“We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul.”

—Emerson, “The Over-Soul”
from *Nature*, from *Self-Reliance*, and *Concord Hymn*

**MEET RALPH WALDO EMERSON**

Ralph Waldo Emerson was the central figure of American Romanticism. His ideas about the individual, claims about the divine, and attacks on society were revolutionary.

Emerson's father was a Unitarian minister and his mother a devout Anglican. When Emerson was only eight years old, his father died, and Mrs. Emerson was forced to open a boardinghouse. At the age of 14, Emerson entered Harvard College. After graduation, he studied at Harvard Divinity School. By 1829, Emerson had been ordained a Unitarian minister and was preaching in Boston's Second Church.

In 1831 Ellen Tucker, Emerson's wife, died suddenly. Emerson had already been questioning his religious convictions, and after Ellen's death, he experienced intense grief that further eroded his faith. Eventually, Emerson left the church to embark on a career as a writer.

**A Controversial Career** In 1833 Emerson settled in Concord, Massachusetts, and began writing *Nature*. This slim book was to become one of Emerson's most influential works. Two years later, Emerson married Lydia Jackson, whom he called “Lidian.” Emerson and Lydia had four children.

During the late 1830s, Emerson gained fame for his lectures—notably “The American Scholar” and the divinity school Address. These speeches, both delivered at Harvard, rejected organized religion and undue reverence for the past. Harvard's conservative administration was outraged. As a result, he was not invited to speak at the college for the next 30 years.

While Emerson's ideas enraged some, they excited many others and helped create the transcendentalist movement, of which Emerson was the spokesperson. Optimism, self-reliance, intuition, and idealism formed the core of transcendentalist thought. Idealism is a philosophy that maintains the belief that reality is created by the mind.

**Challenges to Optimism** Emerson's own optimism was challenged when his son Waldo died of scarlet fever in 1842. Two years later, Emerson's essay “The Tragic” appeared in *The Dial*, a transcendentalist magazine he had co-founded. In this essay, Emerson claimed that the arts and the intellect can “ravish us into a region whereinto these passionate clouds of sorrow cannot rise.”

After 1870, his memory began to fail and the quality of his essays diminished. He stayed in Concord and wrote little in his last years; he died of pneumonia at the age of 79.

Emerson influenced writers as diverse as essayist Henry David Thoreau (page 202), novelist Louisa May Alcott, and poets Robert Frost (page 704), Wallace Stevens (page 689), and Hart Crane. Emerson was a radical individualist, and his impact on American thought can still be felt today. As modern critic Harold Bloom wrote, “... no single sage, not Dr. Johnson nor Coleridge, is as inescapable as Emerson goes on being for American poets and storytellers.”

*Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in 1803 and died in 1882.*
Connecting to the Essay

The following essay is a declaration of Emerson’s belief in the power of nature. Emerson makes some startling claims about how people relate to the natural world and how nature responds to the individual. As you read these essays, think about the following questions:

- How do I interact with nature in my daily life?
- How does my mood affect the way I see the world?

Building Background

The Romantics tended to emphasize two aspects of nature—beauty and power. The darker Romantics, such as the Melville of Moby-Dick, stressed nature’s destructive power. Although Emerson was sensitive to the power of the untamed American wilderness, he chose to dwell on the beauty of nature.

Nature is now recognized as one of Emerson’s most important works. At the time of its anonymous publication, however, it received little attention. In fact, during his lifetime, Emerson was better known as an orator than as an essayist. Nevertheless, all of the ideas found in Emerson’s later work are an extension or reevaluation of those initially expressed in Nature.

Setting Purposes for Reading

Big Idea  Kinship with Nature
As you read this selection from Nature, notice how Emerson links nature to optimism and individualism.

Literary Element  Theme

Theme is the central message of a work of literature that readers can apply to life. As you read, try to determine the central theme of Emerson’s essay.


Interactive Literary Elements Handbook  To review or learn more about the literary elements, go to www.glencoe.com.

OBJECTIVES
In studying these selections, you will focus on the following:

- analyzing figurative language
- drawing conclusions
- recognizing an author’s purpose
- analyzing metonymy
- writing a comparison/contrast essay

Reading Strategy  Recognizing Author’s Purpose

The author’s purpose is the author’s intent in writing a piece of literature. Authors typically write to persuade, to inform, to explain, to entertain, or to describe. While reading this essay, try to determine Emerson’s purpose.

Reading Tip: Asking Questions  It might be useful to ask yourself questions as you read, such as the following:

- What is the thesis or main idea statement?
- How do the details support the thesis statement?
- What are Emerson’s special concerns? Does he show any biases or prejudices? If so, what are they?

Vocabulary

perpetual  (par pech’ oŏ al) adj. lasting forever; eternal; p. 180  The leaders of the American Revolution had hoped to create a perpetual union of states.

integrate  (in’ tō grāt’) v. to bring all parts together into a whole; p. 180  Can we integrate the process by having all the committees report to one chairperson?

perennial  (pa ren’ ě al) adj. continuing year after year; enduring; p. 181  Water pollution is a perennial problem around factories and farms.

blithe  (blīth) adj. lighthearted and carefree; cheerful; p. 181  The old man was always blithe in the company of his grandchildren.

occult  (ə kult’) adj. beyond human understanding; mysterious; p. 181  The old doctor was interested in strange, occult research.

Vocabulary Tip: Synonyms  Words that have the same meaning are called synonyms. The words ragged and shabby, for example, are synonyms. Note that synonyms are always the same part of speech.
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

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Vocabulary

**perpetual** (par pech’oʊ al) adj. lasting forever; eternal

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1. *Envoys* are those sent as representatives of another.
2. *Admonishing* means “gently warning” or “scolding.”
3. Here, *mean* means “poor,” “inferior,” or “shabby.”

**Big Idea**  **Kinship with Nature** How does Emerson's statement relate nature to his belief in individualism?

**Reading Strategy** Recognizing Author's Purpose  **What does this statement suggest to you about Emerson’s purpose?**

**Vocabulary**

**integrate** (inˈ tɪ græt’) v. to bring all parts together into a whole

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4. *Manifold* means “many kinds or varieties.”
5. *Indubitably* means “without a doubt” or “certainly.”
6. *Warranty-deeds* are legal documents that state ownership of property.
maugre\textsuperscript{7} all his impertinent\textsuperscript{8} 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\textsuperscript{9} of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common,\textsuperscript{10} 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 eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel 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 uncontrasted and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate\textsuperscript{11} 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\textsuperscript{12} 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.

\textsuperscript{7}Maugre means “in spite of.”
\textsuperscript{8}Impertinent means “irrelevant.”
\textsuperscript{9}A cordial is a stimulant, such as a drink or medicine.
\textsuperscript{10}A common is community property, such as a park, owned or used by the public.
\textsuperscript{11}Connate means “being in harmony or sympathy.”
\textsuperscript{12}Here, tricked means “dressed.”

\textbf{Viewing the Art:} What elements in this painting reflect the characteristics Emerson attributes to nature?
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. (a) Which of Emerson’s ideas do you think are true in light of your own experience? (b) With which ideas do you disagree?

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) What does Emerson say would happen if the stars appeared only one night in a thousand years? (b) What does his comment suggest about human nature?
3. (a) In Emerson’s view, how do adults and children differ in the way they view nature? (b) What does Emerson suggest accounts for this difference?
4. (a) According to Emerson, what effect does the experience of nature have on him? (b) What conclusion does he draw from that effect?

Analyze and Evaluate
5. (a) In this essay, how does Emerson personify, or give human traits to nature? (b) Does Emerson’s personification of nature strengthen or weaken his arguments? Explain.
6. (a) How does Emerson show his idealism in this essay? (b) How does idealism affect the theme of Nature?
7. Emerson claims that the individual becomes childlike while immersed in nature. (a) What evidence does he use to support this statement? (b) Do you agree with this claim? Why or why not?

Connect
8. **Big Idea**  Kinship with Nature  How do your feelings about nature compare with those of Emerson?

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element  Theme
Some works of literature have a stated theme, which is expressed directly. More works have an implied theme, which is revealed gradually through events, dialogue, or description. A literary work may have more than one theme.

1. What is the central theme in *Nature*? Is this theme stated or implied? Explain.
2. How is the theme of this essay consistent with Emerson’s transcendentalism?

Writing About Literature

**Respond to Theme**  Emerson states, “Nature always wears the colors of the spirit.” Write a one-page response explaining why you agree or disagree with this statement. Use evidence from this essay and your personal experience to defend your position.

READING AND VOCABULARY

Reading Strategy  Recognizing Author’s Purpose
Sometimes an author will have more than one purpose for writing. However, authors generally consider one purpose more important than the others.

1. What do you think Emerson’s main purpose was for writing *Nature*?
2. In support of your opinion, list three details from the essay.

Vocabulary  Practice

**Practice with Synonyms**  Find the synonym for each vocabulary word from *Nature* listed in the first column. Use a dictionary or a thesaurus if you need help.

1. blithe  a. happy  b. reckless
2. integrate  a. dismantle  b. synthesize
3. occult  a. secret  b. unhealthy
4. perennial  a. long lasting  b. frequent
5. perpetual  a. unending  b. stubborn

Web Activities  For eFlashcards, Selection Quick Checks, and other Web activities, go to www.glencoe.com.

182 UNIT 2  AMERICAN ROMANTICISM
I read the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. Always the soul hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instill is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart, is true for all men,—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction and it shall be the universal sense; for always the inmost becomes the outmost,—and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what they thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else, tomorrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full

1. Eminent means “distinguished” or “prominent.”

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>admonition</td>
<td>(ad’mə nish’an) n. a warning; cautionary advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>latent</td>
<td>(la’ tant) adj. present but not evident; hidden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Bards are poets.
of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact makes much impression on him, and another none. It is not without preestablished harmony, this sculpture in the memory. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray.

Bravely let him speak the utmost syllable of his confession. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be made manifest by cowards. It needs a divine man to exhibit any thing divine. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with persistence, to live after our own; but the great man is not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay plastic under the Almighty effort, let us advance and advance on Chaos and the Dark.

Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company in which the members agree for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

What I must do, is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is not without sacrifice but the integrity of your own mind.

It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

6. **Predominating** means “having controlling power or influence.”

7. **Transcendent** means “concerned with a spiritual reality that is beyond the limits of experience and knowable only through intuition.”

8. **Aspirants** are those who seek, or aspire to, advancement or honors.

9. **Palm leaves** are a traditional symbol of victory or success.

10. **Arduous** means “difficult.”

11. Here, **meanness** means “the state of having little importance, worth, or consequence.”

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3. In Greek mythology, the Muses were goddesses who presided over the arts and sciences. Here, **muse** is used to mean “a source of genius or inspiration.”

4. The **divine Providence** is God.

5. Here, **genius** means “the distinctive character” or “predominant spirit.”

6. **Figurative Language**

What comparison is Emerson making here?

7. **Reading Strategy**

Drawing Conclusions According to Emerson, what is the cause of our shame?

8. **Vocabulary**

**manifest** (man’ “fés’t) adj. apparent to the eye or the mind; evident; obvious

**benefactor** (ben’ a fæk’ tar) n. one who gives help or financial aid

**integrity** (in teg’ ra tê) n. moral uprightness; honesty
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond

1. (a) What was your reaction to Emerson’s discussion of nonconformity? (b) In your experience, how valuable a trait is the type of nonconformity that Emerson recommends?

Recall and Interpret

2. (a) According to Emerson, what is genius? (b) How does his definition of genius relate to his belief in individualism?

3. (a) According to Emerson, in what way should a person approach his or her work? (b) What kind of “work” do you think he is describing?

4. (a) To what does Emerson compare society? (b) How does society affect what people value?

Analyze and Evaluate

5. Emerson uses many religious references throughout the essay. (a) Why do you think he does so? (b) How do they affect the essay’s meaning and tone?

6. (a) What kinds of figurative language does Emerson use to describe both society and the individual? (b) How effective is his use of figurative language?

7. (a) What parts of Emerson’s essay did you find most persuasive? (b) What techniques did he use to convince you of his arguments?

Connect

8. Big Idea Optimism and Individualism Do you think it is possible for people to live as individuals and nonconformists in modern society? Why or why not?

Literary Element Figurative Language

There are many different kinds of figurative language. Examples include imagery, personification, metaphor, metonymy, simile, and symbol. An author can use each of these devices to generate various moods, effects, or ideas. For example, when Emerson says that a person “should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across the mind from within,” he is using a metaphor that compares a sudden idea to a flash of lightning.

1. When Emerson writes, “Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string,” what kind of figurative language is he using?

2. Find at least two other examples of figurative language in the excerpt from “Self-Reliance.” Tell how each helps to explain an idea or make it more concrete.

Review: Tone

As you learned in a previous lesson, tone is the reflection of a writer’s attitude toward his or her subject matter, as conveyed through word choice, punctuation, sentence structure, and figures of speech.

Partner Activity Pair up with a classmate and discuss the tone of “Self-Reliance.” Working with your partner, create a two-column chart similar to the one below. Fill in the left-hand column with examples from the text that demonstrate a particular tone. In the right-hand column, label each example with an adjective that describes the tone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It is a deliverance which does not deliver.”</td>
<td>Resolute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Strategy  Drawing Conclusions

Authors often incorporate their own beliefs into their writing. Sometimes they state these beliefs explicitly. In other cases, they merely imply, or hint at, their beliefs. The reader can infer an author’s beliefs by examining his or her word choice, figurative language, or rhetorical techniques. What do you think Emerson believes about the relationship between the individual and society? Is his belief stated or implied? List three details that support your opinion.

Writing About Literature

Compare and Contrast Theme  In many of his essays, Emerson treats related topics, arguments, and themes. How are the themes of “Self-Reliance” and Nature similar? How are they different? Write a one- or two-page analysis, in which you compare and contrast the themes of these essays. Use evidence from Emerson’s essays to defend your position.

Before you begin drafting, take notes on the similarities and differences in the two essays’ themes in a Venn diagram, such as the one below:

Include quotes from the texts related to the themes of each essay, as well as any impressions or ideas that struck you as you read. Once you have completed the diagram, begin drafting.

After completing your draft, meet with a peer reviewer to evaluate each other’s work and suggest revisions. Then proofread and edit your draft for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Literature Groups

Being Courageous  In what ways would it take courage for students today to trust themselves and live according to their own convictions? Discuss this question in your group. Was Emerson courageous in expressing his beliefs? What might he have risked, if anything? What might he have gained? Share your ideas with the class.

Academic Vocabulary

Here are two vocabulary words from the vocabulary list on page R86. These words will help you think, write, and talk about the selection.

approach  (ə prōch’) n. a method used to make advances toward a full understanding or accomplishment

evident  (ev’ ə dənt) adj. clear; obvious

Practice and Apply
1. What was Emerson’s approach to the issue of conformity in “Self-Reliance”?
2. What do you believe was evident to Emerson before he began writing this essay?
By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world,

The foe long since in silence slept,
Alike the Conqueror silent sleeps,
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone,
That memory may their deed redeem,
When like our sires our sons are gone.

Spirit! who made those freemen dare
To die, or leave their children free,
Bid time and nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and Thee.
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. What were your reactions to the poem?

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) What did the farmers do at the bridge in Concord? (b) What does the speaker imply about the impact of their activities?
3. (a) Where are the battle’s participants now? (b) What has happened to the bridge?
4. (a) What wish do the last two lines express? (b) Why do you think the speaker wishes for this?

Analyze and Evaluate
5. (a) A hymn is a song of praise or thanksgiving. What is Emerson praising or being thankful for in this poem? (b) Do you think this hymn is a fitting dedication for a war monument? Explain.
6. (a) What is the effect of the rhyme and rhythm of this poem? (b) Do you think the use of rhyme is appropriate to the subject matter? Explain.

Connect
7. Big Idea Optimism and Individualism How does this poem relate to Emerson’s optimism and belief in the individual?

LITERARY ELEMENT Metonymy
Metonymy is a type of figurative language in which one word is used to stand for a related term. When Emerson writes that the “sun shines into a child’s heart,” he uses heart to stand for soul, or deep emotions.

1. To what is Emerson referring when he speaks of “the shot heard round the world”?
2. What kind of emotional response does the metonymy “the shot heard round the world” create?

Reading Strategy Applying Background Knowledge
Applying background knowledge can aid in evaluating a literary work. For example, apply background knowledge you learned in your American history classes to evaluate the accuracy of Emerson’s poem.

1. Is Emerson’s portrayal of the battle accurate?
2. In support of your opinion, provide at least three pieces of evidence from “Concord Hymn” and from your background knowledge.

Academic Vocabulary
Here are two words from the vocabulary list on page R86. These words will help you think, write, and talk about the selection.

communicate (kə məˈni kət) v. to pass along information or knowledge
period (pərˈi d) n. a division of time

Practice and Apply
1. What ideas did Emerson most successfully communicate in “Concord Hymn”?
2. How well did Emerson’s first stanza capture the mood of the Revolutionary War period?
Scientists know plenty about depression. Now they are starting to understand the roots of positive emotion.

By MICHAEL D. LEMONICK

IT ALL BEGAN WITH RICHARD DAVIDSON, A PROFESSOR OF psychology and psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin. Davidson was in a lab observing a Buddhist monk sink deep into blissful meditation when he noticed something that sent his own pulse racing. Davidson checked the data streaming to his computer from electrodes attached to the monk’s skull. Electrical activity in the left prefrontal lobe of the monk’s brain was shooting up at a tremendous rate. “It was exciting,” Davidson recalls. “We didn’t expect to see anything that dramatic.”

When Davidson made his discovery, he had been studying the link between prefrontal-lobe activity and the bliss deep meditators experience. But even for someone with his experience, watching the brain crackle with activity as a person entered a trancelike state was something never seen before. It made clear, says Davidson, that happiness isn’t just a vague feeling. Instead it’s a physical state of the brain—one that you can bring on deliberately.

That’s not all. As researchers have gained an understanding of the physical characteristics of a happy brain, they have come to see that those traits have a powerful influence on the rest of the body. Scientists have discovered that happiness or feelings of hopefulness, optimism, and contentment appear to lessen the risk or limit the severity of cardiovascular disease, lung disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and colds. According to a Dutch study of elderly patients, those upbeat mental states reduced an individual’s risk of death 50%.

Doctors have known for years that clinical depression—the extreme opposite of happiness—can worsen heart disease and other illnesses. But the neurochemistry of depression is much better known than that of happiness, mostly because depression has been studied more intensively and for much longer. Until about 10 years ago, says Dacher Keltner, a psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley, “90% of emotion research focused on the negative. There still are all of these interesting questions about the positive state.”
Happiness on the Brain

A growing number of researchers exploring the physiology and neurology of happiness are starting to answer those questions. Perhaps most basic of all is what happiness is, in a clinical sense. At this point, nobody can say exactly. The word happiness, Davidson observes, “is kind of a placeholder for a group of positive emotional states. It’s a state of well-being where individuals are usually not motivated to change the way they are feeling. They’re motivated to preserve it.” But, Davidson notes, there is much more that scientists must learn about the qualities and effects of happiness in humans. Much of that information lies in a part of the brain called the left prefrontal cortex, the brain’s major center of happiness.

Scientists want to know if the prefrontal cortex creates the sensation of happiness or whether it merely reflects a person’s more general emotional state. Davidson thinks the answer is both: “We’re confident that this part of the brain is the cause of at least certain kinds of happiness.” That suggests some people are genetically predisposed to be happy by virtue of their busy prefrontal cortices, and research in infants confirms it. Davidson first measured left prefrontal activity in babies less than a year old. Then he gave them a test in which their mothers left the room briefly. “Some babies will cry hysterically the instant the mom leaves,” he says. “Others are more resilient.” It turns out that the babies with the higher left prefrontal activity are the ones who don’t cry. “We were actually able to predict which infants would cry in response to that brief but significant stress.”

In short, some babies are just born happy. But neuroscientists have also learned that the brain is highly adaptable. It rewires itself in response to experience, and that’s especially true before the age of puberty. One might assume, therefore, that negative experiences might destroy a happy personality—and if they’re extreme and frequent enough, that might be true. Davidson has learned, however, that mild to moderate doses of negative experience are helpful. The reason, he believes, is that stressful events give us practice at bouncing back from unpleasant emotions. They’re like an exercise to strengthen our happiness muscles.

The Chemistry of Happiness

Exactly what is the physical difference, though, between a left prefrontal cortex that leans towards happiness and one that doesn’t? It almost certainly has in part to do with neurotransmitters. These chemicals ferry signals from one neuron to the next. Davidson believes that one of these chemicals, dopamine, may be significant. Researchers are studying the relationship of dopamine levels to feelings of extreme happiness and depression.
Dopamine pathways may be especially important in aspects of happiness associated with moving toward some sort of goal such as monks achieving a meditative state. “People have made progress telling the difference between the positive feeling you get when you approach a goal, which maps onto dopamine, and the sensory pleasure of enjoying something, which maps onto the opioid system,” says Berkeley’s Keltner. “This is really neat territory.”

Among those exploring that territory is Brian Knutson, an assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at Stanford, who monitors the brains of test subjects. The mental mode he studies is anticipation. “When people think of happiness,” says Knutson, “they think of feeling good. But a big part of happiness is also looking forward to something.” Knutson’s research was inspired by the classic work of Ivan Pavlov, who trained dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell, which they associated with mealtime.

Instead of food, Knutson used money—a small cash payoff if subjects won a video game. “When we looked at their brains just before they got the reward,” he says, “we saw this spark that clearly had to do with how positive the idea of making money was.” The spark showed up not in the left prefrontal cortex but in the nucleus accumbens, located in the subcortex, at the bottom of the brain. The bigger the prize, Knutson found, “the more activation.” Knutson believes he is looking at the kind of happy feelings we experience as excitement. The primary focus of his work is to understand how emotion and reason work together as people make choices. But it could also be a key to mapping out the brain’s broader happiness circuitry.

Happiness and Physical Health
Understanding brain changes when a person feels good is one aspect of happiness research. Another is understanding how positive emotion affects the rest of the body. As with the brain studies, researchers tend to focus on specific aspects of happiness. Harvard psychologist Laura Kubzansky is studying optimism. In a large study she tracked 1,300 men for 10 years and found that heart-disease rates among men who called themselves optimistic were half the rates for men who didn’t.

“It was a much bigger effect than we expected,” she says. Kubzansky also looked at pulmonary function, since poor pulmonary function can signal a range of problems, including early death and cardiovascular disease. Again, optimists did much better. “I’m an optimist,” she says, “but I didn’t expect results like this.”

In a separate study, Kubzansky, working with Duke psychologist Laura Richman, looked at hopefulness and curiosity—mental states that overlap with optimism in some ways. “We found them to be protective against hypertension, diabetes, and upper-respiratory infection,” she says. Such protective effects may explain the longevity advantage found in that Dutch study of the elderly—an advantage for happy optimists that persisted even when researchers corrected for diet, education, and other factors.

Exactly how states of mind affect the body’s biochemistry is still far from clear. Optimists may simply feel less stress than pessimists and so they can avoid the noxious biochemical cascades that stress is known to trigger. Another likely factor: optimistic, happy types seem to take better

Robert Frost

“Happiness makes up in height for what it lacks in length.”

Benjamin Franklin

“Happiness consists more in small conveniences or pleasures that occur every day, than in great pieces of good fortune that happen but seldom to a man in the course of his life.”

Benjamin Franklin
care of themselves than sad sacks do. Many studies—and common sense—suggest that to be the case.

In a series of studies begun in 1998, psychologist Robert Emmons of the University of California at Davis has found further evidence that happy people are better at keeping themselves in good shape. Emmons randomly assigned 1,000 adults to one of three groups. The first group kept daily journals of their moods and rated them on a scale of 1 to 6. The second group did that and listed the things that annoyed or hassled them throughout their day. The third group kept a journal but added an activity that has repeatedly been shown to improve one’s sense of satisfaction with life: they were asked to write down every day all the things for which they were grateful.

Despite being assigned randomly, the last group not only had the predicted jump in their overall feelings of happiness, says Emmons, but were also found to spend more time exercising, be more likely to have regular medical checkups, and routinely take preventive health actions like wearing sunscreen. Overall, the “gratitude” group were promoting better health. “They rate themselves as more energetic, more enthusiastic, more alert,” Emmons reports. In short, keeping the diaries contributed to their physical and emotional well-being.

Not surprisingly, the advantages were greatest when compared with the group that focused on life’s hassles. “People who are grateful tend to view their body a certain way,” says Emmons. “They see life as a gift, health as a gift. So they want to take certain measures to preserve it.” Reminding yourself of what you’re grateful for is a technique open to anyone, but more sophisticated methods of manipulating happiness are showing promise as well. Behavior therapy and medication, for example, are used mostly to fight depression, but they may also be useful in enhancing happiness.

Such positive results gratify happiness scientists. Thanks to Keltner, Davidson, and others, those findings have gained the field a degree of respectability that’s long overdue—and that ultimately could make all of us a whole lot happier.

—From TIME, January 17, 2005

RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond

1. Were you surprised at the findings of the scientists? Why or why not?

Recall and Interpret

2. What are some reasons given in the article for why happier people live longer?

3. (a) Why did Davidson use a monk for his study? (b) What other professions or types of people would also be suitable for his experiment?

Analyze and Evaluate

4. (a) What kinds of evidence does the writer use to support his point? (b) Why is the writer’s choice of evidence appropriate to his purpose?

5. How is your appreciation of Emerson and Thoreau affected by the possibility that their optimism may have been biologically determined?

Connect

6. Pretend that you are either Emerson or Poe and write a letter to the editor agreeing or disagreeing with the findings in “The Biology of Joy.” Try to imitate the tone and language of the author you choose, using the excerpts from “Self-Reliance” on pages 183–184 and “The Pit and the Pendulum” on pages 251–260 as guidelines. Be sure to support your conclusions with evidence from the article.
New England socialite, expatriate revolutionary, transcendentalist, author, feminist—all of these labels describe Margaret Fuller. Born in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, Fuller received an extensive education in literature, languages, and the arts from her father, Timothy Fuller Jr., a congressman from Massachusetts. She was a very precocious child and continued to educate herself after attending several local academies. After her father’s sudden death in 1835, she became responsible for the education of her eight younger siblings.

“When people keep telling you that you can’t do a thing, you kind of like to try it.”

—Margaret Fuller

Feminist and Intellectual  In 1836, Fuller first met Ralph Waldo Emerson (page 178) and stayed at his house in Concord while he was finishing his essay Nature. On first acquaintance he was uninterested in Fuller, put off by what he described as her “extreme plainness” and her “trick of opening and shutting her eyelids” and saying that the two would “never get far.” Like many who knew her, however, he soon changed his opinion and developed great respect for Fuller. He wrote of Fuller, “she has noble traits and powers and cannot fail of a permanent success.” They became close friends, and Fuller eventually joined his Transcendentalist Club.

In 1839 Fuller moved to Boston and began a series of language classes and formal conversations for women on topics such as literature, education, mythology, and philosophy. She was described as a dazzling discussion leader, and these meetings attracted many intellectuals and social activists. Though women were sometimes taught the same subjects as men, they had few opportunities to use their learning. Fuller’s meetings provided an opportunity for women to discuss their ideas and speak their thoughts freely. These meetings gave her a formidable reputation, and in 1840 she was invited to edit The Dial, a transcendentalist magazine, in which she published her essay “The Great Lawsuit.” She later expanded this essay into her groundbreaking feminist work, Woman in the Nineteenth Century. Her book reveals her extensive knowledge of literature and philosophy. It gained a wide audience and is an impressive argument for the equal status of women.

Activism Abroad  In 1846 Fuller went to Europe as the first female foreign correspondent for the New York Tribune. While in Rome, she was involved with Italian aristocrat and revolutionary Giovanni Angelo Ossoli and eventually had a child with him. Ossoli was active in the Risorgimento, a movement to overthrow Rome’s papal state and to unify Italy; Fuller vigorously supported the movement. She felt at home in Italy and saw the Risorgimento as an opportunity for women and the laboring class to gain freedom and human rights. When the 1848 revolution broke out, Fuller volunteered in a hospital and sent vivid reports home to the Tribune while Ossoli fought. The revolution failed, and in 1850 Fuller and Ossoli fled to the United States with their infant son, Angelo. Tragically, their ship sank off the coast of New York, and all three were killed.

Fuller’s life is well summed up by her memorial in Cambridge: “in youth an insatiable student . . . in riper years teacher, writer, critic . . . in maturer age . . . earnest reformer in America and Europe.”

Margaret Fuller was born in 1810 and died in 1850.
Connecting to the Essay

Would you challenge conventional wisdom to express an unpopular opinion that you held? Consider how Margaret Fuller challenges the accepted beliefs of her time.

Building Background

Fuller was one of the earliest and most vocal supporters of women’s rights in the United States. She was writing at a time when laws were beginning to be changed in order to give women more of an equal status with men. Shortly before Woman in the Nineteenth Century was published, for example, laws were passed in some states allowing married women to own property separately from their husbands. Fuller’s book laid the groundwork for the women’s suffrage movement that in 1920 resulted in the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees women’s right to vote. Horace Greeley, publisher of the New York Tribune, called her book “the ablest, bravest, broadest assertion yet made of what are termed Woman’s Rights.”

Setting Purposes for Reading

**Big Idea** Optimism and Individualism

As you read, notice how Fuller’s feminism is an extension of Emerson’s belief in the divinity of the individual.

**Literary Element** Thesis

A thesis is the main idea of a work of nonfiction. The thesis may be stated directly or implied. As you read this essay, look for the thesis of Fuller’s essay.


**Reading Strategy** Summarizing

Summarizing is briefly stating the main ideas of a selection in your own words and in a logical sequence. Summarizing what you have read is an excellent tool for understanding and remembering a passage. As you read, summarize Fuller’s ideas to better understand this selection.

**Vocabulary**

- **ludicrous** (lū’drəs) adj. deserving laughter; foolish; false; p. 196 *It would be ludicrous to go camping during this blizzard.*
- **commensurate** (kəm’ə nə rət) adj. equal to; proportionate; p. 197 *Our participation in the development of this project was commensurate with your own.*
- **arbitrary** (ər’ə trər’é) adj. of a random or unreasonable character; p. 197 *The organization of the police roadblocks appeared to be arbitrary.*
- **lot** (lōt) n. way of life or purpose as determined by fate; fortune; p. 198 *The lot of the poor family was full of hardship.*
- **reverence** (rəvərəns) n. a feeling of respect or deep affection; p. 198 *The congregation had a great deal of reverence for their minister.*

In studying this selection, you will focus on the following:

- analyzing literary periods
- recognizing a thesis statement
- summarizing text
- writing an evaluative essay
Knowing that there exists in the minds of men a tone of feeling toward women as toward slaves, such as is expressed in the common phrase, “Tell that to women and children”; that the infinite soul can only work through them in already ascertained limits; that the gift of reason, Man’s highest prerogative, is allotted to them in much lower degree; that they must be kept from mischief and melancholy by being constantly engaged in active labor, which is to be furnished and directed by those better able to think, etc., etc.,—we need not multiply instances, for who can review the experience of last week without recalling words which imply, whether in jest or earnest, these views, or views like these,—knowing this, can we wonder that many reformers think that measures are not likely to be taken in behalf of women, unless their wishes could be publicly represented by women?

“That can never be necessary,” cry the other side. “All men are privately influenced by women; each has his wife, sister, or female friends, and is too much biased by these relations to fail of representing their interests; and, if this is not enough, let them propose and enforce their wishes with the pen. The beauty of home would be destroyed, the delicacy of the sex be

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1. Prerogative means “right.”
2. Here, biased means “influenced.”

**Reading Strategy** Summarizing Summarize this statement in your own words.
violated, the dignity of halls of legislation degraded, by an attempt to introduce them there. Such duties are inconsistent with those of a mother;” and then we have ludicrous pictures of ladies in hystericis at the polls, and senate-chambers filled with cradles.

But if, in reply, we admit as truth that Woman seems destined by nature rather for the inner circle, we must add that the arrangements of civilized life have not been, as yet, such as to secure it to her. Her circle, if the duller, is not the quieter. If kept from “excitement,” she is not from drudgery. Not only the Indian squaw carries the burdens of the camp, but the favorites of Louis XIV3 accompany him in his journeys, and the washer-woman stands at her tub, and carries home her work at all seasons, and in all states of health. Those who think the physical circumstances of Woman would make a part in the affairs of national government unsuitable, are by no means those who think it impossible for negresses4 to endure field-work, even during pregnancy, or for sempstresses5 to go through their killing labors.

As to the use of the pen, there was quite as much opposition to Woman’s possessing herself of that help to free agency as there is now to her seizing on the rostrum6 or the desk; and she is likely to draw, from a permission to plead her cause that way, opposite inferences to what might be wished by those who now grant it.

As to the possibility of her filling with grace and dignity any such position, we should think those who had seen the great actresses, and heard the Quaker preachers of modern times, would not doubt that Woman can express publicly the fulness of thought and creation, without losing any of the peculiar beauty of her sex. What can pollute and tarnish is to act thus from any motive except that something needs to be said or done. Woman could take part in the processions, the songs, the dances

Vocabulary

ludicrous (lud krəs) adj. deserving laughter; foolish; false

3. Louis XIV was the king of France from 1638–1715.

4. Negresses is an archaic term for women of black African descent.

5. Sempstresses are “seamstresses.”

6. A rostrum is a platform for speakers.
of old religion; no one fancied her delicacy was impaired by appearing in public for such a cause.

As to her home, she is not likely to leave it more than she now does for balls, theatres, meetings for promoting missions, revival meetings, and others to which she flies,7 in hope of an animation for her existence commensurate with what she sees enjoyed by men. Governors of ladies’-fairs are no less engrossed by such a charge, than the governor of a state by his; presidents of Washingtonian societies8 no less away from home than presidents of conventions. If men look straitly to it, they will find that, unless their lives are domestic, those of the women will not be. A house is no home unless it contain food and fire for the mind as well as for the body. The female Greek, of our day, is as much in the street as the male to cry, “What news?” We doubt not it was the same in Athens of old. The women, shut out from the marketplace, made up for it at the religious festivals. For human beings are not so constituted that they can live without expansion. If they do not get it in one way, they must in another, or perish.9

As to men’s representing women fairly at present, while we hear from men who owe to their wives not only all that is comfortable or graceful, but all that is wise, in the arrangement of their lives, the frequent remark, “You cannot reason with a woman,”—when from those of delicacy, nobleness, and poetic culture, falls the contemptuous10 phrase “women and children,” and that in no light sally11 of the hour, but in works intended to give a permanent statement of the best experiences,—when not one man, in the million, shall I say? no, not in the hundred million, can rise above the belief that Woman was made for Man,—when such traits as these are daily forced upon the attention, can we feel that Man will always do justice to the interests of Woman? Can we think that he takes a sufficiently discerning and religious view of her office and destiny ever to do her justice, except when prompted by sentiment,—accidentally or transiently, that is, for the sentiment will vary according to the relations in which he is placed? The lover, the poet, the artist, are likely to view her nobly. The father and the philosopher have some chance of liberality; the man of the world, the legislator for expediency, none.

Under these circumstances, without attaching importance, in themselves, to the changes demanded by the champions of Woman, we hail them as signs of the times. We would have every arbitrary barrier thrown down. We would have every path laid open to Woman as freely as to Man. Were this done, and a slight temporary fermentation12 allowed to subside, we should see crystallizations more pure and of more various beauty. We believe the divine energy would pervade nature to a degree unknown in the history of former ages, and that no discordant collision, but a ravishing harmony of the spheres,13 would ensue.

Yet, then and only then will mankind be ripe for this, when inward and outward freedom for Woman as much as for Man shall be acknowledged as a right, not yielded as a concession. As the friend of the Negro assumes that one man cannot by right hold another in bondage, so should the friend of Woman assume that Man cannot by right lay even well-meant restrictions on Woman. If the Negro be a soul, if the woman be a soul, apparelled in flesh, to one Master only are they accountable. There is but one law for souls, and, if there is to be an

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7. Here, flies means “rushing toward.”
8. Washingtonian societies were patriotic groups similar to today’s Daughters of the American Revolution.
9. Fuller is suggesting here that the women of ancient Greece, although excluded from male society, were able to find alternative modes of expression.
10. Contemptuous means “scornful.”
11. Here, sally means “witty remark.”
12. Here, fermentation means “unrest.”
13. Fuller is referring to the ancient belief that the movement of the stars and planets created a perfect music, known as “the music of the spheres.”
interpreter of it, he must come not as man, or son of man, but as son of God.

Were thought and feeling once so far elevated that Man should esteem himself the brother and friend, but nowise the lord and tutor, of Woman,—were he really bound with her in equal worship,—arrangements as to function and employment would be of no consequence. What Woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home. If fewer talents were given her, yet if allowed the free and full employment of these, so that she may render back to the giver his own with usury, she will not complain; nay, I dare to say she will bless and rejoice in her earthly birthplace, her earthly lot. Let us consider what obstructions impede this good era, and what signs give reason to hope that it draws near.

I was talking on this subject with Miranda, a woman, who, if any in the world could, might speak without heat and bitterness of the position of her sex. Her father was a man who cherished no sentimental reverence for Woman, but a firm belief in the equality of the sexes. She was his eldest child, and came to him at an age when he needed a companion. From the time she could speak and go alone, he addressed her not as a plaything, but as a living mind. Among the few verses he ever wrote was a copy addressed to this child, when the first locks were cut from her head; and the reverence expressed on this occasion for that cherished head, he never belied.17 It was to him the temple of immortal intellect. He respected his child, however, too much to be an indulgent parent. He called on her for clear judgment, for courage, for honor and fidelity; in short, for such virtues as he knew. In so far as he possessed the keys to the wonders of this universe, he allowed free use of them to her, and, by the incentive of a high expectation, he forbade, so far as possible, that she should let the privilege lie idle.

Thus this child was early led to feel herself a child of the spirit. She took her place easily, not only in the world of organized being, but in the world of mind. A dignified sense of self-dependence was given as all her portion, and she found it a sure anchor. Herself securely anchored, her relations with others were established with equal security. She was fortunate in a total absence of those charms which might have drawn to her bewildering flatteries, and in a strong electric nature, which repelled those who did not belong to her, and attracted those who did. With men and women her relations were noble,—affectionate without passion, intellectual without coldness. The world was free to her, and she lived freely in it. Outward adversity came, and inward conflict; but that faith and self-respect had early been awakened which must always lead, at last, to an outward serenity and an inward peace.

Of Miranda I had always thought as an example, that the restraints upon the sex were insuperable only to those who think them so, or who noisily strive to break them. She had taken a course of her own, and no man stood in her way. Many of her acts had been unusual, but excited no uproar. Few helped, but none checked her; and the many men who knew her mind and her life, showed to her confidence as to a brother, gentleness as to a sister. And not only refined, but very coarse men approved and aided one in whom they saw resolution and clearness of design. Her mind was often the leading one, always effective.

14. Nowise means "not at all."
15. Here, usury means "interest."
16. Miranda is a fictional character based on Fuller’s own experiences.
17. Belied means "betrayed" or "misrepresented."

Big Idea: Optimism and Individualism How is this statement similar to Emerson’s ideas in "Self-Reliance?"
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. Which of Fuller’s arguments do you find most convincing? Explain.

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) Fuller says that women are kept from excitement. In her judgment, what are they not kept from? (b) Based on this judgment, what can you infer about the true motives of those opposed to women’s rights?
3. (a) What are two examples that Fuller gives of women who fill public positions with “grace and dignity”? (b) How do these examples strengthen Fuller’s argument?
4. (a) How do men respond to Miranda? (b) What is the reason for their response, and what does it suggest about women’s education?

Analyze and Evaluate
5. (a) Why do you think Fuller presents opposing viewpoints throughout the essay? (b) How effective is her use of this rhetorical device?
6. Fuller makes an analogy between the plight of women and that of enslaved African Americans. Is this a valid analogy? Why or why not?
7. (a) Why do you think Fuller introduces Miranda into this essay? (b) Does Miranda help advance Fuller’s arguments? Explain.

Connect
8. **Big Idea** Optimism and Individualism How does Fuller’s feminism draw on the transcendentalist belief in optimism and individualism?

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element Thesis
The thesis statement in a nonfiction piece may be stated directly, or it may be implied. Writers often state the thesis in the opening paragraph. However, if the thesis is implied, the reader must closely examine the facts, details, and rhetorical devices used by the author to determine the thesis statement.

1. What is the thesis of this essay?
2. Is Fuller’s thesis stated directly or implied?

Writing About Literature

Evaluate Contemporary Relevance Fuller says, “We would have every arbitrary barrier thrown down. We would have every path laid open to Woman as freely as to Man.” Is this goal still relevant today? Write a brief essay in which you assess Fuller’s goal in light of contemporary relationships between men and women.

READING AND VOCABULARY

Reading Strategy Summarizing
Summarizing can help you come to a conclusion about an author’s beliefs. Briefly summarize the main ideas of this essay. On the basis on your summary, state two of Fuller’s beliefs.

Vocabulary Practice

Practice with Analogies Choose the word pair that best completes the analogy.

1. arbitrary : logical ::
   a. practical : instructions
   b. anxious : nervous
   c. cancer : disease
   d. perfect : flawed
   e. cautious : timid
2. ludicrous : buffoon ::
   a. word : language
   b. festive : celebration
   c. odd : strange
   d. canoe : boat
   e. captive : free
3. reverence : minister ::
   a. fairness : injustice
   b. scorn : fool
   c. page : book
   d. despair : comedian
   e. schedule : agenda

Web Activities For eFlashcards, Selection Quick Checks, and other Web activities, go to www.glencoe.com.
The Fireside Poets

In the mid-1800s, a group of highly popular American writers became known as the "Fireside Poets" because it was thought that families often sat by the fire and read or recited their poems aloud. Eager to help establish a truly national literature, these poets frequently created vivid pictures of the New England countryside in their lyrics or of famous events from American history in their narrative poems.

William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878) was the oldest of the Fireside Poets. Though his background was Puritan, Bryant was influenced by the English Romantic poets, such as William Wordsworth. He was the first to portray the American landscape in words. In such famous poems as "To a Waterfowl" and "To the Fringed Gentian," Bryant wrote of the wildlife he encountered while he was hiking through the Berkshire Mountains in western Massachusetts.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882) entered Bowdoin College at the age of fifteen and graduated in the same class as Nathaniel Hawthorne. In his poetry, such as the narrative poems Evangeline and The Song of Hiawatha, he mythologized the American past by using rhyme and simple verse. Tales of a Wayside Inn (1863), a collection of stories in verse supposedly told by various people at an inn, includes one of Longfellow's best known poems, "Paul Revere's Ride." He was the first American to have a bust placed in the Poet's Corner of England's Westminster Abbey.

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892) came from a poor Quaker farm family. His first book, Legends of New England, was published in 1831, but he became nationally famous with the work Snow-Bound, published in 1866. "Storytelling was a necessary resource in the long winter evenings," Whittier wrote, and Snow-Bound tells of a family isolated and telling stories during a storm. Whittier was devoted to the abolitionist movement, and much of his poetry, including "The Hunters of Men" and "Massachusetts to Virginia," reflects his stance against racism and slavery.

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894) studied both law and medicine but opted for a medical career.

Among his best-known poems are "The Chambered Nautilus" and "Old Ironsides," the nickname for the famous American warship, the USS Constitution. Rumors that the ship was about to be scrapped inspired Holmes's poem, which roused public sentiment in support of saving it.

James Russell Lowell (1819–1891) objected to slavery and the war with Mexico. In 1846 the first of The Biglow Papers, his antislavery and antiwar poetry series, was published to great acclaim. Lowell created the voice of a rural Yankee, Hosea Biglow, who expressed Lowell's views with wit and humor. Lowell became the first editor of the Atlantic Monthly in 1857.

Americans responded enthusiastically to the Fireside Poets, in part because their works celebrated the values of ordinary people—regard for hard work, respect for family, courage in the face of danger, love of one's country, and love of nature. Because Americans also believed that these writers were the equals of the British poets of the time, they became more confident about the future of their country's culture.
To the Fringed Gentian
William Cullen Bryant

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven’s own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night—

5  Thou comest not when violets lean
O’er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o’er the ground-bird’s hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com’st alone,

10  When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,

15  Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,

20  May look to heaven as I depart.

Old Ironsides
Oliver Wendell Holmes

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;

5  Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon’s roar; —
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes’ blood,

10  Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o’er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor’s tread,
Or know the conquered knee; —

15  The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

Oh, better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,

20  And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

1. What does the speaker in “To the Fringed Gentian” describe in lines 9–12? What do these lines add to your understanding of the speaker’s attitude towards the gentian?

2. How does Bryant use personification in lines 13 and 14? How do these lines relate to the end of the poem?

3. According to the speaker in “Old Ironsides,” what events have taken place on the ship? What does his description of these events suggest about his attitude towards Old Ironsides?

4. In “Old Ironsides,” explain the terms of the metaphor in lines 15–16.

OBJECTIVES

• Analyze literary periods
• Draw conclusions about a speaker’s attitudes

• Analyze figurative language
from Walden

**MEET HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

Although he is best known for his simple lifestyle at Walden Pond, Henry David Thoreau was a complex man: opinionated, cranky, nonconformist, compassionate, and subtly humorous. He was an unconventional thinker who expressed his ideas about major issues such as war, slavery, wealth, taxes, friendship, vegetarianism, and the lessons that nature can teach, yet he also wrote about topics as simple as hoeing his garden and walking in the woods. Much of what Thoreau did, thought about, or saw—and he was a keen observer—later took the form of a journal entry, an essay, or part of a book.

Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts, and lived there most of his life. He graduated from Harvard University in 1837 and took a teaching job at his old grammar school. However, he refused to physically discipline his students and quickly resigned. Thoreau founded a progressive school with his brother John in Concord the next year. Although the school was successful, it had to close in 1841 because of his brother's poor health.

Life in the Woods While at Harvard, Thoreau was influenced by the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the two men became friends. From 1841 to 1843, Thoreau lived with the Emerson family, assisting as a handyman. During this time he contributed a variety of works to The Dial, a Transcendentalist magazine, including poetry, literary essays, and the first of his nature essays. The act that probably most changed Thoreau’s life occurred in 1845, when he built a cabin on land that Emerson owned at Walden Pond near Concord. Thoreau lived there for more than two years spending most of his time reading, writing (including his most famous book, Walden), observing nature, and meditating.

Thoreau was deeply affected by his brother’s death in 1842, and three years later decided to write an account of a camping and canoeing trip they had taken, referring to notes he had made along the way. The account became his first book, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, written during his time at Walden Pond and published in 1849. The publisher returned the unsold copies, prompting Thoreau to later observe, “I now have a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself.”

Thoreau’s most famous book, Walden, or, Life in the Woods, was first published in 1854 and over time has become a classic. In Walden we learn what Thoreau considered most important in life. For example, he thought that most people spend too much time working to afford luxuries and do not take time to truly experience life. Walden also reflects a changing New England and Thoreau’s response to industrialization. Most importantly, through Walden and his other works, Thoreau helped inspire a long tradition of nature writing in the United States. He remains an inspiration for environmentalists everywhere.

Henry David Thoreau was born in 1817 and died in 1862.

“**In Wildness is the preservation of the world.**”

—Thoreau, Walking

**Author Search** For more about Henry David Thoreau, go to www.glencoe.com.
Connecting to the Essay
Do you ever wish for a life with fewer distractions and complications? In these excerpts from Walden, Thoreau discusses his reasons for leaving the city to live in the woods. Think about the following questions:

- What are the unimportant details in your life?
- What is really important to you?

Building Background
Thoreau lived in a rugged cabin that measured ten feet by fifteen feet at Walden Pond for two years, two months, and two days. The cabin, which he built himself, was simple and sturdy, with plastered walls and a shingled roof. His equipment consisted of an ax, two knives and a fork, three plates, one cup, one spoon, a jug for oil, a jug for molasses, and one lamp. He made his own furniture, including a bed, table, desk, and three chairs. At Walden, Thoreau devoted himself to observing the seasons, the animals, the plants and to writing his journals; however, he was not a hermit. Thoreau was able to visit his relatives and friends nearly every day, since the pond was only a mile from Concord.

Setting Purposes for Reading

**Big Idea** Kinship with Nature
As you read, look for the ways in which Thoreau stresses the importance of a close relationship with nature.

**Literary Element** Metaphor
A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares or equates two seemingly unlike things. In contrast to a simile, a metaphor implies the comparison instead of stating it directly, and does not use the connectives like or as. For example, Thoreau uses the metaphor "this chopping sea of civilized life" to suggest the perils and difficulties of modern living. As you read, identify other metaphors that Thoreau uses to convey his ideas.


Reading Strategy Connecting
Connecting to personal experience means relating what you read to your own life. As you read, look for connections between Thoreau’s observations and your own experiences and list ones that you find.

Vocabulary

deliberately (di li'b' ar it lē') adv. in a careful, thoughtful way; p. 204 Thoreau deliberately nailed in place the roof to his cabin.

resignation (rez' ig nä' shan) n. unresisting acceptance; submission; p. 204 He practiced calm resignation to life’s troubles.

sublime (sab lîm') adj. of great spiritual or intellectual value; noble; p. 204 To Emerson, intuition was a sublime power.

rudiment (rū' da mant) n. an imperfect or undeveloped part; p. 205 Though the rudiments of the plan look interesting, it needs more elaboration and detail.

myriad (mir' ē ad) adj. countless, innumerable; p. 205 There were myriad efforts to improve society during the Age of Reform.

Vocabulary Tip: Context Clues When you come across an unfamiliar word, examine its context—the surrounding words and sentences—for clues to its meaning. One familiar type of context clue, known as contrast, provides a word or phrase that is opposite in meaning to the unfamiliar word, as in the following example: "One is enough... what do you care for a myriad" (p. 205).

Interactive Literary Elements Handbook To review or learn more about the literary elements, go to www.glencoe.com.
from
Where I Lived and What I Lived For
I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartanlike as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.”

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme

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1. Marrow is the soft tissue inside bones. It also means “the best or most essential part.”
2. Spartans were inhabitants of the ancient Greek city-state of Sparta. Spartanlike means simple, economical, and disciplined.
3. [to cut . . . close] means “to gather as much of the essence of life as possible.”

Reading Strategy Connecting In what ways might people today “live what [is] not life”?

Vocabulary

- deliberately (di lib’ ar it le) adj. in a careful, thoughtful way
- resignation (rez’ ig nā’ shan) n. unresisting acceptance; submission

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4. Here, mean means “of little importance, worth, or consequence” or “ignoble.”
5. The fable referred to is a Greek myth in which Zeus changes ants into men.
6. In Homer’s Iliad, the Trojans are compared to cranes battling pygmies.
7. Evitable means “avoidable.”

Vocabulary

- sublime (sab lim’) adj. of great spiritual or intellectual value; noble
cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. . . .

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine tomorrow. As for work, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was itself. Hardly a man takes a half hour's nap after dinner, I would forsake his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was itself. Hardly a man takes a half hour's nap after dinner, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, but, if we will confess the consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance, nine tomorrow. As for work, and so they take a thousand stitches today to save hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and we haven't any of any consequence.

8. Founder means "to sink, as a boat."
9. Dead reckoning is a method of navigation used by sailors when the stars cannot be seen.
10. Saint Vitus' dance is a nervous disorder characterized by involuntary twitching of the muscles in the face, arms, and legs.

Reading Strategy Connecting In what ways might you say people today have the “Saint Vitus’ dance”?

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? . . .

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel

11. The Wachito River (now called the Ouachita) flows from southern Arkansas into northern Louisiana. People in Thoreau's time thought that criminals went to that region to escape from the law.

Literary Element Metaphor What comparison is Thoreau making here?

Reading Strategy Connecting Do you think Thoreau's arguments against mail and news are relevant today?

Vocabulary

rudiment (rū’də mant) n. an imperfect or undeveloped part
myriad (mī’rē ăd) adj. countless; innumerable
all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore-paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

from
Brute Neighbors

It is remarkable how many creatures live wild and free though secret in the woods, and still sustain themselves in the neighborhood of towns, suspected by hunters only. How retired the otter manages to live here! He grows to be four feet long, as big as a small boy, perhaps without any human being getting a glimpse of him. I formerly saw the raccoon in the woods behind where my house is built, and probably still heard their whin-nering at night. Commonly I rested an hour or two in the shade at noon, after planting, and ate my lunch, and read a little by a spring which was the source of a swamp and of a brook, oozing from under Brister's Hill, half a mile from my field. The approach to this was through a succession of descending grassy hollows, full of young pitch pines, into a larger wood about the swamp. There, in a very secluded and shaded spot, under a spreading white pine, there was yet a clean firm sward to sit on. I had dug out the spring and made a well of clear gray water, where I could dip up a pailful without roiling it, and thither I went for this purpose almost every day in mid-summer, when the pond was warmest. Thither too the woodcock led her brood, to probe the mud for worms, flying but a foot above them down the bank, while they ran in a troop beneath; but at last, spying me, she would leave her young and circle round and round me, nearer and nearer till within four or five feet, pretending broken wings and legs, to attract my attention, and get off her young, who would already have taken up their march, with faint wiry peep, single file through the swamp, as she directed. Or I heard the peep of the young when I could not see the parent bird. There too the turtle-doves sat over the spring, or fluttered from bough to bough of the soft white pines over my head; or the red squirrel, coursing down the nearest bough, was particularly familiar and inquisitive. You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns.

I was witness to events of a less peaceful character. One day when I went out to my wood pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised

12. A divining rod is a forked stick believed to indicate the presence of underground minerals or water.

13. Sward means a grassy piece of land.

Big Idea Kinship with Nature Why does Thoreau make this comment about the relationship between people and nature?

Big Idea Kinship with Nature How would you compare this suggestion with Thoreau’s comments in the chapter “Where I Lived and What I Lived For”?
to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The legions of these Myrmidons covered all the hills and vales in my wood-yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I have ever witnessed, the only battlefield I ever trod while the battle was raging; *internecine* war; the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noonday prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity than bulldogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle-cry was Conquer or die. In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the hillside of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles, who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar—for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red—he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right foreleg, leaving the foe to select among his own members; and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America, that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism displayed. For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden Concord Fight! Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why here every ant was a Buttrick—“Fire! for God's sake fire!”—and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer. There was not one hireling there. I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a three-penny tax

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14. The *Myrmidons* were a legendary group of Thessalians who followed their king, Achilles, in the Trojan War. In modern English, *Myrmidon* can refer to any devoted, unquestioning follower.
15. *Internecine* means “deadly” or “marked by destruction.”
16. In Greek mythology, *Achilles* was king of the Myrmidons. A handsome warrior reknowned for his bravery and greatness, he died in battle during the Trojan War.

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**Reading Strategy** Connecting *What other events among animals might you compare to events among people?*

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**Literary Element** Metaphor How effective is this extended metaphor comparing the battling ants to human warfare?
on their tea; and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill, at least.

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near foreleg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breastplate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer’s eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddle-bow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

from Conclusion

. . . I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment; that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them. . . |

20. Three-penny tax on their tea refers to the tea tax portion of the Townshend Acts, passed by the English Parliament in 1767 and designed to collect revenue from the American colonies. After protest from the colonists, the Townshend Acts were repealed in 1770, but the tax remained in place. That tax required a payment of three pennies per pound of imported tea.

21. Bunker Hill was the first major battle of the American Revolutionary War. It was fought in Charlestown (now Boston, Massachusetts) on June 17, 1775.

22. Here, carbuncle means a type of red precious stone.

23. The Hôtel des Invalides is a famous complex in Paris, France. Louis XIV founded the hospital to accommodate 7,000 elderly or injured veterans. Today, it houses several museums and a church.

24. A person who took a cabin passage on a sailing ship would travel in a private compartment, sheltered from the weather.
AFTER YOU READ

RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. With which of Thoreau’s ideas do you strongly agree? With which ideas do you strongly disagree?

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) What did Thoreau hope to do at Walden? (b) How could being at Walden help him achieve his goal?
3. (a) What are Thoreau’s views of the news and the mail? (b) What do these views tell you about his values?
4. (a) Summarize the battle between the ants that Thoreau describes. (b) Why do you think he becomes so fascinated with this battle?

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element Metaphor
Thoreau frequently uses metaphor and other types of figurative language to help convey his ideas. For example, the metaphor “Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in” (p. 205) compares time to a stream, suggesting that one moment follows another in an uninterrupted flow. Sometimes, Thoreau develops a metaphor throughout an entire paragraph—a technique called extended metaphor.

1. Why does Thoreau say he goes “a-fishing” in time?
2. Give an example of another metaphor from the reading.

Listening and Speaking
Guest Speaker Thoreau earned money and spread his ideas by giving lectures to local groups. Write and deliver a lecture that Thoreau might have given to high school students in which he explains his ideas about nature, materialism, and progress. Include examples from Walden.

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READING AND VOCABULARY

Reading Strategy Connecting

Connecting to Personal Experience Although Thoreau lived in the 1800s, his message remains relevant. What are some of the things that surround us in the United States today about which Thoreau might cry, “Simplify, simplify”?

Vocabulary Practice

Practice with Context Clues Choose the best meaning for each vocabulary word from Walden.
1. Trying not to jostle the ants, Thoreau deliberately picked up the chip on which they were fighting.
   - a. carelessly
   - b. forcefully
   - c. carefully
   - d. contemplatively
2. Realizing his own guilt, the prisoner bowed his head and listened with resignation as the verdict was read.
   - a. anger
   - b. acceptance
   - c. disbelief
   - d. amazement
3. Mozart’s music seems sublime, as if created by a higher power.
   - a. heavenly
   - b. loud
   - c. quiet
   - d. bizarre

HENRY DAVID THOREAU 209
Comparing Literature Across Time and Place

Connecting to the Reading Selections

How far would you go to carry out your principles, beliefs, or values? The three writers compared here—Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas K. Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela—took a stand against injustice. In the following selections, they speak out against the oppression they witnessed during their lifetimes.

**Henry David Thoreau**

*from Civil Disobedience* ............................................. essay .................. 212

*The highest duty of a citizen*

**Mohandas K. Gandhi**

*On the Eve of Historic Dandi March* ............................................. speech .................. 218

*Nonviolent resistance—a tool for social justice*

**Nelson Mandela**

*from Long Walk to Freedom* ............................................. autobiography ................ 220

*A society transformed through sacrifice and commitment*

**COMPARING THE Big Idea Optimism and Individualism**

Some of the major American Romantic writers celebrated the spirit of individualism and optimism. Thoreau, for instance, believed that ordinary citizens can better themselves, their political system, and their society. Gandhi and Mandela, reformers from other cultures and eras, shared Thoreau’s belief in the power of the individual to bring about change peacefully.

**COMPARING Persuasive Messages**

To bring about reform, Thoreau, Gandhi, and Mandela swayed audiences to share their views, gain their support, or rally them to take action. Each of these leaders used nonviolent methods to convey his message with clarity and force.

**COMPARING Cultures**

Thoreau, Gandhi, and Mandela belonged to different cultures and fought injustices that were unique to their surroundings. Social and historical circumstances presented each of them with distinct challenges. In meeting those challenges, they left their mark on their particular cultures—and changed the course of history.
Connecting to the Essay
Would you risk being put in jail to stand up for something you believe in? In his essay, Thoreau reflects on his choice to disobey the law. As you read the essay, think about the following questions:

- What is the basic purpose of government?
- How much power should government have over citizens’ lives?

Building Background
Thoreau’s refusal to pay a tax led to his arrest—and interrupted his stay at Walden Pond. Thoreau’s action was a protest against the U.S. war with Mexico, which took place between 1846 and 1848. He believed the government was fighting the war solely to expand territory and that it would lead to the expansion of slavery. In “Civil Disobedience” he reflects on the night he spent in jail for refusing to pay the tax and criticizes the government for straying from its true purpose—to serve the people.

Setting Purposes for Reading

Big Idea | Optimism and Individualism
Thoreau’s outlook reflected the Romantic spirit of optimism and individualism—the belief that ordinary citizens could better themselves, their political system, and their society. As you read, notice how Thoreau opposed limitations on personal freedom.

Literary Element | Argument
An argument is a form of persuasion that uses logic, reasons, and evidence to influence an audience’s ideas or actions. For example, in “Civil Disobedience,” Thoreau argues for limiting the power of government. As you read Thoreau’s essay, analyze how he develops his argument through various persuasive techniques.


Reading Strategy | Evaluating Evidence
One way of evaluating the evidence presented in an argument is to distinguish between facts and opinions. Facts are statements that can be proved true, while opinions are statements that are based on personal beliefs. As you read “Civil Disobedience,” ask yourself these questions:

- Do the facts seem relevant, reliable, and accurate?
- Do the opinions seem based on facts and thoughtful observations?

Reading Tip: Taking Notes
Use a chart to list key facts and opinions in Thoreau’s essay.

Facts
“I have paid no poll-tax for six years.”
(relevant information)

Opinions
“That government is best which governs least.”
(unsupported judgment)

Vocabulary

din (din) n. loud, continuous noise; p. 212
The din of construction work kept me from concentrating.

alacrity (ə lak’rə tē) n. speed; swiftness; p. 212
The soccer player’s alacrity surprised the defense.

expedient (ek spē’ dē ant) adj. convenient or efficient for a certain purpose; p. 213
In Thoreau’s era, the railroad was the most expedient means of traveling from Boston to New York.

blunder (blun’ dər) n. a serious error or mistake resulting from carelessness or confusion; p. 214
The police’s blunder allowed the criminal to escape through the back door.

sanction (săngk’ shan) n. approval or support; p. 216
The troops awaited sanction from their commanding officer before continuing their mission.
I heartily accept the motto, “That government is best which governs least”; and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe—“That government is best which governs not at all”; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient, but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government—what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. It does not keep the country free. It does not settle the West. It does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is

1. Expedient means “something employed to bring about a desired result; a means to an end.”

2. Posterity means “future generations.”

3. Fain means “gladly” or “willingly.”

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>din</td>
<td>(din) n. loud, continuous noise</td>
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<tr>
<td>alacrity</td>
<td>(ə lakˈra tē) n. speed; swiftness</td>
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most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of india-rubber, would never manage to bounce over the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule, is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience?—in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. . . .

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. “Pay,” it said, “or be locked up in the jail.” I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster: for I was not the State’s schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the lyceum should not present its tax-bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well as the Church. However, at the request of the selectmen, I condescended to make some such statement as this in writing: “Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined.” This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made a like demand on me since; though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find a complete list.

**Vocabulary**

expedient (ək spē’ dé ant) adj. convenient or efficient for a certain purpose

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4. Whit means “a tiny amount” or “a bit.”
5. A lyceum is an organization that sponsors educational programs, such as concerts and lectures.
6. Selectmen refers to a group of elected local officials.
I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my towns- men, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through, before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which fol- lowed them out again without let or hindrance, and they were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remain- ing respect for it, and pitied it.

Thus the State never intentionally confronts a man’s sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I. They force me to become like themselves. I do not hear of men being forced to live this way or that by masses of men. What sort of life were that to live? When I meet a government which says to me, “Your money or your life,” why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do: I cannot help that. It must help itself; do as I do. It is not worth the while to snivel about it. I am not responsible for the success- ful working of the machinery of society. I am not the son of the engineer. I perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and grow and flourish as best they can, till one, perchance, overshadows and destroys the other. If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man.

The night in prison was novel and interesting enough. The prisoners in their shirt-sleeves were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the doorway, when I entered. But the jailer said, “Come, boys, it is time to lock up”; and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their steps returning into the hollow apartments. My room-mate was introduced to me by the jailer as “a first-rate fellow and a clever man.” When the door was locked, he showed me where to hang my hat, and how he managed mat- ters there. The rooms were whitewashed once a month; and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably the neatest apart- ment in the town. He naturally wanted to know where I came from, and what brought me there; and, when I had told him, I asked him in my turn how he came there, presuming him to be an honest man, of course; and, as the world goes, I believe he

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**Vocabulary**

- **blunder** (blun’ dar) n. a serious error or mistake resulting from carelessness or confusion

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**Big Idea**  
**Optimism and Individualism**  
**Why does Thoreau believe he is freer than his “townsmen”?**
was. “Why,” said he, “they accuse me of burning a barn; but I never did it.” As near as I could discover, he had probably gone to bed in a barn when drunk, and smoked his pipe there; and so a barn was burnt. He had the reputation of being a clever man, had been there some three months waiting for his trial to come on, and would have to wait as much longer; but he was quite domesticated and contented, since he got his board for nothing, and thought that he was well treated.

He occupied one window, and I the other; and I saw that if one stayed there long, his principal business would be to look out the window. I had soon read all the tracts that were left there, and examined where former prisoners had broken out, and where a grate had been sawed off, and heard the history of the various occupants of that room; for I found that even here there was a history and a gossip which never circulated beyond the walls of the jail. Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, which are afterward printed in a circular form, but not published. I was shown quite a long list of verses which were composed by some young men who had been detected in an attempt to escape, who avenged themselves by singing them.

I pumped my fellow-prisoner as dry as I could, for fear I should never see him again; but at length he showed me which was my bed, and left me to blow out the lamp. It was like traveling into a far

9. Tracts are leaflets or pamphlets, especially those on religious or political topics.
country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town-clock strike before, nor the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating. It was to see my native village in the light of the Middle Ages, and our Concord was turned into a Rhine\(^{10}\) stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me. They were the voices of old burghers\(^{11}\) that I heard in the streets. I was an involuntary spectator and auditor\(^{12}\) of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village-inn—a wholly new and rare experience to me. It was a closer view of my native town. I was fairly inside of it. I never had seen its institutions before. This is one of its peculiar institutions; for it is a shire town.\(^{13}\) I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about.

In the morning, our breakfasts were put through the hole in the door, in small oblong-square tin pans, made to fit, and holding a pint of chocolate, with brown bread, and an iron spoon. When they called for the vessels again, I was green enough to return what bread I had left; but my comrade seized it, and said that I should lay that up for lunch or dinner. Soon after he was let out to work at haying in a neighboring field, whither he went every day, and would not be back till noon; so he bade me good-day, saying that he doubted if he should see me again.

When I came out of prison—for some one interfered, and paid that tax—I did not perceive that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth and emerged a tottering and gray-headed man; and yet a change had to my eyes come over the scene—the town, and State, and country—greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. . . .

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to—for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well—is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher\(^{14}\) was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at least which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose\(^{15}\) if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellows. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

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10. Concord refers to the Concord River. The Rhine River flows through Germany and the Netherlands.

11. Burghers is a term for inhabitants of a city.

12. Here, auditor means “someone who hears,” or “a listener.”

13. A shire town, or county town, is similar to a county seat.

14. The Chinese philosopher is Confucius (c. 551–479 B.C.)

15. Here, repose refers to the state’s “peace of mind.”

**Big Idea** Optimism and Individualism  What type of freedom does Thoreau desire?

**Vocabulary**

-sanction (sangk’n’shan) n. approval or support
RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond
1. What was your reaction to Thoreau’s opinion on disobeying the government?

Recall and Interpret
2. (a) Why was Thoreau jailed? (b) What does this tell you about Thoreau’s beliefs?
3. (a) Why is Thoreau’s cellmate in prison? (b) What does Thoreau presume about his cellmate’s conviction?
4. (a) How does Thoreau react to his night in jail? (b) What does this say about his personality?

Analyze and Evaluate
5. How does Thoreau’s perspective change when he is released from prison?
6. How does the fact that Thoreau spent only one night in jail affect your evaluation of his opinions?
7. (a) How do you evaluate Thoreau’s criticism of democracy? (b) Is it accurate; is it fair? (c) Cite evidence from the story to support your opinion.

Connect
8. Big Idea Optimism and Individualism (a) What do you think are some essential qualities for an individual who wishes to reform society or the government? (b) Which of these qualities does Thoreau possess?

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element Argument
A valid argument relies on logic—the process of clear, well-organized thinking that leads to a reasonable conclusion.

Partner Activity What does Thoreau conclude about freedom and the role of government? Meet with another classmate to discuss whether Thoreau’s conclusions are logical.

Writing About Literature
Evaluate Contemporary Relevance Based on the ideas in “Civil Disobedience” consider how Thoreau might encourage young people to become involved in their government. Write a brief essay in which you give examples of the political roles that young people might play.

READING AND VOCABULARY

Reading Strategy Evaluating Evidence
A successful persuasive essay relies on various kinds of supporting evidence, such as facts and opinions.

1. What kind of evidence does Thoreau rely on more—facts or opinions?
2. Was the evidence presented in the essay strong enough to persuade you to agree with Thoreau’s viewpoints? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Practice
Practice with Antonyms Choose the best antonym for each vocabulary word from “Civil Disobedience.”

1. alacrity
   a. simplicity  c. wiliness
   b. slowness  d. custom
2. expedient
   a. dated  c. useless
   b. careful  d. creative
3. sanction
   a. ban  c. approval
   b. increase  d. innovation
In all probability this will be my last speech to you. Even if the Government allow me to march tomorrow morning, this will be my last speech on the sacred banks of the Sabarmati. Possibly these may be the last words of my life here.

I have already told you yesterday what I had to say. Today I shall confine myself to what you should do after my companions and I are arrested. The program of the march to Jalalpur must be fulfilled as originally settled. The enlistment of the volunteers for this purpose should be confined to Gujarat only. From what I have seen and heard during the last fortnight, I am inclined to believe that the stream of civil resisters will flow unbroken.

But let there be not a semblance of breach of peace even after all of us have been arrested. We have resolved to utilize all our resources in the pursuit of an exclusively nonviolent struggle. Let no one commit a wrong in anger. This is my hope and prayer. I wish these words of mine reached every nook and corner of the land. My task shall be done if I perish and so do my comrades. It will then be for the Working Committee of the Congress to show you the way and it will be up to you to follow its lead. So long as I have not reached Jalalpur, let nothing be done in contravention to the authority vested in me by the Congress. But once I am arrested, the whole responsibility shifts to the Congress. No one who believes in nonviolence, as

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1. The Sabarmati is a river in western India.
2. Here, program means “mission.”
3. Jalalpur, a city in India, was the last stop on Gandhi’s march to Dandi.
4. Gujarat is a state in western India.
5. By Congress, Gandhi is referring to the Indian National Congress, a political party led by Gandhi in the 1920s and 1930s.
a creed, need, therefore, sit still. My compact with the Congress ends as soon as I am arrested. In that case there should be no slackness in the enrolment of volunteers. Wherever possible, civil disobedience of salt laws should be started. These laws can be violated in three ways. It is an offense to manufacture salt wherever there are facilities for doing so. The possession and sale of contraband salt, which includes natural salt or salt earth, is also an offense. The purchasers of such salt will be equally guilty. To carry away the natural salt deposits on the seashore is likewise violation of law. So is the hawking of such salt. In short, you may choose any one or all of these devices to break the salt monopoly.

We are, however, not to be content with this alone. There is no ban by the Congress and wherever the local workers have self-confidence other suitable measures may be adopted. I stress only one condition, namely, let our pledge of truth and non violence as the only means for the attainment of Swaraj be faithfully kept. For the rest, every one has a free hand. But, that does not give a license to all sundry to carry on on their own responsibility. Wherever there are local leaders, their orders should be obeyed by the people. Where there are no leaders and only a handful of men have faith in the program, they may do what they can, if they have enough self-confidence. They have a right, nay it is their duty, to do so. The history of the world is full of instances of men who rose to leadership, by sheer force of self-confidence, bravery and tenacity. We too, if we sincerely aspire to Swaraj and are impatient to attain it, should have similar self-confidence. Our ranks will swell and our hearts strengthen, as the number of our arrests by the Government increases.

Much can be done in many other ways besides these. The liquor and foreign cloth shops can be picketed. We can refuse to pay taxes if we have the requisite strength. The lawyers can give up practice. The public can boycott the law courts by refraining from litigation. Government servants can resign their posts. In the midst of the despair reigning all round people quake with fear of losing employment. Such men are unfit for Swaraj. But why this despair? The number of Government servants in the country does not exceed a few hundred thousand. What about the rest? Where are they to go? Even free India will not be able to accommodate a greater number of public servants. A Collector then will not need the number of servants he has got today. He will be his own servant. Our starving millions can by no means afford this enormous expenditure. If, therefore, we are sensible enough, let us bid goodbye to Government employment, no matter if it is the post of a judge or a peon. Let all who are cooperating with the Government in one way or another, be it by paying taxes, keeping titles, or sending children to official schools, etc. withdraw their cooperation in all or as many ways as possible. Then there are women who can stand shoulder to shoulder with men in this struggle.

You may take it as my will. It was the message that I desired to impart to you before starting on the march or for the jail. I wish that there should be no suspension or abandonment of the war that commences tomorrow morning or earlier, if I am arrested before that time. I shall eagerly await the news that ten batches are ready as soon as my batch is arrested. I believe there are men in India to complete the work begun by me. I have faith in the righteousness of our cause and the purity of our weapons. And where the means are clean, there God is undoubtedly present with His blessings. And where these three combine, there defeat is an impossibility. A Satyagrahi, whether free or incarcerated, is ever victorious. He is vanquished only when he forsakes truth and nonviolence and turns a deaf ear to the inner voice. If, therefore, there is such a thing as defeat for even a Satyagrahi, he alone is the cause of it. God bless you all and keep off all obstacles from the path in the struggle that begins tomorrow.

Gandhi insists that his followers must have self-confidence to succeed in their struggle against the British. Why is self-confidence important for someone using nonviolence as a tool for social justice? For example, why might a Satyagrahi need self-confidence to be effective? Write a paragraph explaining your views.

6. Swaraj means “home rule.” It refers to Indians’ desire to rule themselves, rather than be ruled by the British.

7. Satyagrahi means someone who embodies Gandhi’s ideal of satyagraha and practices nonviolent resistance.
May 10 dawned bright and clear. For the past few days, I had been pleasantly besieged by arriving dignitaries and world leaders who were coming to pay their respects before the inauguration. The inauguration would be the largest gathering ever of international leaders on South African soil.

The ceremonies took place in the lovely sandstone amphitheater formed by the Union Buildings in Pretoria. For decades, this had been the seat of white supremacy, and now it was the site of a rainbow gathering of different colors and nations for the installation of South Africa’s first democratic, nonracial government.

On that lovely autumn day I was accompanied by my daughter Zenani. On the podium, Mr. de Klerk was first sworn in as second deputy president. Then Thabo Mbeki was sworn in as first deputy president. When it was my turn, I pledged to obey and uphold the constitution and favor of supporting acts of sabotage against the government. In 1962 he was jailed and, after a widely publicized trial, was sentenced to life in prison in 1964. Over the years, Mandela became the world’s best-known political prisoner, gaining international support in his fight against apartheid.

Nelson Mandela
David Turnley/CORBIS

BUILDING BACKGROUND

From prisoner to president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela was one of the political miracles of the twentieth century. Born the son of an African tribal chief in 1918, Mandela passed up his right to chieftainship to study law, starting a firm with fellow reformer Oliver Tambo. In 1944 he became a leader in the African National Congress (ANC), a political party that opposed apartheid, South Africa’s policy of racial segregation.

After a massacre of unarmed Africans in 1960, Mandela dropped his nonviolent reform method in favor of supporting acts of sabotage against the government. In 1962 he was jailed and, after a widely publicized trial, was sentenced to life in prison in 1964. Over the years, Mandela became the world’s best-known political prisoner, gaining international support in his fight against apartheid.

F. W. de Klerk served as president of South Africa from 1989 to 1994.

Thabo Mbeki is a politician who became the president of South Africa in 1999.
to devote myself to the well-being of the republic and its people. To the assembled guests and the watching world, I said:

Today, all of us do, by our presence here . . . confer hope and glory to newborn liberty. Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud.

. . . We, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil. We thank all of our distinguished international guests for having come to take possession with the people of our country of what is, after all, a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity.

We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation.7 We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender, and other discrimination.

Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another. . . . The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement.

Let freedom reign. God bless Africa!

A few moments later we all lifted our eyes in awe as a spectacular array of South African jets, helicopters, and troop carriers roared in perfect formation over the Union Buildings. It was not only a display of pinpoint precision and military force, but a demonstration of the military’s loyalty to democracy, to a new government that had been freely and fairly elected. Only moments before, the highest generals of the South African Defense Force and police, their chests bedecked8 with ribbons and medals from days gone by, saluted me and pledged their loyalty. I was not unmindful of the fact that not so many years before they would not have saluted but arrested me. Finally a chevron of Impala jets9 left a smoke trail of the black, red, green, blue, white, and gold of the new South African flag.

The day was symbolized for me by the playing of our two national anthems, and the vision of whites singing “Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika” and blacks singing “Die Stem,” the old anthem of the republic. Although that day, neither group knew the lyrics of the anthem they once despised, they would soon know the words by heart.

On the day of the inauguration, I was overwhelmed with a sense of history. In the first decade of the twentieth century, a few years after the bitter Anglo-Boer War10 and before my own birth, the white-skinned peoples of South Africa patched up their differences and erected a system of racial domination against the dark-skinned peoples of their own land. The structure they created formed the basis of one of the harshest, most inhumane societies the world has ever known. Now, in the last decade of the twentieth century, and my own eighth decade as a man, that system had been overturned forever and replaced by one that recognized the rights and freedoms of all peoples regardless of the color of their skin.

That day had come about through the unimaginable sacrifices of thousands of my people, people whose suffering and courage can never be counted or repaid. I felt that day, as I have on so many

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6. Confer means “to bestow, or give, an honor.”
7. Emancipation means “the process of becoming free from restraint or control.”
8. Bedecked means “adorned or clothed.”
9. Here, chevron is a V-shaped pattern; an Impala jet is a military fighter plane.
10. The Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) was fought between Great Britain and the Boers, who are South Africans of Dutch decent.
other days, that I was simply the sum of all those African patriots who had gone before me. That long and noble line ended and now began again with me. I was pained that I was not able to thank them and that they were not able to see what their sacrifices had wrought.\(^\text{11}\)

The policy of apartheid created a deep and lasting wound in my country and my people. All of us will spend many years, if not generations, recovering from that profound hurt. But the decades of oppression and brutality had another, unintended effect, and that was that it produced the Oliver Tambos, the Walter Sisulus, the Chief Luthulis, the Yusuf Dadoos, the Bram Fischers, the Robert Sobukwes\(^\text{12}\) of our time—men of such extraordinary courage, wisdom, and generosity that their like may never be known again. Perhaps it requires such depth of oppression to create such heights of character. My country is rich in the minerals and gems that lie beneath its soil, but I have always known that its greatest wealth is its people, finer and truer than the purest diamonds.

It is from these comrades in the struggle that I learned the meaning of courage. Time and again, I have seen men and women risk and give their lives for an idea. I have seen men stand up to attacks and torture without breaking, showing a strength and resiliency that defies the imagination. I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. I felt fear myself more times than I can remember, but I hid it behind a mask of boldness. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.

I never lost hope that this great transformation would occur. Not only because of the great heroes I have already cited, but because of the courage of the ordinary men and women of my country. I always knew that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man’s goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.

We took up the struggle with our eyes wide open, under no illusion that the path would be an easy one. As a young man, when I joined the African National Congress,\(^\text{13}\) I saw the price my comrades paid for their beliefs, and it was high. For myself, I have never regretted my commitment to the struggle, and I was always prepared to face the hardships that affected me personally. But my family paid a terrible price, perhaps too dear a price for my commitment.

In life, every man has twin obligations—obligations to his family, to his parents, to his wife and children; and he has an obligation to his people, his community, his country. In a civil and humane society, each man is able to fulfill those obligations according to his own inclinations and abilities. But in a country like South Africa, it was almost impossible for a man of my birth and color to fulfill both of those obligations. In South Africa, a man of color who attempted to live as a human being was punished and isolated. In South Africa, a man who tried to fulfill his duty to his people was inevitably ripped from his family and home and was forced to live a life apart, a twilight existence of secrecy and rebellion. I did not in the beginning choose to place my people above my family, but in attempting to serve my people, I found that I was prevented from fulfilling my obligations as a son, a brother, a father, and a husband.

In that way, my commitment to my people, to the millions of South Africans I would never know or meet, was at the expense of the people I knew best and loved most. It was as simple and yet as incomprehensible as the moment a small child asks her father, “Why can you not be with us?” And the father must utter the terrible words: “There are other children like you, a great many of them . . .” and then one’s voice trails off.

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11. Here, \textit{wrought} means “made.”
12. The people Mandela refers to—Tambo, Sisulu, Luthuli, Dadoo, Fischer, and Sobukwe—are fellow South African reformers and opponents of apartheid.
13. The \textit{African National Congress} (ANC) is a South African political party founded by blacks in 1912.
I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was born free—free in every way that I could know. Free to run in the fields near my mother’s hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man or God.

It was only when I began to learn that my boyhood freedom was an illusion, when I discovered as a young man that my freedom had already been taken from me, that I began to hunger for it. At first, as a student, I wanted freedom only for myself, the transitory freedoms of being able to stay out at night, read what I pleased, and go where I chose. Later, as a young man in Johannesburg, I yearned for the basic and honorable freedoms of achieving my potential, of earning my keep, of marrying and having a family—the freedom not to be obstructed in a lawful life.

But then I slowly saw that not only was I not free, but my brothers and sisters were not free. I saw that it was not just my freedom that was curtailed, but the freedom of everyone who looked like I did. That is when I joined the African National Congress, and that is when the hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man’s freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else’s freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.

When I walked out of prison, that was my mission, to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both. Some say that has now been achieved. But I know that is not the case. The truth is that we are not yet free; we have merely achieved the freedom to be free, the right not to be oppressed. We have not taken the final step of our journey, but the first step on a longer and even more difficult road. For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. The true test of our devotion to freedom is just beginning.

I walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.

**The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.**

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14. A *mealie* is an ear of Indian corn.

15. Here, *vista* means a “wide viewpoint of history.”

**Quickwrite**

What qualities and values distinguish Nelson Mandela as a leader of the people? Write a paragraph describing these qualities and values. Use evidence from his autobiography to support your position.
Wrap-up: Comparing Literature Across Time and Place

● from Civil Disobedience
  Henry David Thoreau

● On the Eve of Historic Dandi March
  Mohandas K. Gandhi

● from Long Walk to Freedom
  Nelson Mandela

COMPARING THE Big Idea Optimism and Individualism

Partner Activity With a partner, read each of the following quotations. Then discuss how each quotation reflects the writer’s optimism and individualism. Cite evidence from the selections.

“The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think is right.”
—Henry David Thoreau, Civil Disobedience

“A Satyagrahi, whether free or incarcerated, is ever victorious.”
—Mohandas K. Gandhi, On the Eve of Historic Dandi March

“My country is rich in the minerals and gems that lie beneath its soil, but I have always known that its greatest wealth is its people, finer and truer than the purest diamonds.”
—Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom

COMPARING Persuasive Messages

Group Activity Thoreau, Gandhi, and Mandela craft different arguments for social reform. With a small group discuss the following questions.

1. What is each writer’s main message or philosophical assumption? What objections might some readers raise to the viewpoints presented?
2. What is the historical context that shapes each writer’s message?
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of each writer’s argument for both friendly and hostile audiences. Which writer best succeeds at stating his case? Why?

COMPARING Cultures

Visual Display Cultural, historical, and political forces influenced these writers. Thoreau was influenced by American Romanticism; Gandhi, by British colonialism; Mandela, by African culture and apartheid. Create a three-panel collage of images—one panel for each writer—illustrating these cultural, historical, and political forces.

OBJECTIVES
● Compare and contrast authors’ messages
● Analyze historical content
● Evaluate argument