

- What is Thoreau's purpose in going to the woods?
- What criticisms does Thoreau have of his fellow townsfolk in Concord? Are these criticisms justifiable, or is Thoreau just a wacko? Do these ideas apply to people in our society today?
- Identify Transcendentalist ideas in this chapter.
- How does Thoreau employ slave imagery?
- What is Thoreau's attitude toward education? Do you see any contradictions in his argument?
- What do you think of Thoreau's attitude towards older people? What has been your personal experience with this?
- What seems to be the central focus of this chapter?

ECONOMY



- What is Thoreau's definition of wealth?
- What is the point of comparing the farmer to the poet?
- What meanings does Thoreau assign to the concepts of morning and wakefulness?
- Why did Thoreau go to the woods?
- Note Thoreau's use of the word "sublime."
- Do you find Thoreau's ideas about simplicity extreme? What are the implications of progress in his mind?
- Who are the "sleepers"?
- What is Thoreau's opinion of the news? Do you agree?



WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR

- What is “serious reading” as opposed to “easy reading”?
- What is Thoreau’s opinion on the classics? On languages? On novels? Where do you stand on these topics?
- Discuss the state of literacy in Thoreau’s day as he describes it. What’s changed?
- Are Thoreau’s ideas about the Lyceum valid today?
- What does Thoreau mean by desiring a “broad margin” to his life?
- What did the train represent to Thoreau? Was he speaking prophetically?
- Catalogue the various sounds of Walden and note their significance.



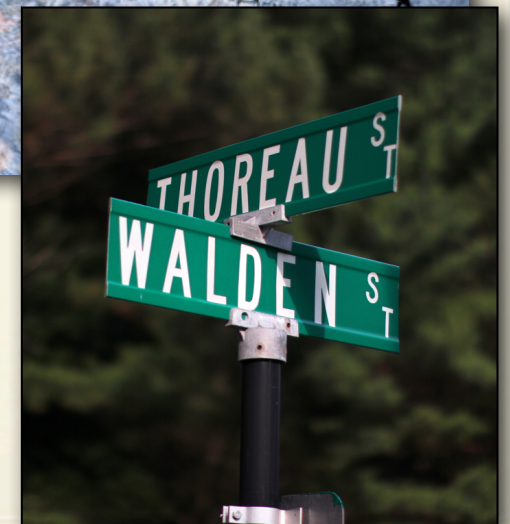
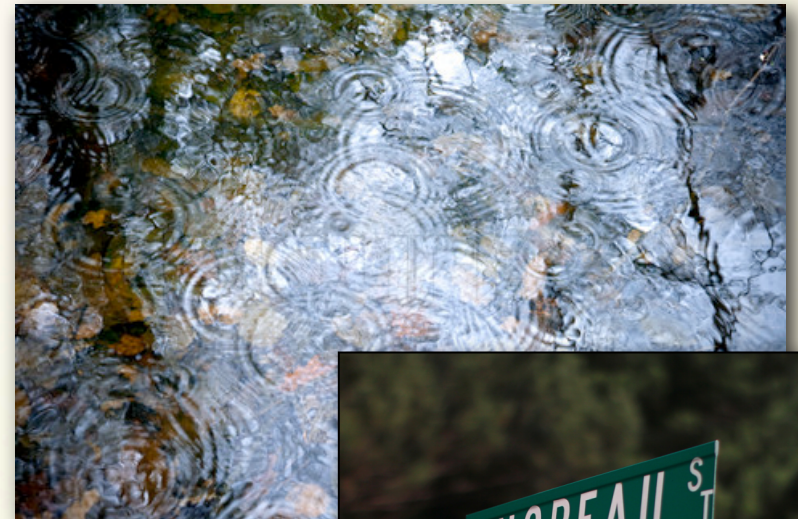
Concord Free Library

Screech Owl



READING; SOUNDS

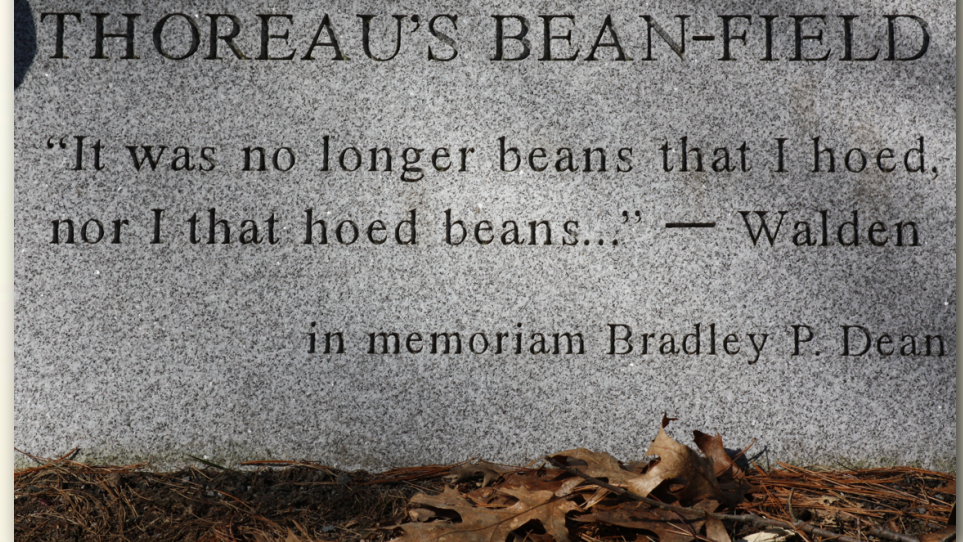
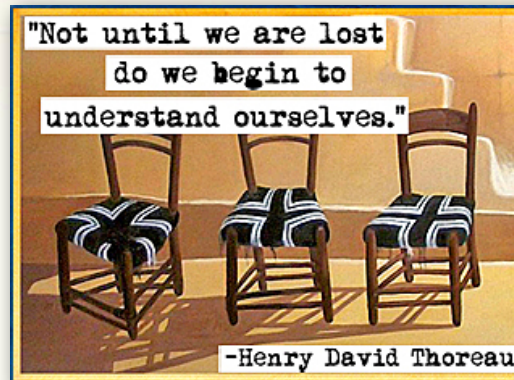
- What does Thoreau mean by “my serenity is rippled but not ruffled.” How do you define serenity?
- Why do you think Thoreau mentions the missed visitors?
- What does the concept of darkness seem to mean in this chapter?
- Thoreau says he doesn’t get lonely, and he gives several reasons. Does this work for you?
- What does Thoreau mean by saying that society is “too cheap”? Do you agree?
- For Thoreau, what is the key to contentment? How would most people today react to Thoreau’s ideas about solitude?



SOLITUDE

- How does the idea of the three chairs work?
- What are Thoreau's views on hospitality?
- What points are made about the "animal man" and "spiritual man" in the discussion about Alek Therien?
- What types of visitors come to the cabin? What does Thoreau conclude about these visits?
- Explore the moral lessons of Thoreau's experience with beans.

VISITORS; THE BEAN FIELD



- Describe the overall impact of Thoreau's visits to town. What goes through his mind? What do the townsfolk think of him?
- What occupies the "worthies"?
- What does Thoreau learn from getting lost in the dark?
- What's up with Thoreau's arrest?
- Explain what Thoreau learns about himself from studying the ponds.
- How do you interpret the religious imagery in "Baker Farm"?
- What lessons emerge from the parable of John Field?

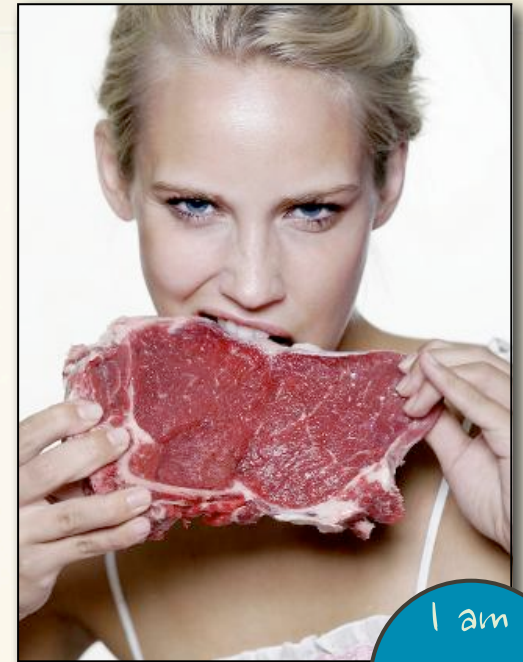


A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is Earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature.



THE VILLAGE; THE PONDS; BAKER FARM

- How would you define Thoreau's concept of "wildness"?
- What is Thoreau's argument about teaching boys to hunt? Do you agree?
- What are Thoreau's principal objections to "animal food"?
- What is Thoreau suggesting by his analogy of man (and whole nations!) in the larva state?
- Do you agree with Thoreau's statement about coffee? (*omg Mr N put that cup down--you'll ruin the day!*)
- What does Thoreau's statement, "An unclean person is universally a slothful one..." have to do with the larger argument in this chapter?
- What's the point of the story about John Farmer?

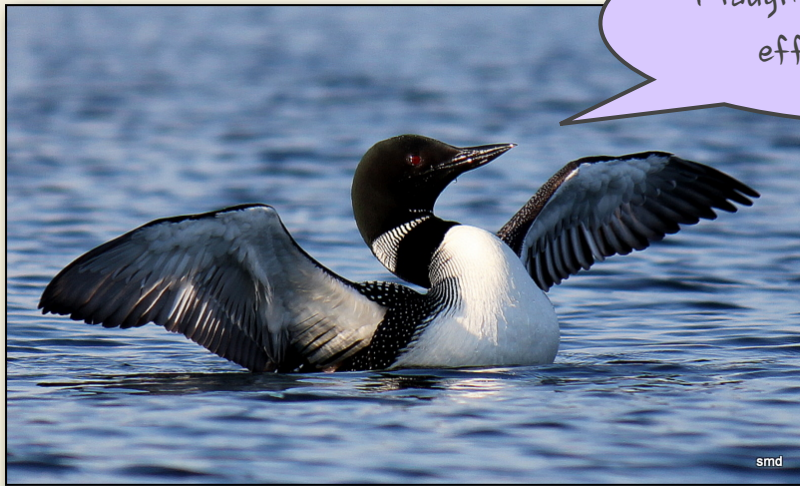


I am NOT good raw.



HIGHER LAWS

- What is the point of the dialogue between “hermit” and “poet”? Hint: might this have something to do with “Higher Laws”?
- Who are the various “brute neighbors”? Are there lessons to be learned in observing any of them?
- Analyze the battle of the ants in detail. Can you make applications or inferences from this?
- What does Thoreau learn from the loon?



BRUTE NEIGHBORS

He was indeed a silly loon.



The Barred Owl (*strix varia*)

- Do you sense a change in Thoreau as he prepares for winter? How can you tell?
- Interpret Thoreau's "dream house."
- What sort of characters formerly lived in the area? What inferences can be made from this?
- Among Thoreau's winter visitors were Ellery Channing, Bronson Alcott, and RW Emerson. Has Thoreau changed his views on the importance of solitude?

A wise old owl sat in an oak;
the more he saw the less he spoke;
the less he spoke the more he heard:
why can't we all be like that bird?



HOUSE WARMING / FORMER INHABITANTS; & WINTER VISITORS



- How do the sounds of winter seem to differ from those of summer? What might this mean?
- Do you see a larger meaning in Thoreau's discussion of the fox and the hounds?
- How do Thoreau's observations of the rabbit compare to those he makes of other winter animals?
- In what ways does the pond in winter relate to the point of Thoreau's experiment?

Ha! The pond farted! (Or, did I just eat too much corn?)

WINTER ANIMALS; THE POND IN WINTER





- “Walden was dead and is alive again.” Discuss all the possible implications of this statement.
- How does the style and content of Thoreau’s conclusion compare to that of the opening chapter?



SPRING; CONCLUSION



ONE OF THE ATTRACTIONS OF COMING TO THE WOODS TO LIVE WAS THAT I SHOULD HAVE THE LEISURE AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE SPRING COME IN—AND TWEET ABOUT IT.

omg is this really happening?



FINAL THOUGHTS ON WALDEN:

Was Thoreau's "Experiment" a success?