


Day 5: "Solitude" from Walden

Begin lesson

Card 1 of 11

	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 flattering 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 always tell if visitors had called.</p>	<p>Teaching notes</p> <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: 5</p> <p>Focus question: How does Thoreau use rhetoric to develop his message?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Teaching notes</p> <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 record responses to the focus question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Following class, collect student notes to use as a formative assessment.
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Getting Started

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Getting Started

Teaching notes

Introduction 1 of 2

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Walden: Solitude
By Henry David Thoreau

Walden: "Solitude"
Henry David Thoreau

Teaching notes

Pacing: 5 minutes

Notes:


- Remind students a bit about the most important things that were discussed each day.
- This might be a good time to ask students to give brief responses to the central questions of Days 1-4 to

refresh their memories.

- Give students plenty of unassisted time to write individually. Use these responses as assessments.

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>refresh their memories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Give students plenty of unassisted time to write individually. Use these responses as assessments.	<p>Pacing: 5 minutes</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Remind students a bit about the most important things that were discussed each day.This might be a good time to ask students to give brief responses to the central questions of Days 1-4 to

Focus Question

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<h1>Focus Question</h1>	<h3>Teaching notes</h3>

Focus Question

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After reading Walden: "Solitude" by Thoreau, write an essay in which you discuss how Thoreau develops multiple ideas to communicate his message. Be sure to include evidence from the text that we have discussed and collected over the past few days.

Teaching notes

Pacing: 45 minutes

Standard: RI.11-12.2

Purpose: In answering this question, students will demonstrate their ability to cite the evidence that builds the defining ideas across the text. They will also demonstrate their ability to analyze how the ideas

interact and work together to shape a cohesive and convincing argument.

Answer:

"Solitude," the fifth chapter of Thoreau's Walden, focuses on two central ideas--solitude and man's relationship to Nature--developing and redefining them 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." In the third paragraph, he discusses the severe geographical isolation in which he lives, after which he describes that the "innocent and encouraging society" which comes from the natural world. Nature connects "the days of animated life" for Thoreau, which implies that it gives him a way of understanding not only the world, but life itself. 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. Essentially, Thoreau's solitude takes place in Nature although Nature itself is company and society to Thoreau. In Thoreau's opinion, solitude in a vacuum would make self-realization impossible, for he would have nothing against which to weigh himself.

Ordinarily, solitude is an occasional necessity for man and we align it with loneliness. Thoreau separates the two, saying that not only is he not lonely, but he has never found "a companion so companionable as solitude." Thoreau feels sympathy with Nature, and is at peace there, "like the lake." Nature provides "sweet, beneficent society" and "unaccountable friendliness" to Thoreau, making human society insignificant. In fact, Nature is the most kindred and "humanest" of all elements to Thoreau. When he questions, "Why should I feel lonely? is not our planet in the Milky Way?" he requires his readers to consider their place in this vast universe and shifts

the focus off of the individual self. To him, solitude is merely a physical state while loneliness is an emotion to be avoided. Nature guards against loneliness because being in nature draws him outside of his own self which allows him the duality that he discusses in paragraph 11--considering one's self while simultaneously being yourself. Thoreau gives both an argument against loneliness and an argument against the frequent society of mankind. While loneliness and society seem to be contradictory, Thoreau posits that they are actually intricately connected.

Thoreau is writing "Solitude" to persuade his audience that living alone in close communion with nature is good for the body, mind, and soul. Using simile, Thoreau compares his serenity to a lake's calm surface and compares the friendliness he feels from Nature to an atmosphere that sustains him. This reveals a deep connection that Thoreau feels between his own emotions and spirituality and Nature. In paragraph 4, Thoreau uses metaphor to describe visitors to nature who seek understanding of themselves. The visitors come to Walden Pond with dark thoughts and feelings but leave lightened. He also compares the night to a "black kernel". The night represents Thoreau's time alone in Nature, out of which he hopes for a time of growth and life. The personification of Nature is the literary device that Thoreau uses most in "Solitude." The wind "roars," the waves "dash," and animals are "Nature's watchmen." Nature herself is given a clear personality, from the capitalization of her name to the "sweet and beneficent society" and "infinite and unaccountable friendliness" that she provides Thoreau. Even the smallest part of the natural world, the pine needles, "swelled with sympathy and befriended" Thoreau. Thoreau's use of figurative language aligns him with Nature and makes Nature seem like a real person. By living in close contact with the "person" of Nature, Thoreau does not feel lonely in the least. It also helps the reader understand the ways that living in Nature is good for Thoreau and why he is encouraging others to do the same.

While "Solitude" may seem to be an essay of fondness to Nature, Thoreau uses a variety of rhetorical devices to persuade his audience. Men often say that they "should think [Thoreau] would feel lonesome...and want to be nearer to folks." Yet he prefers a life of solitude and self-reliance in his small cabin surrounded by Nature. He uses a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos to achieve his purpose. Thoreau uses ethos in paragraph 6, when he describes the spiritual benefits of living a solitary life in communion with Nature. This ethical appeal reveals Thoreau's belief in a higher being and connects his message to religion and spirituality. Thoreau uses pathos in paragraph 4 when he vividly describes his own emotions when in communion with Nature, saying that even storms are "Æolian music to a healthy and innocent ear" and that "the gentle rain" is good for him, for he enjoys the "friendship of the seasons." In paragraphs 12-13, Thoreau masterfully uses logos to give clear and logical reasons for a life of solitude. He says that "a man thinking or working is always alone" and that "solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows." He also says that "society is commonly too cheap" and that when we spend too much time with one another we "lose some respect for one another." Through his use of rhetoric, Thoreau expresses his belief that only through communion with the natural world can one truly understand himself and find personal peace and health.

Look for students....

- Using text evidence from across the text to support claims about "Solitude".
- Identifying and tracking the development of the key ideas as well as their interaction with one another to convey Thoreau's argument.
- Identifying and assessing the literary devices used and their effect.
- Examining Thoreau's rhetorical appeals and their effectiveness.


After the Lesson

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

Comprehension Skill Video

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	Teaching notes
	Use this video as an intervention tool for students who struggle to answer the focus question. The video uses a metacognitive approach to model the targeted reading comprehension skills.