

AP English Language: Summer Reading, 2017

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Welcome to AP English Language! We look forward to working with you!

The pages attached detail your summer assignment, which has two parts:

1. To read a non-fiction book from the given list, writing reflective journal entries to illustrate your thought processes and reactions.
2. To conduct a nature observation, keeping a log and illustrating it with photographs, sketches, charts, or other items.

The goals of the assignment are these:

1. To create a greater interest in and awareness of current social, political, economic, environmental, and other issues.
2. To prepare students for our late autumn study of Transcendentalism, including the writings of Thoreau and Emerson. (It's much easier to conduct a nature observation in the summer!)

Keep your notes and ideas carefully! **The work will be requested during the first two to three weeks of class in the fall of 2017.** The book list and assignment will be posted at the Hanford High School website.

**ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACETS OF THIS DUAL ASSIGNMENT IS YOUR DEMONSTRATION OF THE ABILITY TO READ AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS. PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW THESE DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY.**

**PART ONE: READING:**

Directions:

1. Read the book carefully. Mark interesting passages; write questions in the margins; doodle; read creatively and ACTIVELY.
2. Divide the book into six sections. Write a reflective entry of about 75 words for each section. As you write your entries, please keep these guidelines in mind:
  - Less than one-third of the entry should consist of summary. ANY ENTRY THAT CONSISTS ONLY OF SUMMARY will receive only 1/3 credit.
  - Instead of summarizing, reflect on some of the points below. You don't have to address every point for every entry; however, by the time you have written all the entries, you will probably have hit most of them.
    - a. Do you agree or disagree with the author's viewpoint? Be specific as to why!
    - b. What are some of the best arguments? Even in books that seem to be simply describing a situation, the author is making a case for SOMETHING!
    - c. What arguments or examples in the book do NOT make sense to you? Why?

- d. What are some examples of excellent writing from the text? You might consider vivid similes, surprising metaphors, sentence structure, descriptive phrases. How does this vivid writing add to your understanding of the author's purpose?
- e. What elements or events in the text surprise, shock, or startle you? What elements cause you to rethink your ideas on the issue or situation?

## **PART TWO: OBSERVING**

Directions:

In this segment, you will SAFELY, actively, and thoughtfully consider the meaning of nature in your life and in the lives of those around us. You will consider the three tenets of Transcendentalism: INDIVIDUALITY, IDEALISM, and THE DIVINITY OF NATURE. Tap into your transcendentalist self. Find a natural setting that is safe and convenient, but be sure that the setting has a number of natural features: trees, water, plants, birds, grasses, etc. Make sure it is quiet and comfortable enough for you to sit quietly and observe. BE SAFE AND DO NOT TRESPASS!!!! (If you are not doing three separate observations, follow the directions for the other possible choices.)

### **1. Read the attached handout on Thoreau and the Transcendentalists.**

### **2. Consider these points:**

- What does it mean to be an individual in today's society?
- How does nature impact all of us?
- What beauties (and horrors) of nature do you see during your observations? Cold, heat, insects, wind, snow, vegetation, animals? How do these facets of nature impact you?
- Why is a love of nature considered to be an idealistic trait?

### **3. Conduct your observation in one of these ways:**

- During a family camping trip, summer camp setting, hunting / fishing trip, or other outdoor endeavor, set aside THREE time slots of 20 minutes each. Write one journal, illustrated with photographs or sketches, of each observation, for a total of THREE entries. While safety is the most important factor, try to do your observation alone, without distractions. Other people should be within hearing, but you should not take somebody along with you or talk on the phone / text / read during this time.
- Hike Badger Mountain or some other safe peak. During your hike, stop three times to conduct your observations. Write one journal, illustrated with photographs or sketches, of each observation, for a total of THREE entries. While safety is the most important factor, try to do your observation alone, without distractions. Other people should be within hearing, but you should not take somebody along with you or talk on the phone / text / read during this time.

### **4. Write up your journal entries:**

- Each entry should consist of at least 100 words and should be illustrated by at least one photograph or sketch: THREE entries / 300 words, and three photographs or sketches
- Write up a final entry of 100 words to reflect on the experience as a whole. Was it useful or a waste of time? Why?
- In total: Write THREE journal entries and ONE final reflection, with photos!
- DON'T FORGET TO HAVE THE PERMISSION PAGE SIGNED!!!

Author	Title	Subject	Pages
<b>THE NATURAL WORLD</b>			
Abbey, Edward	<i>Desert Solitaire</i>	Reflections on man / nature	288
Pollan, Michael	<i>The Botany of Desire</i>	Symbiosis: man and plants	271
Young, Ed	<i>I Contain Multitudes</i>	Microbes within us!	368
<b>POLITICS AND SOCIETY</b>			
Desmond, Matthew	<i>Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City</i>	Poverty and riches in America	448
Gladwell, Malcolm	<i>Outliers</i>	Who succeeds and why	336
Gladwell, Malcolm	<i>The Tipping Point</i>	How and why does society change?	301
Leovy, Jill	<i>Ghettocide</i>	Murder in the ghetto	384
Moore, Natalie	<i>The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation</i>	Segregation on the South Side of Chicago	272
Nafisi, Azar	<i>Reading Lolita in Tehran</i>	Under totalitarian government, is literature safe? Is anyone?	400
Sandberg, Cheryl	<i>Lean In</i>	Women in the workplace	217
Stevenson, Bryan	<i>A Just Mercy</i>	Who is on death row and why	368
Vance, J.D.	<i>Hillbilly Elegy</i>	Growing up poor in the Rust Belt	272
Yunus, Mohammad	<i>Banker to the Poor</i>	Lending to 3 <sup>rd</sup> world business	240
<b>FAMILY / PERSONAL</b>			
Abramovich, Alex	<i>Bullies: A Friendship</i>	A bullied boy and his tormenter become "friends"	224
Cain, Susan	<i>Quiet: Being an Introvert . . .</i>	Why being an introvert is good	368
Conley, Garrard	<i>Boy Erased</i>	Gay "reprogramming"	352
Fournier, Ron	<i>Love That Boy</i>	A father's journey with an autistic son	240
Hornbacher, Marya	<i>Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulemia</i>	Body issues	336
Sandberg, Cheryl	<i>Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, Finding Joy</i>	When life gives you lemons, here's how to make lemonade	240
Sheff, David	<i>Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey</i>	A father and his addicted son	336
<b>HISTORY</b>			
Alexievich, Svetlana	<i>Second Hand Time</i>	The collapse of the Soviet Union	496
Cullen, David	<i>Columbine</i>	The Columbine shooting	417
Eggers, Dave	<i>Zeitoun</i>	Hurricane Katrina	368
Margolick, David	<i>Elizabeth and Hazel</i>	Desegregation in Little Rock	320
Shetterly, Margaret	<i>Hidden Figures</i>	How black female mathematicians made the space program possible	368

Stark, Peter	<i>Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire</i>	Settling the Pacific Northwest; the politics and the pain	400
<b>THE LARGER WORLD</b>			
Boo, Katherine	<i>Beyond the Beautiful Forevers</i>	Life and death in Mumbai, India	256
McDougall	<i>Born to Run</i>	The Tarahumara runners of Mexico	304
Manji, Irshad	<i>The Trouble with Islam</i>	Islam from a religious woman	240
Nazario, Sonia	<i>Enrique's Journey</i>	A boy travels from Honduras to America to find his mom	299
Yousafzai, Malala	<i>I Am Malala</i>	Standing up for education and being shot by the Taliban	352
<b>SCIENCE</b>			
Gawande, Azul	<i>Complications</i>	The life of a surgeon	269
Glieck, James	<i>Time Travel</i>	A trip through pop culture, science, and literature	352
Marsh, Henry	<i>Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death, and Brain Surgery</i>	The life of a surgeon	288
Roach, Mary	<i>Stiff</i>	What cadavers teach	274
Roach, Mary	<i>Gulp: Travels Through the Gut</i>	Your mysterious gut	352
Sacks, Oliver	<i>The Mind's Eye</i>	Mysteries of the mind	288
Zimmer, Carl	<i>Parasite Rex</i>	World's most dangerous creatures	320

I. TRANSCENDENTALISM:

The Transcendentalist Movement in America began in the early 1830s; the movement began as a reaction to industrialism, and to the idea that man could be replaced by machines. Leaders of the movement, including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, wrote about the transcendence of the human spirit. They felt that the human spirit could transcend (rise above) the petty nature of humanity, especially by fostering a strong connection to the world of nature. This movement was short-lived – it lasted only ten years – and was widely condemned by traditional religion. Emerson was even branded a heretic for preaching about the universal spirit, rather than about God. Still, the Transcendentalist movement had a great influence on American thought: “Whenever writers celebrate the individual, whenever they look to the natural world as a mirror of human lives, whenever they state a belief in the power of intuition to grasp fundamental truths, they owe a great debt to the Transcendentalists” (Prentice Hall: *Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes* 385).

II. From Thoreau's Journals:

“I love nature partly because she is not man, but a retreat from him. None of his institutions control or pervade her. There a different kind of right prevails. In her midst I can be glad with an entire gladness. If this world were all man, I could not stretch myself, I should lose all hope. He [mankind] is constraint, she [nature] is freedom to me. He makes me wish for another world. She makes me content with this.” (January 3, 1853)

“I thrive best on solitude. If I have had a companion only one day in a week, unless it were one or two I could name, I find that the value of the week to me has been seriously affected. It dissipates my days, and often it takes me another week to get over it.” (December 28, 1856)

### III. TRANSCENDENTALISM

**Transcendentalism** is a philosophical and social movement that began around 1836, in New England. It was created as a rebellious reaction to the previous Age of Reason and its rationalist way of thinking. The original members of the movement also believed society and its organized institutions (for example, religion and politics) **were corrupting the purity of individuals**. The movement was created based on ideas from a variety of sources, including Hindu texts, various other religious ideas, and German idealism.

Transcendentalism, as a whole, centered on the writings and teachings of American author **Ralph Waldo Emerson**; it especially focused on his piece entitled, *Self-Reliance*. Transcendentalists were some of the first known **non-conformists** in America, and thus they critiqued contemporary society for its unthinking conformity. Through his writing, Emerson urged everyone to find his own 'original relation to the universe.'

Transcendentalists believed in numerous values, however they can all be condensed into three basic, **essential values: individualism, idealism, and the divinity of nature.**

Transcendentalist followers alleged that organized institutions in society, like religion and politics, negatively tainted individuals' innocence. **At the same time, they believed that individuals are at their best when they are entirely independent and 'self-reliant.'** The notion of thinking for oneself without following the rules set forth by a society is one of the fundamental tenets of transcendentalism. This concept inspires one to have his own free thoughts, based on his own values, rather than the values of others.

During the early 19th Century when this movement was first created, its members were not well-received, or even liked, by many others. However, rather than feeling defeated, true transcendentalists remained true to their movement's new values and continued to advocate for their unpopular, nonconformist ideas. Because of this, many members of society, or the conformists, feared transcendentalists and assumed them to be out to wreak havoc on society. These people were mistaken though, because the **true purpose of becoming an individual, according to transcendentalist belief, is to promote the peace and harmony of becoming oneself.** One of Emerson's famous aphorisms helps clarify this belief: 'conformity is the death of individualism.'

**The second key value of the transcendentalist movement is that of idealism.** This value is a little more self-explanatory. Between the Age of Reason and Transcendentalism was the Romanticism movement; similarly to the British Romantics, this movement focused on the use of **creativity and imagination**, something the Age of Reason obviously greatly strayed from. The focus of idealism in the transcendentalist way of thinking sought to continue to **utilize the innovative, imaginative ideas from the previous Romantic Movement.** The members of the transcendentalist movement hoped to break away from the strict confines of the Age of Reason, and bring society into a more ideal, enjoyable environment.

**The final essential transcendental value is the belief in the divinity of nature.**

Transcendentalists did not believe in organized religion, but they were very spiritual people. They believed that nature is sacred, and that it is imperative for individuals to connect with nature.

Transcendentalists were lovers of nature, and did not think it was something that could be controlled by anyone. Instead, they believed that the **only thing people can control is what is in their own minds**. According to Transcendentalists, if one senses a strong connection to nature, then he will be able to understand his oversoul and, in effect, be able to live a successful, complete life, free from any constraints placed upon him by conforming to society. **The term oversoul is a transcendentalist term, which explains that everything is connected and thus happens for a reason;** therefore, transcendentalists also believe that, since nature is divine, we must not interfere with it and must let it be as God intended.

# Nature Project: Signature Page

Dear Parents and Students:

In the fall of the junior year, students in AP Language will be studying Transcendentalism. Because this study often falls in late October / early November, it seems logical to ask students to complete their nature observations during the summer – the weather is certainly much better!

Students are asked to complete one of these items:

- Three 20-minute observations of nature
- A hike up Badger Mountain or some other meaningful spot

Student safety is paramount! If possible, however, students should complete their observations / hikes alone. This doesn't mean that students are isolated in the wilderness. Instead, students should find a quiet place, apart from others but within earshot or sightlines. Perhaps they may leave a family campsite and walk into the woods, just far enough that they can see and be seen. Perhaps they may choose a buddy with whom to hike up Badger Mountain; the two will hike alone but within sight of each other.

The tenets of Transcendentalism are individuality, idealism, and the divinity of nature. Before their observations, students should read the notes on Transcendentalism; these notes will prepare them to write their journal entries. As students experience quiet times in nature, they should reflect on the experience and consider the importance of nature for all humans.

Please sign below to indicate these things:

1. You have read and understood the guidelines.
2. The nature observation actually took place.

**Student:**

I completed the nature observation assignment.

\_\_\_\_\_

Student signature Date

**Parent:**

My student completed the nature observation assignment.

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature Date