

The Missing Chapter of *Walden*

Last week curators at the Concord Museum in Concord, Massachusetts, were cleaning out the attic when they opened an old trunk and found the original manuscript of Henry David Thoreau's classic work, *Walden*. Scholars were ecstatic to have a chance to see Thoreau's own handwriting and to analyze his revisions.



Both curators and scholars were startled, however, to discover an entire chapter of *Walden* that no one had ever seen before. They knew it had to be his, partly because they recognized his handwriting, but also partly by the style of the chapter:

- It focuses on nature.
- It uses long, complex sentences and sophisticated language.
- It includes references to Greek and Roman mythology and ancient history.
- The chapter begins by describing a specific scene in nature. It continues by adding more detail to the description, and it ends by making a connection between nature, human life, and possibly the Oversoul.
- It includes a philosophical discussion of something related to the scene.

Your task is to produce that missing chapter. Find or invent a scene from nature. Elaborate on it and then make a connection to life. Plan to write a minimum of 500 words.

This assignment is due _____.

This task is designed as a concluding activity or assessment piece for 11th or 12th grade students who have read and discussed the writing of Henry David Thoreau.

Common Core Standards addressed by this writing task:

Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.