

## HUMANITIES SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

The Summer Assignment for incoming juniors focuses on Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, a seminal text that has become part of Mass Academy culture and lore. Students will read excerpts of the text, read a selection of modern responses to *Walden*, write reflections, and expand their vocabularies.

**Text:** Enriched Classics Pocket Books edition of *Walden and "Civil Disobedience"* by Henry David Thoreau (ISBN # 13:978-0-7434-8772-6). **Important:** This edition was selected specifically because of its accessibility and the applicability of its explanatory notes. You do NOT need to read "Civil Disobedience."

### Students must read each of the following chapters from *Walden*:

Chapter One: Economy  
Chapter Two: Where I Lived and What I Lived For  
Chapter Three: Reading  
Chapter Four: Sounds  
Chapter Five: Solitude  
Chapter Six: Visitors  
Chapter Seven: The Bean Field  
Chapter Eight: The Village  
Chapter Eleven: Higher Laws  
Chapter Twelve: Brute Neighbors  
Chapter Thirteen: House-Warming  
Chapter Sixteen: The Pond in Winter  
Chapter Seventeen: Spring  
Chapter Eighteen: Conclusion

After reading *Walden*, students will read "**Conversation: The Legacy of Henry David Thoreau**" from the following link:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1\\_V3mDX3aawcPVuwJ1AEW80R0h39j4BMC](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1_V3mDX3aawcPVuwJ1AEW80R0h39j4BMC)

You are not responsible for answering any of the questions following the readings.

From *Walden: Living Deliberately* – Bill McKibben (2008) \*\* this is a helpful introduction to *Walden*

From *Walden* – E.B. White (1934)

*A Short History of America* – Robert Crumb (1979)

"Living Like Weasels" – Annie Dillard

From *The Future of Life* – E.O. Wilson (2002)

*Doing Nothing* – Sue Monk Kidd (2008)

From "Hamlet's Blackberry" – William Powers (2010)

"My Walden, My Walmart" – Crispin Sartwell (2012)

From *Walden on Wheels: On the Open Road from Debt to Freedom* – Ken Ilgunas (2013)

### Writing Assignment Due on the first Day of School (8/15):

Students will write a personal *Walden Journal*, keeping a running commentary of reflections on and reactions to the text. The journal will:

- Include no more than one (double-spaced) typed page of reflections and reactions for each assigned chapter of *Walden*.
- Include at least three entries reflecting on and responding to the readings in "Conversation: The Legacy of Henry David Thoreau."
- The writing style may be informal; correct grammar and spelling must be used.

- Be in the form of a logbook or diary, with a date written down for each journal entry. Reflections and comments should be honest reactions to what Thoreau says. Students may argue with him, talk back to him, ask questions, challenge his observations and comments, agree and disagree with him.

This is a difficult book to read. The *Introduction* (pp. vii – xv), end-notes (pp. 401 -428), and *Interpretive Notes* (pp. 431 – 430) in the Enriched Classics edition of *Walden* should help you as you slog your way through Thoreau’s text.

**Important:** The final pages of your journal should contain a *Vocabulary Appendix* listing of at least 50 new words (plus their definitions) that you encountered in reading *Walden*.

The *Journal* may be illustrated with artwork, drawings and/or a unique cover.

Additional Optional Resource: The “*Great Books: Walden*” documentary  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHRDg4z3brs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHRDg4z3brs)

Come to school on August 15<sup>th</sup> ready to discuss *Walden* and the supplementary readings. I look forward to hearing your musings, opinions, and rants.

