating their old base with unsettling content. New Internet media -- although commendably ambitious -- are too reliant on untrained, unseasoned and assimilated millennials whose worldview is shaped by, and whose day-to-day interaction with urban America is limited to, social media and pop culture.

Holistic journalism, the kind that pushes America toward a more perfect union, is a twice-as-hard undertaking. It can be done only with resources, commitment, experience and life-experience-rich diversity. Holistic journalism challenges us to think, re-evaluate and discover our better selves. At its best, America has often overcome its flaws and found the courage to embrace the task of self-evaluation and renewal. We survived the Civil War, the assassination of President Lincoln, the tumultuous 1960s, and the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.

12/11/2014

ESPN.com - Why black folks can't breathe

One of the biggest differences between then and now is the quality of the information provided to the masses. The collapsing business model for the institutions that traditionally informed us in a nuanced way has compromised what we're willing to tell the masses. This has led to the goal of true equality being replaced by the impossibility of attaining colorblindness.

Colorblindness, in a country with our complex racial history, has nothing to do with equality and everything to do with disregarding the sins of bigotry. Colorblindness is a ploy to avoid the difficulty of pursuing justice.

Justice is blind. America is not.

Lesson Plan #6: Abstract: Having read “Why Black Folks Can’t Breathe” and an excerpt from “Civil Disobedience” for homework, students will compare and contrast Whitlock and Thoreau’s views of government and its proper role in the lives of citizens. They will consider their own places in American society. Is it similar to or different from the situation depicted in the “Why Folks” article? They will consider how where people live affects civil rights. They will grapple with the methods that Whitlock and Thoreau espouse for combatting injustice.

Essential Question: How do American writers extol/question the American Dream of Equality?

Lesson #6 Objectives:

- Students will be able to summarize the main ideas of two non-fiction articles.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast how these articles depict government and its relationship to citizens.
- Students will compare and contrast how these two articles suggest combatting injustice.
- Students will analyze the effectiveness of the rhetoric in each article.
- Students will analyze how Thoreau’s ideas continue to influence our society.

**Massachusetts DESE State Standards:
Reading Informational Texts, 11-12**

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Writing Standards, 11-12

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Speaking and Listening Standards, 11-12

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

Lesson #6 Activities (55 minute class):

- Do now: Take out your copies of “Why Black Folks” and “Civil Disobedience.” Write a paragraph responding to any of the class Prejudice questions generated yesterday using a quote from each article. (10 minutes)
- Ask for a few students to share their responses (10 minutes)
- Tell students that they will be comparing and contrasting the views expressed in last night’s homework in small groups. Divide class into groups of four.
- Begin by summarizing the main ideas in each article to activate your thinking.
- Continue answering the questions, supported by textual evidence. (35 minutes)
- HW: Write a 500-word analysis of how you think Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” influences Whitlock’s article.

<p>Compare Whitlock and Thoreau's views.</p>	<p>Compare Whitlock and Thoreau's views.</p>
<p>How does Whitlock view the penal system?</p>	<p>How does Thoreau view the penal system?</p>
<p>Compare Whitlock and Thoreau's views.</p>	<p>Compare Whitlock and Thoreau's views.</p>
<p>How does Whitlock think changes can be made?</p>	<p>How does Thoreau think changes can be made?</p>

What rhetorical/literary devices does Whitlock employ to make his points? Where do they occur and do you think they succeed? Why or why not?

Use the remaining space to explore how your life would be altered if instead of living in Lexington, you lived in an inner city minority neighborhood. What would you experience walking around the neighborhood? How would you feel?

What rhetorical/literary devices does Thoreau employ to make his points? Where do they occur and do you think they succeed? Why or why not?

Use the remaining space to explore how your life would be altered if instead of living in Lexington, you lived in an inner city minority neighborhood. What would you experience walking around the neighborhood? How would you feel?

Thoreau's Influence on Modern Thinking

Premise: Thoreau is often regarded as “ahead of his time” in his thinking. It is not difficult to recognize his influence on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for instance. Fast forward to now. Examine the relevance of his philosophy to today's problems.

Assignment: Write a 500-word analysis of how Thoreau influences Whitlock's thinking in his article “Why Black Folks Can't Breathe.” You may use the comparisons you made in your group as a launching point for your argument. Be sure to use evidence from both texts as support. Conclude with your opinion of how Thoreau would respond to Whitlock's statement that, “Colorblindness is a ploy to avoid the difficulty of pursuing justice.”

Format:

- MLA format
- 500 words, double-spaced
- (Brief intro establishing influences, body paragraphs developing influences, Conclusion that speculates on Thoreau's response to Whitlock's statement on colorblindness)
- Due on Turnitin.com by 11:00 P.M. tomorrow night
- Points: 35

Rubric for Thoreau's Influence on Whitlock

Criteria/Grade	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Topic Development: Thoreau's influence on Whitlock 70%	<p>Thesis introduces specific influences. Body develops influences thoroughly using ample textual evidence from both pieces. Conclusion offers a highly plausible theory of Thoreau's opinion of Whitlock's view of colorblindness.</p>	<p>Thesis introduces influences. Body develops influences using sufficient textual evidence from both pieces. Conclusion offers a plausible theory of Thoreau's opinion of Whitlock's view of colorblindness.</p>	<p>Thesis is somewhat unclear about influences. Body develops influences in a generic way using scant textual evidence.</p>	<p>Does not address the prompt and/or lacks evidence to support ideas.</p>
Language 20%	<p>Uses highly specific vocabulary and sophisticated sentence structure. Ideas flow smoothly.</p>	<p>Uses appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structure, and some sentence variety. Writing is coherent.</p>	<p>Uses mostly appropriate vocabulary. May have usage or homophone errors. Sentences are correct but lack variety. Writing lacks flow.</p>	<p>Uses inadequate, incorrect or inappropriate vocabulary. Sentences are unsophisticated and/or incoherent.</p>
Mechanical Correctness 10%	<p>Writing is polished and has no mechanical errors.</p>	<p>Writing has few mechanical and/or typographical errors.</p>	<p>Writing has several mechanical and/or typographical errors.</p>	<p>Abundant mechanical and/or typographical errors</p>

Lesson #7 Abstract: This lesson skips ahead into quarter four when students study the American Dream of Self-Determination. Students will read an excerpt from Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Self-Reliance” before reading *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Emerson’s focus on the potential of every human being will also serve to prepare students (along with the work already completed in their Four-Season Journals) to write a Personal Narrative, i.e. practice for their college admissions essay.

Essential Question: How do American writers extol/question the American Dream of Self-Determination?

Lesson #7 Objectives:

Students will be able to identify aphorisms in “Self-Reliance.”

Students will be able to identify and paraphrase main ideas in “Self-Reliance.”

Students will be able to evaluate the applicability of Emerson’s ideas in contemporary society, i.e. the place of the individual in society.

Students will be able to write their own aphorisms that reflect their beliefs.

Massachusetts DESE State Standards:

Reading Informational Texts, 11-12

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Writing Standards, 11-12

3.A. Demonstrate understanding of the concept of theme by writing short narratives, poems, essays, speeches, or reflections that respond to universal themes (e.g., challenges, the individual and society, moral dilemmas, the dynamics of tradition and change).

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Lesson #7 Activities (60 minute class):

- In preparation for this lesson, divide “Self-Reliance” into approximately six equal segments.
- Begin class by playing the NPR interview with James Geary about his book *The World in a Phrase*, in which he defines aphorisms, explains their function throughout history, and offers some terrific examples.
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4983562> (10 minutes).
- Before beginning group work on “Self-Reliance,” read the excerpt aloud to students. Ask them to listen for aphorisms.
- Divide students into groups. Provide each group with a dictionary - or they may use the dictionary function on their phones. Each group will identify aphorisms and select a favorite, as well as paraphrase their segment. (25 minutes)
- Each group selects a reporter who shares their aphorisms, favorite aphorism, and paraphrase of their segment. Clarify, as needed. Students may ask questions here as well. (20 minutes). (This activity may continue into next class, if needed).
- Explain aphorism assignment and the class Aphorism Collage, which will be displayed in the classroom and on teacher website.
- HW: Write your own aphorisms that express your belief about human identity and/or place in society.

Write your own Aphorisms

Premise: In the interview with James Geary, he said that one of his favorite aphorisms comes from Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Life consists in what a man is thinking of all day." What are you thinking of?

Assignment: Express your view of life through the lens of Self-Determination. How do humans achieve their true identities? Alternatively, express any truth about life that occurs to you. Remember: aphorisms are short and pithy. Try your hand at writing three different aphorisms. **Asterisk one aphorism to add to a class Aphorism Collage.**

(Completion grade 12 points)

1.

2.

3.

Bonus: Your aphorism might serve as an appropriate hook for your upcoming Personal Narrative (college essay).

Personal Essay Assignment

Directions and prompts taken from the Common Application

Common Application Instructions: The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. *What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores?* Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your limit, not your goal. Use the full range if you need it, but don't feel obligated to do so. (The application won't accept a response shorter than 250 words.)

Additional Guidelines: Consider the reflections and discoveries you made in your Four-Season journal this year. Your chosen place inspired you to explore the nature around you and the wonder within. Review these journals; you may discover an inspiration and starting point for this essay. Your aphorisms also might serve as inspiration and/or a terrific lead for your essay.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Personal Narrative Rubric

Criteria	Advanced A+ to B+	Proficient B to C	Developing C- to D-	Beginning
Content and Organization	Essay is highly focused and richly detailed, and conveys a compelling sense of your personal traits and values.	Essay is focused and detailed, and conveys a clear sense of your personal traits and values.	Essay conveys a sense of who you are, but may lack focus, detail or consistent clarity	Essay needs more focus, editing, and detail to convey a clear sense of your personal traits and values.
Style and Language	Essay achieves a sophisticated, creative and consistently polished style using vivid verbs, precise vocabulary and figurative language. Writers uses feelings, actions, dialogues, imagery and context effectively	Essay exhibits facility in the use of language, using appropriate vocabulary and figurative language. Writer does not use <i>telling</i> statements.	Essay's style may be interesting, but not consistently creative, polished or sophisticated. Vocabulary not always specific or appropriate. Writer uses some <i>telling statements</i> .	Essay displays developing facility in the use of language, sometimes using weak vocabulary or inappropriate word choice. Writer relies on <i>telling</i> statements instead of details
Voice and Tone	Voice shows candor, humility, humor, confidence, maturity, and thoughtful appreciation of personal experiences, attributes, and values. Voice is distinctive and engaging	Voice is personable and reflects humility and appreciation of personal attributes and experiences.	Voice reveals a limited sense of author's identity because voice is stiff, forced, phony, or saccharine.	Voice is flat, inconsistent, difficult to pin down, or discouraging to reader
Diction and Syntax	Sentence variety enhances style and effect. Successfully uses sophisticated sentence patterns. Rich, effective vocabulary.	Sentence variety is appropriate to style and effect. Moderately successful in using sophisticated sentence patterns. Effective vocabulary.	Some sentence variety. Some errors in diction and syntax. Vocabulary may be vague, repetitive, and/or misused.	Little or no sentence variety. Sentences lack coherence. Many errors in diction and syntax. Simplistic, inadequate, misused vocabulary.
Mechanics and Sentence Structure	Virtually no mechanical errors, relative to the length or complexity.	Very few or no mechanical errors relative to the length or complexity. Sentences flow smoothly.	Some mechanical errors that do not interfere with communication. Or limited text, but mechanically correct.	Mechanical errors seriously interfere with communication. Or errors are disproportionate to the length or complexity of the piece.

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