


Day 1: "Solitude" from Walden

Begin lesson

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	Teaching notes
	Click the "Begin lesson" button to view this lesson. Teaching notes for each slide will appear in this box.

Before the Lesson

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Before the Lesson	Teaching notes


Anchor Text

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<p style="text-align: center;">Walden: Solitude By Henry David Thoreau Published 1854</p> <p>This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself. As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt-sleeves, though it is cool as well as cloudy and windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me. The bullfrogs tramp to usher in the night, and the note of the whip-poor-will is borne on the rippling wind from over the water. Sympathy with the flattening alder and poplar leaves almost takes away my breath; yet, like the lake, my serenity is rippled but not ruffled. These small waves raised by the evening wind are as remote from storms as the smooth reflecting surface. Though it is now dark, the wind still blows and murmurs in the wood; the waves still dash, and some creatures halt the rest with their notes. The repose is never complete. The wildest animals do not repose, but seek their prey now; the fox, and skunk, and rabbit, now roam the fields and woods without fear. They are Nature's watchmen—links which connect the days of animated life.</p> <p>When I return to my house I find that visitors have been there and left their cards, either a bunch of flowers, or a wreath of evergreen, or a name in pencil on a yellow walnut leaf or a chip. They who come rarely to the woods take some little piece of the forest into their hands to play with by the way, which they leave, either intentionally or accidentally. One has peeled a willow wand, served it into a pie, and dropped it on my table. I could almost tell if visitors had called.</p>	<h2>Teaching notes</h2> <p>Download and print copies of the anchor text for each student.</p>
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Student Notes Sheet

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<p style="text-align: center;"> LearnZillion</p> <p>Name: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Student notes for: Walden "Solitude"</p> <p>Day: 1</p> <p>1. Look at the title of the text. Why do you think Thoreau chose this title?</p> <p>2. What is Thoreau describing in the first paragraph? What is his tone?</p> <p>3. Thoreau uses the phrase "the parental source of our life" on page 4. What does this word choice tell us?</p>	<h2>Teaching notes</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This guided notes sheet provides students with the text-dependent questions associated with this lesson, and relevant graphic organizers. You may modify these sheets as needed. During class, students can use these sheets to record their responses, notes, or ideas. Use the back to
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record responses to the focus question.

- Following class, collect student notes to use as a formative assessment.

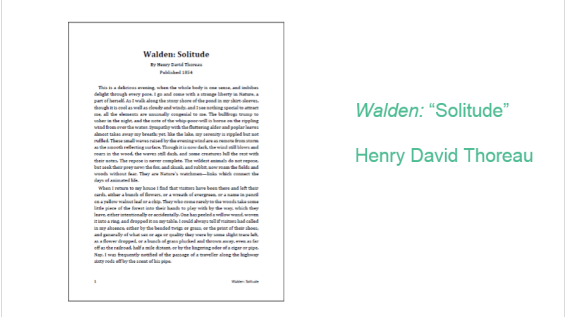
Getting Started

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<h1>Getting Started</h1>	Teaching notes


Introduction 1 of 2

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 <p style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">Walden: "Solitude"</p> <p style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">Henry David Thoreau</p>	Teaching notes
	<p>Pacing: 5 minutes</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hand out copies of the text and the Student Notes Sheet to each of your students. ■ Split them into groups of 3-5 students and have them sit closely together. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have students read the text aloud with one another, marking passages that resonate with them as they read together (they will annotate more heavily later on). ■ After they read, have students consider the questions together, consulting the text for evidence.

Introduction 2 of 2

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 <p>As we explore the text we will be asking and answering questions.</p> <p>We will find and keep track of evidence from the text to support our ideas about each question.</p>	<h3>Teaching notes</h3> <p>Pacing: 5 minutes</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hand out copies of the text and the Student Notes Sheet to each of your students.▪ Split them into groups of 3-5 students and have them sit closely together.▪ Have students read the text aloud with one another, marking passages that resonate with them as they read together (they will annotate more heavily later on).▪ After they read, have students consider the questions together, consulting the text for evidence.
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Exploring the Text

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<h1>Exploring the Text</h1>	<h3>Teaching notes</h3>
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Supporting Question 1

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Look at the title of the text. Why do you think Thoreau chose this title?

Teaching notes

Pacing: 5 minutes

Standard: RI.11-12.4

Purpose: This question emphasizes the importance of considering text features and requires students to begin using the text as evidence and considering the central ideas of

"Solitude." It sets students up for the subsequent questions for Day 1 and the unit as a whole.

Answer: Thoreau chose the title of "Solitude" to immediately give the reader an idea about his life at Walden Pond and to begin developing a central idea of the text. He also gave the text this title to challenge the reader's idea of solitude by offering his own perspective--that is, solitude is not the same thing as loneliness.

Look for students....

- Considering how the title relates to the opening of the text.
- Beginning to think about Thoreau's perspective on the idea of solitude.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "How does the title relate to the opening paragraph of the text? Does the first paragraph describe solitude?"
- Ask, "How is Thoreau's idea of solitude different from yours?"

Additional Notes:

- You may want to have students look up "solitude" in the dictionary and consider which definition is closest to the way Thoreau is defining it.
- Have students draw from evidence in the text to support their thoughts. Though this may not seem like a difficult question, it is important to have students begin to use higher-level thinking and academic vocabulary.

Supporting Question 2

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What is Thoreau describing in the first paragraph? What is his tone?

Teaching notes

Pacing: 5 minutes

Standard: RI.11-12.1

Purpose: By having students focus on the main ideas and tone of one paragraph, they are using the same skills they will need to identify them in the whole text, but in a more

manageable way. The first paragraph is also often the best indication of what the text is about.

Answer: In the first paragraph, Thoreau describes the inspiration and community that he experiences when he is alone in the natural world. He personifies Nature to portray his feeling that it provides companionship. He also compares himself to the lake, saying "like the lake, my serenity is rippled but not ruffled." While he is serene, he is not at all bored or lifeless, but is breathless with amazement and wonder. We can see that Thoreau sees Nature as a companion when he uses phrases like "a delicious evening," "I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself," and "imbibes delight in every pore." These phrases create a very fond and intimate tone when describing Nature, which reflects how Thoreau feels about being in Nature.

Look for students....

- Moving from a simple answer of "nature" to a more complicated idea, pulling out the central theme of communion or society with nature.
- Considering the stylistic elements used by Thoreau to convey his point (personification, simile).
- Considering the tone of the passage and what it means about Thoreau's emotions and perspective.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Where do you see simile in this passage? What does that simile say about Thoreau's perspective?
- Where is metaphor in this passage? What does that metaphor tell us about Thoreau's ideas about nature?
- What is Thoreau's tone in this paragraph? Support your answer with text evidence (diction, imagery, etc.)
- What could the central theme of this passage be?

- What is the effect of Thoreau's use of alliteration in this paragraph?
- Look up the word 'imbibe.' Why is this word particularly effective in multiple ways?

Additional Notes:

- Something that is important on Day 1 is getting your students excited about the text and having them relate to it.
- One way to achieve everything you want to with this question is by having students work on individual questions in groups or partners, then sharing with the class. This is also a way to build confidence in your struggling learners by assigning them the more manageable questions or questions with the smallest scope.

Supporting Question 3

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Thoreau uses the phrase "the perennial source of our life" on page 4. What does this word choice tell us?

Teaching notes

Pacing: 5 minutes

Standard: RI.11-12.4

Purpose: As a master wordsmith, Thoreau did not choose his words flippantly. "Perennial" is a wonderful example of saying a great deal with only one word. It forces readers to

think about flowers, but also about the eternal, continual renewal of Nature as well as connecting Nature to life. This focus on individual words to convey a larger meaning is essential in future days of the unit.

Answer: "Perennial" means "lasting for an infinite amount of time, eternal," but it also refers to plants which have a life cycle lasting more than two years. It can also refer to something which lasts continually throughout the entire year, as a stream. This word choice shows how skillful Thoreau is as a wordsmith because each meaning makes the seemingly simple concept much more nuanced and beautiful. The use of "perennial" indicates that the source of man's life is Nature and blurs the line which differentiates man from nature.

Look for students....

- Defining "perennial." This may begin as their own definition, but encourage them to seek multiple definitions.
- Considering how those multiple definitions develop the themes of the text.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What does "perennial" mean?"
- Ask, "What do you think the "perennial source of our life" is?"
- Ask, "What does Thoreau think the "perennial source of our life" is?"
- Ask, "How is your idea of the "perennial source of our life" different from Thoreau's?"
- Ask, "What other words could Thoreau have used in this sentence? What is the effect of those words?"
- Ask, "How does each definition of perennial develop the central ideas of the text?"

Additional Notes:

- Allow students to express their own perspective about the perennial source of life. This will make the connection between such a simple sentence and a complex

worldview, which is what Thoreau is doing.

- Consider words such as "ultimate," "eternal," and "seasonal" in place of "perennial" and consider the effect.
- Have students make the connection between this one sentence and the complex theme of man's communion with Nature.

Supporting Question 4

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How does Thoreau feel about his nearest neighbor being "a mile distant" in paragraph 3?

Teaching notes

Pacing: 5 minutes

Standard: RI.11-12.1

Purpose: Students will use text evidence to consider how Thoreau portrays his environment and his neighbors, which helps students understand his notion of solitude.

Thoreau's introduction of human and natural characters throughout the text specifically helps to convey his perspective about the world. In the next few days, students will develop this idea of Thoreau's society and how he sees neighborhood and community.

Answer: Thoreau describes the solitude of his location, saying that it "is as much Asia or Africa as New England." He then asks himself (and the reader), "For what reason have I this vast range and circuit...for my privacy, abandoned to me by men?" He does not seem disappointed by his privacy and solitude, but considers it to be "sufficient space," describing it with possessive pronouns such as "my own sun and moon and stars." He also describes his spring visitors as men who "plainly fished much more in the Walden Pond of their own natures and baited their hooks with darkness" and who left with "light baskets" and light souls. These visitors found self-actualization by being alone with only Nature as a companion, as does Thoreau. Additionally, Thoreau's allusion to Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" serves to reinforce the idea that man understands himself when he is self-reliant and in touch with the natural world.

Look for students....

- Considering how Thoreau answers his own questions, "For what reason have I this vast range and circuit, some square miles of unfrequented forest, for my privacy, abandoned to me by men?"
- Questioning what Thoreau's use of the phrase "sufficient space" tells us about his perspective.
- Describing why Thoreau uses possessive pronouns throughout the paragraph.
- Discussing the meaning behind Thoreau's fishing metaphor.
- Discovering and contemplating Thoreau's allusion to Thomas Gray's poem, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What is the tone of this paragraph? What does that relay about Thoreau's feelings on solitude?"
- Ask, "Why does Thoreau use the phrase, 'sufficient space?'"
- Ask, "Why does Thoreau use possessive pronouns?"
- Ask, "What is the effect of Thoreau's fishing metaphor in this paragraph? How does the metaphor develop the theme?"
- Say, "When Thoreau says the visitors left 'the world to darkness and to me,' he is alluding to a poem by Thomas Gray entitled, 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.' After reading the poem, consider what effect this allusion has to the central themes of the text."
- Say, "Thoreau asks, 'For what reason have I this vast range and circuit, some square miles of unfrequented forest, for my privacy, abandoned to me by men?' What answer does he give?"

Additional Notes:

- "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" by Thomas Gray can easily be found online. This would be a good homework assignment for students, or an extension activity in class for more advanced learners.
- Thoreau believes that he has been given this "vast range and circuit, some square miles of unfrequented forest" in order that he can achieve self-realization and spiritual and physical health. This is the central question of the text and of vital importance for students to consider. Be sure that you address this question in class and discuss it together.

Focus Question

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<h1>Focus Question</h1>	Teaching notes

Focus Question

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How does Thoreau develop the ideas of solitude and communion with Nature over the course of the text?

Teaching notes

Pacing: 20 minutes

Standard: RI.11-12.2

Purpose: Students must understand the central ideas of this text in order to move forward. In the case of Thoreau, the central ideas are not necessarily easy to identify and the way that they interact is complicated

and intricate. By rereading the text multiple times in search of evidence and common themes and then considering how those ideas interact and complicate one another, students will begin to fully understand the text's central ideas and the author's purpose.

Answer: "Solitude," the fifth chapter of Thoreau's *Walden*, focuses on two central ideas--solitude and man's relationship to Nature--which *Walden* develops and refines throughout the text. From the first paragraph we see Thoreau's fondness of nature, and we soon realize that it is his companion, his protection, and his inspiration. It offers "friendship" as well as "sweet and beneficent society." The chapter is titled, "Solitude," which gives the reader an image of being alone in the world. However, throughout the text Thoreau complicates the idea of solitude. Thoreau believes that solitude is inevitable for man, saying "a man thinking or working is always alone." However, he also says that he has not found "the companion that is so companionable as solitude." In the third paragraph he discusses the severe geographical isolation in which he lives, after which he describes that the "most sweet and tender, the most innocent and encouraging society" comes from the natural world. He considers the time in which he doubted his ability to live in solitude to be a "slight insanity" and talks about the protection and empathy that Nature provide him. Finally, he describes the value of Nature for healing and uses various mythological references to convey his meaning. Essentially, Thoreau's solitude takes place in Nature although Nature itself is company and society to Thoreau. In his opinion, solitude in a vacuum would make self-realization impossible, for he would have nothing against which to weigh himself.

Look for students....

- Explicating Thoreau's notion of solitude and how it develops across the text.
- Discussing Nature's importance to Thoreau.
- Rereading the question and the text multiple times.

- Looking throughout the text for examples (not only on one page).
- Choosing the most relevant examples to use as evidence.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What ideas, themes, or motifs does Thoreau keep returning to?"
- Ask, "Thoreau is creating an argument here, though his structure and reasoning is not straightforward or simple. What is he trying to say?"
- Ask, "Is Thoreau's concept of solitude different from yours? If so, in what ways?"
- Ask, "Why would Thoreau talk about solitude at the same time as he talks about being in Nature?"
- Ask, "Where do you feel the most solitary?"

Additional Notes:

- This text will be difficult for struggling learners or ELL students, as it is very dense and has complex ideas. Use the comprehension skill videos throughout the lessons and allow them to discuss the text in groups before giving answers to the whole class.
- We will discuss vocabulary in a later lesson, so only define words for students if it seems particularly necessary.
- While discussing the supporting questions throughout the day is critical to ensure that all students are grasping the most critical ideas, make sure that they leave the classroom with a written product based off this central question. On the student notes sheet, there is space for students to compose their final thoughts in answer to this question at the end of the class.
- We are not trying to push students to an understanding of the difference between solitude and loneliness on Day 1, so if students ask questions about it be encouraging that they have already begun to consider it, but tell them that we will delve into that on Day 2.
- If you have extra time after students have written their responses, you can have selected students read their responses to the class.


After the Lesson

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<h1>After the Lesson</h1>	Teaching notes

Comprehension Skill Video

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 <p>Core Lesson Reread your evidence and ask yourself, "How do these ideas interact?"</p> <p>Communion with Nature liberty in Nature Solitude chapter title</p> <p>in self</p> <p>LearnZillion</p> <p>Visit https://haywood.lzill.co/r/44368</p>	Teaching notes