

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

<p><b>Course/Grade</b> English 11</p>	<p><b>Genre Focus</b>          Nonfiction and Poetry  <u>Nonfiction:</u> from “Nature” by Ralph Waldo Emerson; “Of Man and the Stream of Time” by Rachel Carson; “Touching the Earth” by Bell Hooks  <u>Poetry:</u> “A Blessing” by James Wright; “The Honey Tree” by Mary Oliver; “Flying at Night” by Ted Kooser; “The Peace of Wild Things” by Wendell Berry; “The Gift Outright” by Robert Frost; “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes</p>	<p><b>Pacing</b> 8 days</p>
<p><b>Reading: Text complexity and the growth of comprehension</b></p> <p>The Reading standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade “staircase” of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level. Whatever they are reading, students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts, considering a wider range of textual evidence, and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts. (CCSS, Introduction, 8)</p>		
<p><b>Note on range and content of student reading</b></p> <p>To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing. Along with high-quality contemporary works, these texts should be chosen from among seminal U.S. documents, the classics of American literature, and the timeless dramas of Shakespeare. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images; the ability to evaluate intricate arguments; and the capacity to surmount the challenges posed by complex texts. (CCSS, College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, 35)</p>		
<p><b>An integrated model of literacy</b></p> <p>Although the Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout the Common Core State Standards document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research. (CCSS, Introduction, 4)</p>		
<p><b>Research and media skills blended into the Standards as a whole</b></p> <p>To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today’s curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understanding are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section. (CCSS, Introduction, 4)</p>		

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

**Strands/Topics**

**Standard Statements**

**Reading Literature/Key Ideas and Details**

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.
2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Reading Literature/Craft and Structure**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

**Reading Literature/Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

**Reading Literature/Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

**Reading Informational Text/Key Ideas and Details**

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.
2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

**Reading Informational Text/Craft and Structure**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).
5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

**Reading Informational Text/Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

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.

**Reading Informational Text/Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

**Writing/Text Types and Purposes**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**Writing/Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

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

**Writing/Range of Writing**

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.

**Speaking and Listening/Comprehension and Collaboration**

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.
2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

**Speaking and Listening/Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

**Language/Conventions of Standard English**

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
  - a. Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
  - b. Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, *Garner's Modern American Usage*) as needed.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
  - a. Observe hyphenation conventions.
  - b. Spell correctly.

**Language/Knowledge of Language**

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
  - a. Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

**Language/Vocabulary Acquisition and Usage**

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.
  - b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive*, *conception*, *conceivable*).
  - c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
  - d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
  - a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
  - b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

**Instructional Strategies**

**Day One: Introduction to Nature and the Environment: A Poetic Frame**

Part One: Begin with the following guiding questions:

- What is our relationship with nature?
- How does the natural world affect us physically, emotionally, economically, and spiritually?

Ask students to complete a journal entry in which they explore these questions for themselves. Encourage them to reflect upon their own lives for meaningful encounters with the natural world. Ask students to share their responses either in whole or small groups.

Part Two: Have students read the following poems by James Wright and Mary Oliver (appendix) and discuss how each poet portrays the human relationship with the natural world.

<p>A Blessing by James Wright</p> <p>Just off the highway to Rochester, Minnesota,          Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass.          And the eyes of those two Indian ponies          Darken with kindness.          They have come gladly out of the willows          To welcome my friend and me.          We step over the barbed wire into the pasture          Where they have been grazing all day, alone.          They ripple tensely, they can hardly contain their happiness          That we have come.          They bow shyly as wet swans. They love each other.          There is no loneliness like theirs.          At home once more,          They begin munching the young tufts of spring in the darkness.          I would like to hold the slenderer one in my arms,          For she has walked over to me          And nuzzled my left hand.          She is black and white,          Her mane falls wild on her forehead,          And the light breeze moves me to caress her long ear          That is delicate as the skin over a girl's wrist.          Suddenly I realize</p>	<p>The Honey Tree by Mary Oliver</p> <p>And so at last I climbed          the honey tree, ate          chunks of pure light, ate          the bodies of bees that could not          get out of my way, ate          the dark hair of the leaves,          the rippling bark,          the heartwood. Such          frenzy! But joy does that,          I'm told, in the beginning.          Later, maybe,          I'll come here only          sometimes and with a          middling hunger. But now          I climb like a snake,          I clamber like a bear to          the nuzzling place, to the light          salvaged by the thighs          of bees and racked up          in the body of the tree.          Oh, anyone can see          how I love myself at last!</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

That if I stepped out of my body I would break  
Into blossom.

how I love the world! climbing  
by day or night  
in the wind, in the leaves, kneeling  
at the secret rip, the cords  
of my body stretching  
and singing in the  
heaven of appetite.

In small groups, instruct students to discuss the following questions and to provide direct textual support from the poems for their answers.

1. Compare and contrast each speaker's encounter with nature.
2. What attitude toward nature does each speaker convey?
3. How does the poet's management of language contribute to your understanding of the significance of the encounter with nature? What techniques in particular make the experiences vital and engaging for the reader?
4. What is the most important line in the poem? Come to a consensus within your group and justify your answer.
5. Which experience with nature is more attractive to you as a reader? In other words, if you could experience the same feelings as those expressed by the speaker in each poem, which experience would you find more alluring? satisfying? uplifting? sublime? Why? Justify your answer with evidence from the poem and some illustration from your own life.
6. Create a new title that captures the thematic heart for each poem using a word or phrase from within the poem. Again, justify your choice of title.

After the groups have discussed their answers, have members of each group share their answers with the whole class.

Exit Ticket: Which group's new title was the most effective or engaging? Why?

**Day Two: Non-Print Frame: Video**

Revisit some of the group titles identified in the exit ticket from yesterday's lesson. Revisit the central subjects of each poem regarding transcendent encounters with nature. Then introduce the following discussion questions:

- Regardless of where you were born, some argue that going into nature is a way of going home. What do you think they mean by this claim?
- How might going into a nature reserve or a national park call to mind a return to one's origins, a going home?

Foster a whole group discussion in which students explore possible answers. Then show the video clip of Dayton Duncan discussing these questions: <http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/watch-video/#762>. (The clip is from Ken Burns' Documentary: *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*.)

Guided viewing and listening questions may include:

- What does Duncan claim lies embedded within our species' DNA?
- Why does he allude to the Garden of Eden?
- What relationship with nature does Duncan imply by the phrase "masters of the natural world"?
- What relationship with nature is he advocating?
- (You may wish to show the video clip again and instruct students to look for match cuts before discussing the following questions.) Notice the

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

images that Burns shows while Duncan is speaking. What is the significance of the image of the small lake beneath the mountains during sunset or that of the wolf trotting along a pastoral hillside? How has Burns created match cuts that correspond to the content of Duncan's voiceover?

- Also consider asking students to share their own experiences attending national, state or even metro parks. Explore why they and their families make these visits. Of what value are they?

Introduce the homework: Explain to students that they will be examining several claims about nature and the environment made by various writers, thinkers, and scientists over the last few centuries. Instruct them to carefully comprehend each claim by paraphrasing it. Then ask students to write a response in which they reflect on the content of the claim by providing a personal example, a reaction, or a critique. See the handout entitled "Nature Environment Quotations" (appendix) for the list of quotations, a graphic organizer, and a teacher example.

**Day Three: Pre-Reading Emerson**

Review student responses to the quotations they completed for homework. After discussing the common themes emerging from the collection of quotations, introduce Ralph Waldo Emerson and the transcendental movement. (See the background information on pages 360-365 of the Pearson text outlining Emerson's life and legacy and some of the core tenets of transcendentalism.)

After the introduction, explain to students that they will be previewing the core text for this unit by exploring some of Emerson's quotations out of context. Students will examine six quotations from Emerson's "Nature" and translate (paraphrase) each. Then they will return to the list of quotations they analyzed for homework and compare the content and attitudes toward nature expressed by the other thinkers. See the handout entitled "Encountering Emerson" (appendix) for the list of Emerson quotations, a graphic organizer, and a teacher example. Students may complete this assignment individually or in groups. You may wish to divide the class into small groups and assign each group a different Emerson quote to compare. Share student responses in a whole group forum.

Homework: Have students read "Transcendentalism Ideas: Definitions," a collection of statements about transcendentalism made by its exponents: <http://transcendentalism-legacy.tamu.edu/ideas/tr-aldef.html> . Have them read all the statements and then draw at least three conclusions about the movement as a whole. Alternatively, you may wish to provide students with more guided questions to explore such as the following:

1. What is the relationship between the individual and society according to transcendentalists? Which entity is more important? Why?
2. What is their attitude toward tradition? Should tradition be revered or challenged? Why?
3. How do the critics of the movement view it?
4. How do transcendentalists view truth? Can we arrive at truth through our senses? Why or why not?
5. How is the individual able to comprehend God according to the transcendentalists?
6. Is transcendentalism more a philosophy or a religion?

**Day Four: Framing "Nature" with Non-Print Text: Van Gogh's *The Starry Night***

Revisit the homework and share answers to the guided questions or create a collective list of conclusions about the movement. Then introduce "Nature" by Emerson. Explain that this essay is considered to be the seminal transcendental text. Explain that Emerson uses the image of stars in the night sky as a symbol of one of the themes of transcendentalism. Then project an image of Van Gogh's painting *The Starry Night*.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Van\\_Gogh\\_-\\_Starry\\_Night\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Van_Gogh_-_Starry_Night_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

**Columbus City Schools  
English Language Arts Curriculum  
Reading**

Have students view the painting for at least two minutes and then answer the guided viewing questions on the handout entitled “Starry Night” (appendix). This introduction to the relationship between the human spirit and the natural world is designed to promote reflective thinking and increase student engagement before encountering the more challenging print text of Emerson’s “Nature.” After students have time to respond in writing, foster either small group or whole group discussion in which students share their responses to the questions. Briefly discuss the relationship between Van Gogh’s painting (and quotation) and the central idea of Emersonian transcendentalism as expressed in his essay “Nature”: within nature humans may find spiritual communion.

Extension/homework/or exit ticket: Have students read the poem below by Ted Kooser (appendix) and explore similarities between the poem and the painting.

Flying at Night  
by Ted Kooser

Above us, stars. Beneath us, constellations.  
Five billion miles away, a galaxy dies  
like a snowflake falling on water. Below us,  
some farmer, feeling the chill of that distant death,  
snaps on his yard light, drawing his sheds and barn  
back into the little system of his care.  
All night, the cities, like shimmering novas,  
tug with bright streets at lonely lights like his.

**Day Five: Close Reading Emerson’s “Nature”**

Instruct students to read “Nature” (appendix) by themselves, taking notes on the content and style of the selection. Then re-read the essay aloud and guide students through the close-reading questions outlined in the table below.

Text Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Text-Dependent Questions
<p>To go into <b>solitude</b>, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds will separate between</p>	<p><b>solitude:</b> seclusion; isolation</p>	<p><b>(Q1)</b> What is ironic about Emerson’s claim that “a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society”? <i>When we seek solitude, we usually imagine going into a private room, one’s chamber, but Emerson claims that we must leave our homes just as we must depart from others to truly be alone.</i></p> <p><b>(Q2)</b> Explain the paradox of the second sentence. How can one be both alone and yet not “solitary”? <i>Emerson suggests that while we are engaged in reading and writing, we are somehow connected to others: the writer of the</i></p>



**Columbus City Schools  
English Language Arts Curriculum  
Reading**

<p>him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the <b>perpetual</b> presence of the <b>sublime</b>. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these <b>envoys</b> of beauty, and light the universe with their <b>admonishing</b> smile.</p> <p>The stars awaken a certain <b>reverence</b>, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a <b>kindred</b> impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man <b>extort</b> her</p>	<p><b>perpetual:</b> continuous; uninterrupted <b>sublime:</b> beautiful; transcendent</p> <p><b>envoys:</b> messengers <b>admonishing:</b> warning</p> <p><b>reverence:</b> admiration; veneration</p> <p><b>kindred:</b> related</p> <p><b>extort:</b> to take by force</p>	<p><i>words we read and the audience for whom we write. Therefore, even though we may be physically alone, we are connected intellectually to others.</i></p> <p><b>(Q3)</b> What is Emerson’s attitude toward the night sky? Cite several words that support your determination of attitude. <i>The night sky inspires awe in Emerson. Words such as “reverence,” “heavenly,” “sublime,” “adore,” and “beauty” convey his attitude of admiration.</i></p> <p><b>(Q4)</b> How does Emerson’s syntax further convey his attitude of wonder and awe? <i>Emerson employs interrogative syntax and parallel structure to convey his astonishment.</i></p> <p><b>(Q5)</b> To what does Emerson compare the stars in the night sky? <i>He compares the stars to lights in the “city of God” that act as messengers. Additionally, Emerson personifies the stars as smiling down on earth.</i></p> <p><b>(Q6)</b> For what purpose does Emerson include the anecdote about people seeing stars for only one night thousands of years ago? <i>Emerson seeks to awaken in the reader a profound appreciation for the stars in the sky. His anecdote reveals how we have taken for granted the miracle of starlight because we have grown accustomed to it.</i></p> <p><b>(Q7)</b> What attribute of the stars does Emerson claim inspires reverence in us? <i>Emerson claims their inaccessibility makes us revere them; we can see them but cannot reach them.</i></p> <p><b>(Q8)</b> How does the wise man approach nature? <i>The wise do not seek to exploit nature for their own ends but maintain respect and a humble curiosity, for the wise recognize that they will never fully understand nature.</i></p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

<p>secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.</p> <p>When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by <b>manifold</b> natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is <b>indubitably</b> made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best</p>	<p><b>manifold:</b> assorted; various</p> <p><b>indubitably:</b> unquestionable; undoubtedly</p>	<p><b>(Q9)</b> Emerson employs a metaphor to illustrate the relationship between a foolish person and nature. Explain the metaphor. <i>Emerson compares nature to a toy with which only a fool would play. This metaphor develops both his respect and reverence for nature while revealing his criticism of those who do not share his view.</i></p> <p><b>(Q10)</b> Provide a present-day example of how some have made a toy of nature. <i>Answers will vary.</i></p> <p><b>(Q11)</b> What do you think Emerson means by the phrase “poetical sense”? <i>Although ambiguous, Emerson clarifies that he is not referring to individual components of nature such as might be of interest to the scientist, but, rather, he is referring to the collective of nature and its “impression” on the perceiver.</i></p> <p><b>(Q12)</b> Contrast the perceptions of the woodcutter and the poet as they relate to trees. <i>The woodcutter views a tree as a “stick of timber” to be used whereas the poet doesn’t see the tree as utility but as an object of beauty and inspiration.</i></p> <p><b>(Q13)</b> What is the difference between owning a farm and owning the landscape? <i>Emerson claims one cannot own the landscape for it is a view, a perspective, not something subject to surveys and deeds.</i></p> <p><b>(Q14)</b> How does the poet “own” the landscape? <i>The poet has a specialized perspective that encompasses the horizon, that can see all the parts as harmonious. This capacity is what Emerson means by the word “own” in this usage.</i></p> <p><b>(Q15)</b> Emerson implies multiple meanings of the word “own.” Discuss the purpose of the various denotations and connotations of this word in this paragraph.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Columbus City Schools  
English Language Arts Curriculum  
Reading

<p>part of these men's farms, yet to this their <b>warranty-</b> deeds give no <b>title</b>.</p>          <p>To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child.</p> <p>The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward</p>	<p><b>warranty:</b> guarantee <b>title:</b> legal right to property</p>	<p><i>Emerson explores the western conception of the word “own” as meaning to possess property as in the farmers claim that they own their woodlots and pasture. However, Emerson contrasts that meaning with a more poetical connotation wherein the word comes to mean possessing for oneself but not privately. Rather, the poet belongs to nature as does nature belong to the poet.</i></p> <p><b>(Q16)</b> Emerson uses the word “integrity” twice in this paragraph. Look up the etymology of this word and explain how its original meaning contributes to the main idea of this paragraph. <i>The word is derived from the Latin words “in” and “tag,” meaning untouched and therefore whole. This word choice contributes to Emerson’s assertion that nature should not be individuated. Instead, we should recognize and appreciate its wholeness.</i></p> <p><b>(Q17)</b> Note the pattern of diction that relates to property. Explain how this pattern supports Emerson’s main idea in this paragraph. <i>Words such as “owns,” “property,” “warranty,” “deeds,” and “title” all contribute to Emerson’s assertion that what is most “charming” about one’s land cannot be owned in a conventional or contractual sense; it is to be appreciated in concert with all natural phenomena.</i></p>          <p><b>(Q18)</b> Why do so few adults truly see nature according to Emerson? <i>Adults have grown accustomed to seeing nature “superficially.” They only register sense impressions, not feelings.</i></p> <p><b>(Q19)</b> With what faculties does the child see the sun? <i>Children see the sun with both their eyes and their hearts.</i></p> <p><b>(Q20)</b> What do you think Emerson means by the phrase “spirit of infancy”? <i>Emerson implies that children are more open to wonder and delight and that is the perspective he advocates we all should embrace in the presence of nature.</i></p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

<p>senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His <b>intercourse</b> with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, -- he is my creature, and <b>maugre</b> all his <b>impertinent</b> griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a <b>cordial</b> of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is</p>	<p><b>intercourse:</b> communication</p> <p><b>maugre:</b> in spite of; notwithstanding</p> <p><b>impertinent:</b> rude; insolent</p> <p><b>cordial:</b> stimulating medicine</p>	<p><b>(Q21)</b> To what does Emerson compare man’s “intercourse with heaven and earth”? Why does he employ this metaphor? <i>Emerson compares this communication to food in order to underscore how necessary and life-sustaining such contact is.</i></p> <p><b>(Q22)</b> Why does Emerson personify nature in this section? How does this technique support his main idea in this paragraph? <i>Emerson’s decision to provide nature with a voice that utters the words “he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me” illustrates his point that nature is a benevolent force that bestows compassion and sympathy on humanity.</i></p> <p><b>(Q23)</b> Emerson compares nature to a stage set for what purpose? <i>Emerson employs metaphor to compare nature to the scenery that may be used as a backdrop for a comedy or a tragedy. This metaphor supports his view that nature is the perfect accompaniment for any human emotion.</i></p> <p><b>(Q24)</b> Examine the sentence that begins with the phrase “Crossing a bare common.” Examine the rhetorical effect of Emerson’s syntax. How does the word order support the meaning of the sentence? <i>Emerson layers prepositional phrases in this left-branching sentence to create a sense of accumulation of bleak sensations that are then contrasted by the periodic main clause: “I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration.” This syntax creates suspense and irony, for the reader does not expect such a delightful ending after trudging through such words as “bare,” “puddles,” “twilight,” and “clouded.”</i></p> <p><b>(Q25)</b> What is paradoxical and metaphoric about Emerson’s sentence: “I am glad to the brink of fear.”</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

<p>always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a <b>decorum</b> and <b>sanctity</b> reign, a <b>perennial</b> festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, -- no disgrace, no <b>calamity</b>, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair.</p> <p>Standing on the bare ground, -- my head bathed by the <b>blithe</b> air, and uplifted into infinite space, -- all <b>mean</b> egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, -- master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and <b>connate</b> than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds</p>	<p><b>decorum:</b> dignity  <b>sanctity:</b> holiness  <b>perennial:</b> perpetual; reoccurring</p> <p><b>calamity:</b> disaster; misfortune</p> <p><b>blithe:</b> happy; carefree  <b>mean:</b> selfish</p> <p><b>connate:</b> kindred; native</p>	<p><i>While one would usually consider gladness and fear to be opposite sensations, Emerson's statement reveals the surprising and almost terrifying exhilaration one encounters in nature. He adds to this meaning by comparing fear to some dangerous chasm or depth that gladness of nature takes him to the edge of.</i></p> <p><b>(Q26)</b> Emerson claims that regardless of one's age, when in nature, we feel younger. What figurative device does he employ to convey this idea?  <i>Emerson uses a simile to compare the rejuvenation one experiences in the woods to a snake sloughing off its old skin.</i></p> <p><b>(Q27)</b> What "calamity" would Emerson not recover from through the mediation of nature?  <i>Emerson would be traumatized by blindness, for such a handicap would prevent him from communing with nature.</i></p> <p><b>(Q28)</b> Examine and explain the function of the paradox in the sentence beginning "I become a transparent eye-ball..."  <i>The central contradiction involves a statement about the self: "I am nothing; I see all." Emerson employs this language to convey the experience of transcendence he undergoes in nature. He no longer is aware of his ego identity but experiences a connection to something larger than himself; he feels the flow of some divine force of creation inhabiting his consciousness. This statement captures the essence of Emerson's transcendentalism. He, through the communion with nature, feels "part or particle of God."</i></p> <p><b>(Q29)</b> Emerson employs a pattern of sacred diction to convey his awe toward nature. Cite several words that contribute to this pattern.  <i>The words "God," "sanctity," "faith," "infinite," "Universal Being," and "immortal" contribute to his portrayal of nature as divine.</i></p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Columbus City Schools  
English Language Arts Curriculum  
Reading**

<p>somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.</p> <p>The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an <b>occult</b> relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm, is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.</p> <p>Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great <b>temperance</b>. For, nature is not always <b>tricked</b> in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed</p>	<p><b>occult:</b> magical; mysterious</p> <p><b>temperance:</b> moderation <b>tricked:</b> decorated</p>	<p><b>(Q30)</b> What is the greatest pleasure Emerson finds in nature? <i>He delights in the perception of some mystical connection between himself and nature.</i></p> <p><b>(Q31)</b> Emerson employs antithesis to convey the paradoxical effect nature has on him. Identify the uses of antithesis and explain their function. <i>One example of antithesis is the statement: "The waving of the boughs in the storm is new to me and old." Emerson includes the opposites "new" and "old" to convey both the familiarity and strangeness of natural objects. Additionally, he writes, "It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown." The opposition of "surprise" and "not unknown" similarly conveys this dual effect of natural phenomena.</i></p> <p><b>(Q32)</b> Emerson's delight in nature is caused by what faculty? <i>Emerson claims that humans have "the power to produce this delight." Nature alone does not produce it but working with human perception it has this capability.</i></p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

<p>perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the <b>nymphs</b>, is overspread with <b>melancholy</b> today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.</p>	<p><b>nymphs:</b> lesser deities  <b>melancholy:</b> sadness; gloom</p>	<p><b>(Q33)</b> Explain Emerson’s claim: “Nature always wears the colors of the spirit.” What figurative device does he employ to support the meaning of the claim?  <i>Emerson’s statement expresses the idea that we project our feelings onto the natural world. He employs metaphor comparing our feelings to colored cloth with which we dress nature.</i></p> <p><b>(Q34)</b> How do our feelings and dispositions affect our perceptions of nature? How do Emerson’s examples support the main idea of this paragraph?  <i>Our feelings shape the way we perceive the natural world. If we are sad, even if the sun is shining, we will perceive lugubrious sheen. Emerson’s examples support his earlier claim that the power to delight in nature resides in humanity: our emotions combined with our sensations together forge our perception of nature.</i></p> <p><b>EXTENSION DISCUSSION OR ESSAY QUESTION:</b>  Return to the quotations about transcendentalism you read for homework. Select a statement that you believe captures an essential idea of this essay. Explain how the meaning of this statement finds expression in this essay by citing and explaining at least two pieces of evidence. Conclude with an evaluation of this idea. What aspects of this idea are attractive, useful, uplifting, and what aspects may be limited, erroneous, or misconstrued?</p> <p><i>Answers will vary.</i></p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Day Six: Artistic Analogue: The Hudson River School and Emerson’s “Nature”**

Professor of humanities at Northern Arizona University, Max Oelschlaeger, has said, “Ralph Waldo Emerson’s work expresses the theological and philosophical heart of the Hudson River School.” This assignment is designed to help students recognize the similarity of aesthetic and philosophical views of Emerson and the painters of the Hudson River School by comparing Emerson’s “Nature” to a selection of representative paintings. See the handout entitled “Hudson River Valley” (appendix) for a more detailed description of the assignment, a graphic organizer for student use, and a teacher example.

## Columbus City Schools

### English Language Arts Curriculum

#### Reading

All the images used in the assignment can be found at the websites below:

- The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Hudson River School webpage: [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd\\_hurs.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd_hurs.htm)
- The American Art Gallery's web collection of Hudson River School paintings: <http://americanartgallery.org/exhibit/details/view/list/id/8>

#### **Day Seven: Socratic Seminar: Emerson's Legacy: Transcendental radicalism in the twentieth century and beyond**

Rachel Carson's speech "Of Man and the Stream of Time" and Bell Hooks' essay "Touching the Earth" (appendix) both explore core transcendental beliefs regarding the relationship between humans and the natural world. Both see this relationship as essential to not only happiness but empowerment and mutual survival. Having students read these two contemporary texts will help them appreciate Emerson's legacy and recognize its impact on some of the most critical issues facing our world today.

As a synthesizing listening and speaking activity, have students discuss Hooks' and Carson's texts by answering the questions below.

Seminar Questions:

- How do both Hooks and Carson draw on the ideas Emerson presents in "Nature"? Identify several through-lines by quoting the related passages directly.
- What does our attitude toward the natural world have to do with racism according to Hooks? Would Carson agree with Hooks' claim regarding race? Why or why not? Provide support for your answer.
- Carson and Hooks caution against perceiving nature as merely for our own use and material gain. Do you agree with this criticism? Does nature have a value beyond utility and economy?
- Do you think living in Columbus results in the kind of "estrangement from nature" that Hooks warns of? Why or why not?
- Do you agree with Hooks' assertion that "When we love the earth, we are able to love ourselves more fully"?
- Carson delivered her speech to college graduates in 1962. Even then, Carson acknowledged that her generation had done little to restore the balance between humanity and nature. However, she concluded her speech with a hopeful call to action: "Your generation must come to terms with the environment. Your generation must face realities instead of taking refuge in ignorance and evasion of truth." To what extent were her hopes warranted? To what extent were they unfulfilled? Provide evidence for your answer with reasons and examples from your own studies, experience, and research.

The Teaching Channel website has helpful videos and scoring guides for teacher use regarding Socratic seminars and their utility in helping students master the Common Core Standards: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/bring-socratic-seminars-to-the-classroom> .

#### **Day Eight: Final Assessment: In-Class Essay**

PROMPT: Write an essay in which you identify what you believe is the core transcendental idea that informs two of the poems below. In your essay, be sure to include support for your claim from Emerson's seminal essay "Nature" as well as an analysis of the language and content of the poems. You may also include additional support from related documents that we have studied in this unit.



**Columbus City Schools**  
**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading**

<p>The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry</p> <p>When despair grows in me and I wake in the middle of the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting for their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.</p>	<p>The Gift Outright by Robert Frost</p> <p>The land was ours before we were the land's. She was our land more than a hundred years Before we were her people. She was ours In Massachusetts, in Virginia, But we were England's, still colonials, Possessing what we still were unpossessed by, Possessed by what we now no more possessed. Something we were withholding made us weak Until we found out that it was ourselves We were withholding from our land of living, And forthwith found salvation in surrender. Such as we were we gave ourselves outright (The deed of gift was many deeds of war) To the land vaguely realizing westward, But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced, Such as she was, such as she would become.</p>	<p>The Negro Speaks of Rivers by Langston Hughes</p> <p>I've known rivers: I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.</p> <p>My soul has grown deep like the rivers.</p> <p>I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young. I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep. I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it. I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.</p> <p>I've known rivers: Ancient, dusky rivers.</p> <p>My soul has grown deep like the rivers.</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Instructional Resources**

- Prentice Hall's *Literature: The American Experience*, 2010
- "American Transcendentalism: A Brief Introduction" chapter found on website: Perspectives in American Literature from California State University Stanislaus: <http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap4/4intro.html>
- "American Transcendentalism" webpage from Washington State University: <http://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/amtrans.htm>

**Columbus City Schools  
English Language Arts Curriculum  
Reading**

- Ann Woodlief's Transcendentalism Web at Virginia Commonwealth University: <http://transcendentalism-legacy.tamu.edu/>
- Van Gogh Museum's web collection of letters: <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let691/letter.html>
- Yale: New Haven's Teacher's College Unit on the Wilderness Concept by Nancy Cowdin: <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1990/3/90.03.01.x.html>

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Strategies for Diverse Learners)**

- Museum of Modern Art's audio and video files on Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*: [http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object\\_id=79802](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=79802)

**Professional Articles**

- "The Roots of Preservation: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Hudson River School" by Max Oelschlaeger: <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntwilderness/essays/preserva.htm>

**English Language Arts Connections**

Reading	Language	Speaking and Listening
Incorporate Reading (Literary or Informational Texts) standards as students conduct analysis of various print and non-print autobiographical texts. <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a>	Incorporate Language standards as students construct writing in terms of writing conventions, knowledge of language, and acquisition and use of vocabulary. <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a>	Incorporate Speaking and Listening standards as students engage in one-on-one, small group, and teacher-led collaborative discussions. <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a>

# Appendix

<p>A Blessing by James Wright</p> <p>Just off the highway to Rochester, Minnesota, Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass. And the eyes of those two Indian ponies Darken with kindness. They have come gladly out of the willows To welcome my friend and me. We step over the barbed wire into the pasture Where they have been grazing all day, alone. They ripple tensely, they can hardly contain their happiness That we have come. They bow shyly as wet swans. They love each other. There is no loneliness like theirs. At home once more, They begin munching the young tufts of spring in the darkness. I would like to hold the slenderer one in my arms, For she has walked over to me And nuzzled my left hand. She is black and white, Her mane falls wild on her forehead, And the light breeze moves me to caress her long ear That is delicate as the skin over a girl's wrist. Suddenly I realize That if I stepped out of my body I would break Into blossom.</p>	<p>The Honey Tree by Mary Oliver</p> <p>And so at last I climbed the honey tree, ate chunks of pure light, ate the bodies of bees that could not get out of my way, ate the dark hair of the leaves, the rippling bark, the heartwood. Such frenzy! But joy does that, I'm told, in the beginning. Later, maybe, I'll come here only sometimes and with a middling hunger. But now I climb like a snake, I clamber like a bear to the nuzzling place, to the light salvaged by the thighs of bees and racked up in the body of the tree. Oh, anyone can see how I love myself at last! how I love the world! climbing by day or night in the wind, in the leaves, kneeling at the secret rip, the cords of my body stretching and singing in the heaven of appetite.</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

In small groups, discuss the following questions and provide direct textual support from the poems for your answers.

1. Compare and contrast each speaker's encounter with nature.
2. What attitude toward nature does each speaker convey?
3. How does the poet's management of language contribute to your understanding of the significance of the encounter with nature? What techniques in particular make the experiences vital and engaging for the reader?
4. What is the most important line in the poem? Come to a consensus within your group and justify your answer.
5. Which experience with nature is more attractive to you as a reader? In other words, if you could experience the same feelings as those expressed by the speaker in each poem, which experience would you find more alluring? satisfying? uplifting? sublime? Why? Justify your answer with evidence from the poem and some illustration from your own life.

Create a new title that captures the thematic heart for each poem using a word or phrase from within the poem. Again, justify your choice of title.

**NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT:** Below are several quotations about the natural world.

Read each and then write a paraphrase and a response to each in which you either provide an example, a reflection, or a reaction to the content of the quotation.

NAME:

DATE:

PERIOD:

QUOTATION	PARAPHRASE	RESPONSE
<p>EXAMPLE Most people are <i>on</i> the world, not in it -- have no conscious sympathy or relationship to anything about them -- undiffused, separate, and rigidly alone like marbles of polished stone, touching but separate. - John Muir</p>	<p>Generally, people perceive themselves as individual entities alone on this earth. They do not feel as if they are a part of something larger than themselves. They remain distinct and isolated.</p>	<p>While I agree that some do feel separate and alone, I think that we have the capacity to perceive unity with others and with the environment. For example, when I get up early and walk through my garden at dawn, I feel a kinship with the opening flowers and the stirring birds. We are all waking up to the day.</p>
<p>Trees are poems that earth writes upon the sky, We fell them down and turn them into paper, That we may record our emptiness. -Kahlil Gibran</p>		
<p>America today stands poised on a pinnacle of wealth and power, yet we live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increasing ugliness, of shrinking open space, and of an over-all environment that is diminished daily by pollution and noise and blight. -Stewart L. Udall</p>		
<p>The insufferable arrogance of human beings to think that Nature was made solely for their benefit, as if it was conceivable that the sun had been set afire merely to ripen men's apples and head their cabbages. - Cyrano de Bergerac</p>		
<p>We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. -Aldo Leopold</p>		

<p>Nature has been for me, for as long as I remember, a source of solace, inspiration, venture, and delight; a home, a teacher, a companion. -Lorraine Anderson</p>		
<p>Nothing is more beautiful than the loveliness of the woods before sunrise. -George Washington Carver</p>		
<p>There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, There is a rapture on the lonely shore, There is society, where none intrudes. By the deep sea, and music in its roars; I love not man the less, but nature more. -George Gordon</p>		
<p>To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival. -Wendell Berry</p>		
<p>Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. -Chief Seattle</p>		
<p>How sublime to look down on the workhouse of nature, to see her clouds, hail, snow, rain, thunder, all fabricated at our feet! -Thomas Jefferson</p>		

# ENCOUNTERING EMERSON

NAME:	
DATE:	PERIOD:

In the column on the left, you will find six quotations from Emerson’s essay “Nature.” Begin by speculating what each statement means even though you do not have the context for the quotation. Then select one of the quotations that you examined for homework that best reflects Emerson’s sentiment in his quotation. Explain the comparison in the column to the far right. Use the teacher example as a guide.

EMERSON QUOTATION	TRANSLATION OF EMERSON	COMPARABLE QUOTATION	EXPLANATION OF COMPARISON
<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>Nature never wears a mean appearance.</p>	<p>Nature always appears kind and welcoming.</p>	<p>Nature has been for me, for as long as I remember, a source of solace, inspiration, venture, and delight; a home, a teacher, a companion.</p> <p>-Lorraine Anderson</p>	<p>Anderson and Emerson both portray nature as a kind force, one that is at least inviting if not instructive.</p>
<p>Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit.</p>			
<p>In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows.</p>			
<p>In the woods is perpetual youth.</p>			
<p>There is a property in the horizon which no man has, but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet.</p>			
<p>Nature always wears the colors of the spirit.</p>			



***The Starry Night, 1889***  
**Vincent Van Gogh**

NAME:

DATE:

PERIOD:

What do you notice in this painting? Record ten details:

How does this painting make you feel? Write down at least two emotions and then choose at least one detail from the painting that you think contributes to this feeling.

Van Gogh (a Dutch post impressionist) painted a version of this composition while hospitalized in an asylum near Saint Remy in southern France. In a letter to his brother Theo, Van Gogh wrote, "And it does me good to do what's difficult. That doesn't stop me having a tremendous need for, shall I say the word — for religion — so I go outside at night to paint the stars...." Soon after this period, Van Gogh suffered another mental crisis and died from what most believe to be a self-inflicted gun shot wound. As his note to his brother indicates, despite the psychological anguish he was suffering, Van Gogh found great comfort in his examination of the natural world.

How does this biographical information affect your understanding and appreciation for the painting?

**Reflection Question:** Why do you think nature provides so many with spiritual comfort and solace? Are you comforted by nature? Why or why not? Use the back of this paper to write an extended response to these questions.



## Flying at Night

by Ted Kooser

Above us, stars. Beneath us, constellations.

Five billion miles away, a galaxy dies

like a snowflake falling on water. Below us,

some farmer, feeling the chill of that distant death,

snaps on his yard light, drawing his sheds and barn

back into the little system of his care.

All night, the cities, like shimmering novas,

tug with bright streets at lonely lights like his.

from "Nature" by Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

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

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

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

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

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great **temperance**. For, nature is not always **tricked** in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the **nymphs**, is overspread with **melancholy** today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.




NAME:

DATE:

PERIOD:

## HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL AND EMERSON'S "NATURE"

Imagine you have been instructed to make an illustrated edition of Emerson's "Nature" using the art of the Hudson River School painters. These painters, like Emerson, were inspired by the grandeur and sanctity of the natural world, and in their paintings tried to recreate their experiences of wonder and awe. Carefully examine each painting for its content, composition, mood, symbolism, and tone. Then review Emerson's essay. Select excerpts from the essay that you believe are similar in style and content and then justify your pairing. Be sure to explain specifically how the content of the painting and that of the essay are related. See the example for guidance.

Painting	Emerson Excerpt	Justification for Pairing
<p><i>In the Woods</i>, 1855 Asher B. Durand</p> 	<p>"In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, -- no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair."</p>	<p>Durand's painting of a thick forest within which meanders a tranquil stream that leads the viewer's eye through the woods to the distant blue sky peeking out from the horizon line captures the majesty of Emerson's description of the woods. Emerson characterizes the woods as "plantations of God" wherein "a decorum and sanctity reign." Both Durand and Emerson portray the woods as a place that is inviting and holy. Therefore, this excerpt should accompany Durand's painting because the pairing reflects not only the same subject but also the same attitude.</p>
 <p><i>The Titan's Goblet</i>, 1833 Thomas Cole</p>		
<p><i>View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm—The Oxbow</i>, 1836 Thomas Cole</p> 		

*Hudson River  
Highlands, 1875*  
Robert Havell



*Newburyport Meadows, ca. 1876–81*  
Martin Johnson Heade



*Artist at his Easel in the Woods,*  
(Unknown)  
Thomas Hill



*Aurora  
Borealis, 1865*  
Frederic  
Edwin Church

## Of Man and The Stream of Time

Rachel Carson

Commencement speech delivered on June 12, 1962  
at Scripps College in Claremont, California

*Biologist Rachel Carson alerted the world to the environmental impact of fertilizers and pesticides. Her best-known book, Silent Spring, led to a presidential commission that largely endorsed her findings and helped to shape a growing environmental consciousness. Carson died of cancer in 1964 and is remembered as an early activist who worked to preserve the world for future generations.*

As I was carried here so swiftly across the continent by a jet airliner, it occurred to me that I have really been on the way for ten years, for it was that long ago that your President first invited me to come to Scripps College. Through the intervening years, he has renewed that invitation with infinite patience and courtesy. Now at last circumstances have allowed me to accept, and I am very happy to be here.

Had I come ten years ago, I am not certain what I would have talked about. But as I have lived and, I hope, learned, as I have reflected upon the problems that crowd in upon us today, one stands out in my mind as having such vast importance that I want to discuss it with you now.

I wish to speak today of man's relation to nature and more specifically of man's attitude toward nature. A generation ago this would perhaps have been an academic subject of little interest to any but philosophers. Today it is a subject of immediate and sometimes terrifying relevance.

The word *nature* has many and varied connotations, but for the present theme I like this definition: "Nature is the part of the world that man did not make." You who have spent your undergraduate years here at Scripps have been exceptionally fortunate, living in the midst of beauty and comforts and conveniences that *are* creations of man—yet always in the background having the majestic and beautiful mountains to remind you of an older and vaster world—a world that man did not make.

Man has long talked somewhat arrogantly about the conquest of nature; now he has the power to achieve his boast. It is our misfortune—it may well be our final tragedy—that this power has not been tempered with wisdom, but has been marked by irresponsibility; that there is all too little awareness that man is

part of nature, and that the price of conquest may well be the destruction of man himself.

Measured against the vast backdrop of geologic time, the whole era of man seems but a moment—but how portentous a moment! It was only within the last million years or so that the race of man arose. Who could have foretold that this being, who walked upright and no longer lived in trees, who lurked in caves, hiding in fear from the great beasts who shared his world—who could have guessed that he would one day have in his hands the power to change the very nature of the earth—the power of life and death over so many of its creatures? Who could have foretold that the brain that was developing behind those heavy brow ridges would allow him to accomplish things no other creature had achieved—but would not at the same time endow him with wisdom so to control his activities that he would not bring destruction upon himself?

I like the way E. B. White has summed it up in his usual inimitable style. "I am pessimistic about the human race," said Mr. White, "because it is too ingenious for its own good. Our approach to nature is to beat it into submission. We would stand a better chance of survival if we accommodated ourselves to this planet and viewed it appreciatively instead of skeptically and dictatorially."

Our attitude toward nature has changed with time, in ways that I can only suggest here. Primitive men, confronted with the awesome forces of nature, reacted in fear of what they did not understand. They peopled the dark and brooding forests with supernatural beings. Looking out on the sea that extended to an unknown horizon, they imagined a dreadful brink lying beneath fog and gathering darkness; they pictured vast abysses waiting to suck the traveler down into a bottomless gulf. Only a few centuries have passed since those pre-Columbian days, yet today our whole earth has become only another shore from which we look out across the dark ocean of space, uncertain what we shall find when we sail out among the stars, but like the Norsemen and the Polynesians of old, lured by the very challenge of the unknown.

Between the time of those early voyages into unknown seas and the present, we can trace an enormous and fateful change. It is good that fear and superstition have largely been replaced by knowledge, but we would be on safer ground today if the knowledge had been accompanied by humility instead of arrogance.

In the western world our thinking has for many centuries been dominated by the Jewish-Christian concept of man's relation to nature, in which man is regarded as the master of all the earth's inhabitants. Out of this there easily grew the thought that everything on earth—animate or inanimate, animal, vegetable, or mineral—and indeed the earth itself—had been created expressly for man.

John Muir, who knew and loved the California mountains, has described this naïve view of nature with biting wit: "A numerous class of men are painfully astonished whenever they find anything, living or dead, in all God's universe, which they cannot eat or render in some way what they call useful to themselves....Whales are storehouses of oil for us, to help out the stars in lighting our dark ways until the discovery of the Pennsylvania oil wells. Among plants, hemp is a case of evident destination for ships' rigging, wrapping packages, and hanging the wicked."

So Muir, with his pen dipped in acid, many years ago pointed out the incredible absurdity of such views. But I am not certain that in spite of all our modern learning and sophistication, we have actually progressed far beyond the self-oriented philosophy of the Victorians. I fear that these ideas still lurk about, showing themselves boldly and openly at times, at others skulking about in the shadows of the subconscious.

I have met them frequently, as I have pointed out some exquisite creature of the jade pools to a chance companion. "What is it for?" he may ask, and he is obviously disappointed if I can't assure him that it can be eaten or at least made into some bauble to be sold in a shop.

But how is one to assign a value to the exquisite flower-like hydroids reflected in the still mirror of a tide pool? Who can place in one pan of some cosmic scales the trinkets of modern civilization and in the other the song of a thrush in the windless twilight?

Now I have dwelt at some length on the fallacious idea of a world arranged for man's use and convenience, but I have done so because I am convinced that these notions—the legacy of an earlier day—are at the root of some of our most critical problems. We still talk in terms of "conquest"—whether it be of the insect world or of the mysterious world of space. We still have not become mature enough to see ourselves as a very tiny part of a vast and incredible universe, a universe that is distinguished above all else by a mysterious and

wonderful unity that we flout at our peril.

Poets often have a perception that gives their words the validity of science. So the English poet Francis Thompson said nearly a century ago,

*Thou canst not stir a flower/ Without troubling of a star.*

But the poet's insight has not become part of general knowledge.

Man's attitude toward nature is today critically important, simply because of his new-found power to destroy it. For a good many years there has been an excellent organization known as The International Union for the Protection of Nature. I clearly remember that in the days before Hiroshima I used to wonder whether nature—nature in the broadest context of the word—actually needed protection from man. Surely the sea was inviolate and forever beyond man's power to change it. Surely the vast cycles by which water is drawn up into the clouds to return again to the earth could never be touched. And just as surely the vast tides of life—the migrating birds—would continue to ebb and flow over the continents, marking the passage of the seasons.

But I was wrong. Even these things, that seemed to belong to the eternal verities, are not only threatened but have already felt the destroying hand of man.

Today we use the sea as a dumping ground for radioactive wastes, which then enter into the vast and uncontrollable movements of ocean waters through the deep basins, to turn up no one knows where....

The once beneficent rains are now an instrument to bring down from the atmosphere the deadly products of nuclear explosions. Water, perhaps our most precious natural resource, is used and misused at a reckless rate. Our streams are fouled with an incredible assortment of wastes—domestic, chemical, radioactive, so that our planet, though dominated by seas that envelop three-fourths of its surface, is rapidly becoming a thirsty world.

We now wage war on other organisms, turning against them all the terrible armaments of modern chemistry, and we assume a right to push whole species over the brink of extinction. This is a far cry from the philosophy of that man of peace, Albert Schweitzer—the philosophy of "reverence for life." Although all the world honors Dr. Schweitzer, I am afraid we do not follow him.

So nature does indeed need protection from man; but man, too, needs protection from his own acts, for he is part of the living world. His war against nature is inevitably a war against himself. His heedless and destructive acts enter into the vast cycles of the earth, and in time return to him.

Through all this problem there runs a constant theme, and the theme is the flowing stream of time, unhurried, unmindful of man's restless and feverish pace. It is made up of geologic events that have created mountains and worn them away, that have brought the seas out of their basins, to flood the continents and then retreat. But even more importantly it is made up of biological events that represent that all-important adjustment of living protoplasm to the conditions of the external world. What we are today represents an adjustment achieved over the millions and hundreds of millions of years. There have always been elements in the environment that were hostile to living things—extremes of temperature, background radiation in rocks and atmosphere, toxic elements in the earth and sea. But over the long ages of time, life has reached an accommodation, a balance.

Now we are far on the way to upsetting this balance by creating an artificial environment—an environment consisting to an ever increasing extent of things that “man has made.” The radiation to which we must adjust if we are to survive is no longer simply the natural background radiation of rocks and sunlight, it is the result of our tampering with the atom. In the same way, wholly new chemicals are emerging from the laboratories—an astounding, bewildering array of them. All of these things are being introduced into our environment at a rapid rate. There simply is no time for living protoplasm to adjust to them.

In 1955 a group-of 70 scientists met at Princeton University to consider man's role in changing the face of the earth. They produced a volume of nearly 1200 pages devoted to changes that range from the first use of fire to urban sprawl. It is an astounding record. This is not to say, of course, that all the changes have been undesirable. But the distinguishing feature of man's activities is that they have almost always been undertaken from the narrow viewpoint of short-range gain, without considering either their impact on the earth or their long-range effect upon ourselves.

They have been distinguished, also, by a curious unwillingness to be guided by the knowledge that is available in certain areas of science. I mean especially the knowledge of biologists, of ecologists, of geneticists, all of whom have special areas of competence that should allow them to predict the effect of our actions

on living creatures, including, of course, man himself.

This is an age that has produced floods of how-to-do-it books, and it is also an age of how-to-do-it science. It is, in other words, the age of technology, in which if we know *how* to do something, we do it without pausing to inquire whether we *should*. We know how to split the atom, and how to use its energy in peace and war, and so we proceed with preparations to do so, as if acting under some blind compulsion; even though the geneticists tell us that by our actions in this atomic age we are endangering not only ourselves but the integrity of the human germ plasm.

Instead of always trying to impose our will on Nature we should sometimes be quiet and listen to what she has to tell us. If we did so I am sure we would gain a new perspective on our own feverish lives. We might even see the folly and the madness of a world in which half of mankind is busily preparing to destroy the other half and to reduce our whole planet to radioactive ashes in the doing. We might gain what the English essayist Tomlinson called “a hint of a reality, hitherto fabulous, of a truth that may be everlasting, yet is contrary to all our experience,” for “our earth may be a far better place than we have yet discovered.”

I wish I could stand before you and say that my own generation had brought strength and meaning to man's relation to nature, that we had looked upon the majesty and beauty and terror of the earth we inhabit and learned wisdom and humility. Alas, this cannot be said, for it is we who have brought into being a fateful and destructive power.

But the stream of time moves forward and mankind moves with it. Your generation must come to terms with the environment. Your generation must face realities instead of taking refuge in ignorance and evasion of truth. Yours is a grave and a sobering responsibility, but it is also a shining opportunity. You go out into a world where mankind is challenged, as it has never been challenged before, to prove its maturity and its mastery—not of nature, but of itself. Therein lies our hope and our destiny. “In today already walks tomorrow.”



folks learned to accept a mind/body split that made it possible to abuse the body, we can better understand the growth of nihilism and despair in the black psyche. And we can know that when we talk about healing that psyche we must also speak about restoring our connection to the natural world.

Wherever black folks live we can restore our relationship to the natural world by taking the time to commune with nature, to appreciate the other creatures who share this planet with humans. Even in my small New York City apartment I can pause to listen to birds sing, find a tree and watch it. We can grow plants—herbs, flowers, vegetables. Those novels by African-American writers (women and men) that talk about black migration from the agrarian south to the industrialized north describe in detail the way folks created space to grow flowers and vegetables. Although I come from country people with serious green thumbs, I have always felt that I could not garden. In the past few years, I have found that I can do it—that many gardens will grow, that I feel connected to my ancestors when I can put a meal on the table of food I grew. I especially love to plant collard greens. They are hardy, and easy to grow.

In modern society, there is also a tendency to see no correlation between the struggle for collective black self-recovery and ecological movements that seek to restore balance to the planet by changing our relationship to nature and to natural resources. Unmindful of our history of living harmoniously on the land, many contemporary black folks see no value in supporting ecological movements, or see ecology and the struggle to end racism as competing concerns. Recalling the legacy of our ancestors who knew that the way we regard land and nature will determine the level of our self-regard, black people must reclaim a spiritual legacy where we connect our well-being to the well-being of the earth. This is a necessary dimension of healing. As Berry reminds us:

Only by restoring the broken connections can we be healed. Connection is health. And what our society does its best to disguise from us is how ordinary, how commonly attainable, health is. We lose our health and create profitable diseases and dependencies by failing to see the direct connections between living and eating, eating and working, working and loving. In gardening, for instance, one works with the body to feed the body. The work, if it is knowledgeable, makes for excellent food. And it makes one hungry. The work thus makes eating both nourishing and joyful, not consumptive, and keeps the eater from getting fat and weak. This health, wholeness, is a source of delight.

Collective black self-recovery takes place when we begin to renew our relationship to the earth, when we remember the way of our ancestors. When the earth is sacred to us, our bodies can also be sacred to us.

The sense of union and harmony with nature expressed here is echoed in testimony by black people who found that even though life in the new world was "harsh, harsh," in relationship to the earth one could be at peace. In the oral autobiography of granny midwife Onnie Lee Logan, who lived all her life in Alabama, she talks about the richness of farm life growing vegetables, raising chickens, and smoking meat. She reports:

We lived a happy, comfortable life to be right outa slavery times. I didn't know nothin' else but the farm so it was happy and we was happy. We couldn't do anything else but be happy. We accept the days as they come and as they were. Day by day until you couldn't say there was any great hard time. We overlooked it. We didn't think nothin' about it. We just went along. We had what it takes to make a good livin' and go about it.

Living in modern society, without a sense of history, it has been easy for folks to forget that black people were first and foremost a people of the land, farmers. It is easy for folks to forget that at the first part of the 20th century, the vast majority of black folks in the United States lived in the agrarian south.

Living close to nature, black folks were able to cultivate a spirit of wonder and reverence for life. Growing food to sustain life and flowers to please the soul, they were able to make a connection with the earth that was ongoing and life-affirming. They were witnesses to beauty. In Wendell Berry's important discussion of the relationship between agriculture and human spiritual well-being, *The Unsettling of America*, he reminds us that working the land provides a location where folks can experience a sense of personal power and well-being:

We are working well when we use ourselves as the fellow creature of the plants, animals, material, and other people we are working with. Such work is unifying, healing. It brings us home from pride and despair, and places us responsibly within the human estate. It defines us as we are: not too good to work without our bodies, but too good to work poorly or joylessly or selfishly or alone.

There has been little or no work done on the psychological impact of the "great migration" of black people from the agrarian south to the industrialized north. Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* attempts to fictively document the way moving from the agrarian south to the industrialized north wounded the psyches of black folk. Estranged from a natural world, where there was time for silence and contemplation, one of the "displaced" black folks in Morrison's novel, Miss Pauline, loses her capacity to experience the sensual world around her when she leaves southern soil to live in a northern city. The south is associated in her mind with a world of sensual beauty most deeply expressed in the world of nature. Indeed, when she falls in love for the first time she can name that experience only by evoking images from nature, from an agrarian world and near wilderness of natural splendor:

When I first seed Cholly, I want you to know it was like all the bits of color from that time down home when all us chil'ren went berry picking after a funeral and I put some in the pocket of my Sunday dress, and they mashed up and stained my hips. My whole dress was messed with purple, and it never did wash out. Not the dress nor me. I could feel that purple deep

inside me. And that lemonade Mama used to make when Pap came in out of the fields. It be cool and yellowish, with seeds floating near the bottom. And that streak of green them june bugs made on the trees that night we left from down home. All of them colors was in me. Just sitting there.

Certainly, it must have been a profound blow to the collective psyche of black people to find themselves struggling to make a living in the industrial north away from the land. Industrial capitalism was not simply changing the nature of black work life, it altered the communal practices that were so central to survival in the agrarian south. And it fundamentally altered black people's relationship to the body. It is the loss of any capacity to appreciate her body, despite its flaws, Miss Pauline suffers when she moves north.

The motivation for black folks to leave the south and move north was both material and psychological. Black folks wanted to be free of the overt racial harassment that was a constant in southern life and they wanted access to material goods, to a level of material well-being that was not available in the agrarian south where white folks limited access to the spheres of economic power. Of course, they found that life in the north had its own perverse hardships, that racism was just as virulent there, that it was much harder for black people to become landowners. Without the space to grow food, to commune with nature, or to mediate the starkness of poverty with the splendor of nature, black people experienced profound depression. Working in conditions where the body was regarded solely as a tool (as in slavery), a profound estrangement occurred between mind and body. The way the body was represented became more important than the body itself. It did not matter if the body was well, only that it appeared well.

Estrangement from nature and engagement in mind/body splits made it all the more possible for black people to internalize white-supremacist assumptions about black identity. Learning contempt for blackness, southerners transplanted in the north suffered both culture shock and soul loss. Contrasting the harshness of city life with an agrarian world, the poet Waring Cuney wrote this popular poem in the 1920's, testifying to lost connection:

*She does not know her beauty  
She thinks her brown body  
has no glory.  
If she could dance naked,  
Under palm trees  
And see her image in the river  
She would know.  
But there are no palm trees on the  
street,  
And dishwater gives back no images.*

For many years, and even now, generations of black folks who migrated north to escape life in the south, returned down home in search of a spiritual nourishment, a healing, that was fundamentally connected to reaffirming one's connection to nature, to a contemplative life where one could take time, sit on the porch, walk, fish, and catch lightning bugs. If we think of urban life as a location where black

## BELL HOOKS

B. 1952

*bell hooks was born Gloria Jean Watkins, but when she began writing she took the name of her great-grandmother, "a sharp-tongued woman, a woman who spoke her mind, a woman who was not afraid to talk back," as a way to challenge her own impulse to hold back words. "Paralyzed by the fear that I will not be able to name or speak words that fully articulate my experience or the collective reality of struggling black people, I am tempted to be silent," she has written. Still, she has lectured widely on race, gender, class, and personal empowerment and has authored nearly a dozen books.*

*hooks was born and raised in rural Kentucky, an experience that imprinted her with a love for the land. She was educated at Stanford University and taught English and women's studies at Oberlin College before moving to a teaching position at City College of New York. Her first book, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981), was named by Publishers Weekly as one of the "twenty most influential women's books of the last twenty years." Her other books include *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist*, *Thinking Black* (1988), *Yearning: Race and Gender in the Cultural Marketplace* (1990), and *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery* (1993), from which the following selection is taken. With Cornel West, she coauthored *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* (1991).*

*In "Touching the Earth," hooks suggests that connection with the land is the necessary foundation for black self-empowerment, as it was for earlier generations that lived a rural life. "It has been easy for folks to forget that black people were first and foremost a people of the land, farmers. . . . Growing food to sustain life and flowers to please the soul, they were able to make a connection with the earth that was ongoing and life-affirming," she writes. Speculating that the black psyche was wounded when blacks moved from the agrarian South to the industrial North, she points out that estrangement from the land and from the body makes it easier for blacks to internalize white racist assumptions. Thus, restoring a connection to the natural world goes hand in hand with the struggle to end racism.*

## TOUCHING THE EARTH

When we love the earth, we are able to love ourselves more fully. I believe this. The ancestors taught me it was so. As a child I loved playing in dirt, in that rich Kentucky soil, that was a source of life. Before I understood anything about the pain and exploitation of the southern system of sharecropping, I understood that grown-up black folks loved the land. I could stand with my grandfather Daddy Jerry and look out at fields of growing vegetables, tomatoes, corn, collards, and know that this was his handiwork. I could see the look of pride on his face as I expressed wonder and awe at the magic of growing things. I knew that my grandmother Baba's backyard garden would yield beans, sweet potatoes, cabbage, and yellow squash, that she too would walk with pride among the rows and rows of growing vegetables showing us what the earth will give when tended lovingly.

From the moment of their first meeting, Native American and African people shared with one another a respect for the life-giving forces of nature, of the earth. African settlers in Florida taught the Creek Nation runaways, the "Seminoles," methods for rice cultivation. Native peoples taught recently arrived black folks all about the many uses of corn. (The hotwater cornbread we grew up eating came to our black southern diet from the world of the Indian.) Sharing the reverence for the earth, black and red people helped one another remember that, despite the white man's ways, the land belonged to everyone. Listen to these words attributed to Chief Seattle in 1854:

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man all belong to the same family.

Final Assessment: In-Class Essay

PROMPT: Write an essay in which you identify what you believe is the core transcendental idea that informs two of the poems below. In your essay, be sure to include support for your claim from Emerson's seminal essay "Nature" as well as an analysis of the language and content of the poems. You may also include additional support from related documents that we have studied in this unit.

<p>The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry</p> <p>When despair grows in me and I wake in the middle of the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting for their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.</p>	<p>The Gift Outright by Robert Frost</p> <p>The land was ours before we were the land's. She was our land more than a hundred years Before we were her people. She was ours In Massachusetts, in Virginia, But we were England's, still colonials, Possessing what we still were unpossessed by, Possessed by what we now no more possessed. Something we were withholding made us weak Until we found out that it was ourselves We were withholding from our land of living, And forthwith found salvation in surrender. Such as we were we gave ourselves outright (The deed of gift was many deeds of war) To the land vaguely realizing westward, But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced, Such as she was, such as she would become.</p>	<p>The Negro Speaks of Rivers by Langston Hughes</p> <p>I've known rivers: I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.</p> <p>My soul has grown deep like the rivers.</p> <p>I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young. I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep. I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it. I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.</p> <p>I've known rivers: Ancient, dusky rivers.</p> <p>My soul has grown deep like the rivers.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------