M.A. ENGLISH SEMESTER-II COURSE NO. : ENG-224

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M. A. ENGLISH

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Dear Learner

Welcome to PG English Semester II.

Course Code ENG-224 Literature and Ecology is both interesting and enriching. During the last two decades we have become aware of the fact that there is a dire need to shift focus on nature for the survival of human kind.

Besides, theoretical perspectives the Course introduces you to an indepth study of essays, poetry, novel, short stories which have nature, ecology and its preservation for the human race as the core argument. The objective is both to sensitize and raise environmental consciousness amongst you for the betterment of society, country and the world.

Do read the texts in detail. And visit the DD&OE library for both primary and secondary material in addition to this study material.

Best wishes.

Prof. Anupama Vohra
PG English Coordinator

Course No. ENG-224 | **Duration of Examination: 3 hrs**
Title of the Course: Literature and Ecology | **Total Marks: 100**
Credits: 6 | **(a) Semester Examination: 80**
(b) Sessional Assessment: 20

Syllabus for the examinations to be held in May 2024, 2025, & 2026

Objective: Human beings have lived with close proximity with nature since ages and both have a symbiotic relation with each other. Due to the onslaught of industry and increase in population, the human began exploitation of nature to meet its correspondingly increasing needs and therefore, depleted the resources bringing a large portion of it to the verge of extinction. There is a dire need of shifting the anthropocentric focus on nature and understand the centrality of environment and ecology in the relationship between man and nature. Literature being a carrier and sensitizer with regard to human and cultural values, this course aims at sensitizing students with regard to the significance and the centrality of nature and its ecology for the preservation of human race. It also aims at bringing about environmental consciousness among students, through the genres of prose, poetry; novel, and short stories.

Unit-I

William Rueckert	"Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism"
Henry David Thoreau	From Walden
	(a) "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For"
	(b) "The Battle of Ants"

Unit II

A.K. Ramanujan	"Ecology"
Baldoon Dhingra	"Factories are Eyesores"
Dilip Chitre	"Felling of the Banyan Tree"
Gieve Patel	"On Killing a Tree"
Vihang Naik	"The Banyan City"

Unit III

S. Hareesh	Moustache (English translation by Jayasree Kalathil)

Unit IV

Margaret Atwood	Surfacing

Unit V

Amitav Ghosh	The Hungry Tide

Unit VI

Ruskin Bond	"Dust on the Mountains"
	"Koki's Song"
Jahanvi Barua	"Holiday Homework"
Tamsula Aao	"Laburnum for My Head"

MODE OF EXAMINATION

The paper win be divided into sections A, B and C. **M.M. = 80**

Section A Multiple choice questions

Q.No.1 will be an objective type question covering the entire syllabus. Twelve objectives, two from each unit with four options each will be set and the candidate will be required to write the correct option and not specify by putting a tick mark (√). Any ten of twelve are to be attempted.

Each objective will be evaluated for one mark. (1×10=10)

Section B Short answer questions

Q.No.2 comprises of short answer type questions covering the entire syllabus. Four questions will be set and the candidate will be required to attempt any two questions in about 80-100 words.

Each answer will be evaluated for 5 marks. (2×5 = 10)

Section C Long answer questions

Q.No.3 comprises of long answer type questions from the entire syllabus. Six questions, one from each unit, will be set and the candidate will be required to attempt any five questions in about 300-350 words.

Each answer will be evaluated for 10 marks. (5×12 = 60)

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M.A. ENGLISH SEMESTER II **LESSON NO. 3**
COURSE CODE: ENG-224 **UNIT-I**

"WHERE I LIVED AND WHAT I LIVED FOR" BY HENRY DAVID THOREAU

STRUCTURE

3.1 Objective and Outcome

3.2 Henry David Thoreau: Life and Works

3.3 Check Your Progress

3.4 About *Walden*

3.5 "Where I Lived And What I Lived For": Summary

3.6 "Where I Lived And What I Lived For": Analysis

3.7 Check Your Progress

3.8 Themes

3.9 American Transcendentalism And Thoreau

3.10 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

3.11 Answer Key

3.3 Check Your Progress

3.7 Check Your Progress

3.10 Multiple Choice Questions

3.12 Glossary

3.13 Examination Oriented Questions

3.14 Let Us Sum Up

3.15 Suggested Reading

3.1 OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOME

Dear Leaners, after understanding the concept of ecocriticism in the previous LESSON , you will now read about Henry David Thoreau, one of the best known American writers who can also be considered a precursor of the genre of nature writing. This lesson focuses on his essay "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" and after going through this lesson you will come to know about a significant time in Thoreau's life where he renounced the material world and retreated to live amidst nature for a period of more than two years, and the various life lessons he learnt during this time period following his close communion with nature.

After going through this lesson you will

- develop an understanding about the life and significant works of Henry David Thoreau as well as his contribution to the genre of nature writing
- be familiarised with the essay "Where I Lived and What I Lived For", one of the most distinguished works in American literature
- be appreciative of Thoreau's ways of living in close communion with nature which developed sympathy and empathy in him for the natural world,

and this would also aware and sensitize you dear learner towards the preservation and conservation of nature and environment.

3.2 HENRY DAVID THOREAU: LIFE AND WORKS

Henry David Thoreau (July 12, 1817-May 6, 1862) was anAmerican essayist, philosopher, and poet. Thoreau's writing is influenced by his own life, in particular his time spent at Walden Pond. He enjoys a lasting and celebrated reputation for

embracing non-conformity, the virtues of a life lived for leisure and contemplation, and the dignity of the individual.

Henry David Thoreau was born to John Thoreau and Cynthia Dunbar on July 12, 1817 in Concord, Massachusetts. Thoreau's father was was with the Concord fire department and also ran a pencil factory, while his mother rented out parts of their house to boarders and cared for the children. Named David Henry at birth in honor of his late uncle David Thoreau, Henry David Thoreau was known as Henry. The third of four children, Thoreau spent a peaceful childhood in Concord celebrating, especially the natural beauty of the village. When he was eleven year-old, his parents sent him to Concord Academy, where he did well and was encouraged to apply in college.

In 1833, at the age of sixteen, Thoreau began his studies at Harvard College. His older siblings, Helen and John Jr., helped pay his tuition fee from their salaries. He was a serious student, but was ambivalent to the college's ranking system, preferring to pursue his own projects and interests. This independent spirit also saw him taking a brief absence from the college in 1835 to teach at a school in Canton, Massachusetts, and this stint was an attribute that went to define the rest of his life.

When he graduated in 1837, Thoreau was uncertain what to do next. Uninterested in a career in medicine, law, or ministry, as was common for educated men, Thoreau decided to continue working in education. He secured a place at a school in Concord, but he found he could not administer corporal punishment. After two weeks, he quit.

Thoreau went to work in his father's pencil factory for a short time. In June of 1838 he set up a school with his brother John. However, John became ill just three years later and the school was shut down. In 1838, he and John took a life-changing canoe trip along the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, and Thoreau began considering a career as a poet of nature.

In 1837, when Thoreau was a sophomore at Harvard, Ralph Waldo Emerson settled in Concord. Thoreau had already encountered Emerson's writing in the book *Nature*. By autumn that year, the two kindred spirits had become friends, brought together by similar outlooks: both trusted staunchly in self-reliance, the dignity of the individual, and the metaphysical power of nature. Although they would have a somewhat tumultuous relationship, Thoreau ultimately found both a father and a friend in Emerson. It was Emerson who asked his protégé if he kept a journal (a lifelong habit of the older poet's), prompting Thoreau to begin his own journal in late

1837, a habit which he, too, maintained for almost his entire life up until two months before his death. The journal spans thousands of pages, and manyof Thoreau's writings were originally developed from notes in this journal.

In 1840, Thoreau fell in love with Ellen Sewall, a young woman, visiting Concord. She accepted his proposal but her parents objected the match and she immediately broke off the engagement. And Thoreau never married.

Thoreau moved in with the Emersons for some time in 1841. Emerson encouraged the young man to pursue his literary leanings, and Thoreau embraced the profession of poet, producing many poems as well as essays. While living with the Emersons, Thoreau served as a tutor for the children, a repairman, a gardener, and ultimately the editor of Emerson's works. In 1840, Emerson's literary group, the transcendentalists, began the literary journal *The Dial*. The first issue published Thoreau's poem "Sympathy" and his essay "Aulus Persius Flaccus," on the Roman poet, and Thoreau continued contributing poetry and prose to the magazine, and in 1842 the first of his many nature essays, "Natural History of Massachusetts." He continued publishing with *The Dial* until its closure in 1844 due to financial troubles.

Thoreau became restless while living with the Emersons. In 1842 his brother John died a traumatic death due to tetanus. Thoreau, shocked, moved to New York, to live with Emerson's brother William on Staten Island, tutoring his children, and attempting to make connections among the New York literary market. He felt unsuccessful and despised city life. Here, Thoreau met Horace Greeley, who was to become his literary agent and promoter of his work. He left New York in 1843 and returned to Concord. He worked partly at his father's business, making pencils and working with graphite.

Within two years he felt he needed another change, and decided to finish the book he had begun, inspired by his river canoe trip in 1838. Inspired by the idea of a Harvard classmate, who had once built a hut by the water to read and think, Thoreau decided to take part in a similar experiment.

Emerson bequeathed to him the land he owned by Walden Pond, a small lake two miles south of Concord. In early 1845, at the age of 27, Thoreau started chopping down trees and building himself a small cabin on the shores of the lake. On July 4, 1845, he moved into the house in which he lived for two years, two months, and two days, officially beginning his famous experiment. These were to be some of the most satisfying years of Thoreau's life.

His lifestyle at Walden was ascetic, informed by his desire to live a life as basic and self-sufficient as possible. While he would often walk into Concord, two miles away, and ate with his family once a week, Thoreau spent almost every night in his cottage on the banks of the lake. His diet consisted mostly of the food he found growing wild in the area, and also planted and harvested his own beans. Remaining active with gardening, fishing, rowing, and swimming, Thoreau also spent lots of time documenting the local flora and fauna. When he was not busy with the cultivation of his food, Thoreau turned to his inner cultivation, mainly through meditation. Most significantly, Thoreau spent his time in contemplation, reading and writing. His writing focused mainly on the book he had already begun, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849), which chronicled the trip he spent canoeing with his older brother that ultimately inspired him to be become a poet of nature.

Thoreau also maintained a fastidious journal of this time of simplicity and satisfying contemplation. He returned to his experience on the shore of that lake in just a few years to write the literary classic known as *Walden* (1854), arguably Thoreau's greatest work.

In the summer of 1847, Emerson decided to travel to Europe, and invited Thoreau to reside once more at his house and continue tutoring the children. Thoreau, having completed his experiment and finished his book, lived at Emerson's house for two more years and continued his writing. He could not find a publisher for *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.* He decided to publish it at his own expense, and made little money out of its meager success.

During this time Thoreau also published "Civil Disobedience." Halfway through his time at Walden in 1846, Thoreau met the local tax collector, Sam Staples, who asked him to pay the poll tax that he had ignored for multiple years. Thoreau refused on the basis that he would not pay his taxes to a government which supported enslavement and which was waging war against Mexico (which lasted from 1846-1848). Staples put Thoreau in jail, until the next morning when an unidentified woman, perhaps Thoreau's aunt, paid the tax and Thoreau reluctantly came out. Thoreau defended his actions in an essay published in 1849 under the name "Resistance to Civil Government" and now known as his famous "Civil Disobedience" work. In the essay, Thoreau defends individual conscience against the law of the masses. He explains there is a higher law than civil law, and just because the majority believes something to be right does not make it so. It follows then, he explained, that when an individual intuits a higher law to which civil law does not accord, he must still follow the higher law—no matter what the civil consequences be, in his case, even spending time in

jail. He writes: “Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison.” “Civil Disobedience” is one of Thoreau’s most influential works. It has inspired many leaders to begin their own protests, and has been particularly persuasive to non-violent protesters, including such figures as Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi.

Ultimately, Thoreau moved back into his family home in Concord, working occasionally at his father’s pencil factory as well as a surveyor to support himself while composing multiple drafts of *Walden* and finally publishing it in 1854. After his father’s death, Thoreau took over the pencil factory.

By 1850, Thoreau was less interested in transcendentalism, as the movement was already splitting apart. He continued, however, to explore his ideas about nature, traveling to the Maine Woods, Cape Cod, and to Canada. These adventures found their places in articles, “Ktaadn, and the Maine Woods,” (1848), which was later to make up the beginning of his book *The Maine Woods* (published posthumously in 1864), “Excursion to Canada” (1853), and “Cape Cod” (1855).

With such works, Thoreau is recognized as one of the founders of the genre of American nature writing. Also published posthumously (in *Excursions*, 1863) is the lecture he developed from 1851 to 1860 and which was ultimately known as the essay “Walking” (1864), in which he outlined his thinking on mankind’s relationship to nature and the spiritual importance of leaving society for a time. Thoreau thought of the piece as one of his seminal pieces and it is one of the definitive works of the transcendental movement.

In response to growing national unrest regarding the abolition of enslavement, Thoreau found himself adopting a more stringently abolitionist stance. In 1854 he delivered a scathing lecture called “Slavery in Massachusetts,” in which he indicted the whole country for the evils of enslavement, even the free states where enslavement was outlawed, including, as the title suggested, his own Massachusetts. This essay is one of his most celebrated achievements, with an argument both stirring and elegant.

In 1835, Thoreau contracted tuberculosis and suffered from it periodically over the course of his life. In 1860 he caught bronchitis and his health began to decline. Aware of his impending death, Thoreau showed remarkable tranquillity, revising his unpublished works (including *The Maine Woods* and *Excursions)* and concluding his journal. He died in 1862, at the age of 44, of tuberculosis. His funeral was planned and attended by the Concord literary set, including Amos Bronson Alcott and William Ellery Channing; his old and great friend Emerson

delivered his eulogy.

Let us stop here for a moment. Now that you have read about Henry David Thoreau's life and works, you can try to fill in the blanks given below. If you are not able to get the correct answer, no need to get disheartened. You can go through the above section again and come back to this exercise.

3.3 **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

Fill in the Blanks

1. Thoreau's writing is influenced by his time spent at _____.
2. Thoreau spent his childhood in celebrating the natural beauty of the village in _____
3. A trip along the _____ and _____ Rivers made Thoreau to consider a career as a poet of nature
4. _____ prompted Thoreau to begin his own journal in 1837
5. The first issue of the Transcendentalists' literary journal published Thoreau's poem titled _____.
6. Thoreau's famous experiment of living by the Walden Pond began on _____
7. Thoreau's work titled _____ chronicles the trip that inspired him to become a poet of nature
8. Thoreau defends individual conscience against the law of the masses in his influential essay titled _____
9. Thoreau is recognised as one of the founders of the genre of _____
10. In an essay titled _____Thoreau indicted the whole country for the evils of slavery.

3.4 ABOUT *WALDEN*

Walden is not only the most popular of all Thoreau's works, it is also one of the best read and most influential of all books written in America. While its circulation has never equalled other internationally successful volumes as *The Last of the Mohicans* or *Huckleberry Finn*, it has probably stirred as many thoughtful and imaginative minds in many races as any classic of the nineteenth century.

The idea of returning back to the woods, or at least escaping from the currents of village life, had often floated through Thoreau's mind, and the example of his

friend William Ellery Channing, who had lived alone on the Illinois prairie, must have been influential. The best explanation of his two-year sojourn (July 4, 1845-September 6, 1847) in the cabin which he built with friendly aid upon Emerson's land on the shores of Walden Pond, is documented in the book. He was a poor scholar seeking relief from the pressure of earning a living, so that he might devote his time and energy to study and writing. The personal necessity was not great as his need, as an independent mind, to prove what could be accomplished by simplifying life. Thoreau was a busy man. His excursions of several hours a day in the woods or field, or on the rivers, which were his laboratories for thought and observation, was as nearly obligatory as he could make it. Added to this the hours for reading and study and for the careful day-by-day revision of his notes taken in the field, little time was left for the laborious task of assembling and selecting his scattered paragraphs into books. He went to Walden Pond "to live deliberately" but also to get time and privacy to write a book. "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers" was written at Walden. 'Walden' itself was largely written there. Walden Pond, secluded and beautiful, was indeed an escape from his usuallife, but an escape into the possibility of the maximum of intellectual labour and spiritual reflection, with the minimum necessity for money-making. Nor must it be forgotten that the Thoreau home was a boarding-house!

Walden itself is a tract on how to live and what to live for. Its author wished to show the world how the poor scholar could handle his economic problem. Then farmers, merchants, preachers, married men, with the same ideas as Thoreau, work out theirs in their own fashion. Like all great tracts, this work is both highly personal, in that the particular problem is individual, and universal in its application, since all men not entirely gross have aspirations to live a life which accords with their own inner necessities, which differ in kind and degree, but not in significance, from Thoreau's. Indeed, it may be said that Thoreau's challenge to mankind to learn how to live lest they should lose their souls in the quiet desperation of making a living, was probably never so timely as today.

Walden; or Life in the Woods as it was first entitled, is like the 'Week,' a compilation with additions from his 'Journal.' Much of it was written first as lectures, and at least one section as a magazine article, and then revised for his book. Items and reflections are taken from his 'Journal' as far back as 1839, and he was still using his daily notes for his manuscript a few months before its publication. This final manuscript has been lost but Thoreau's work sheets for the book, about 1500 in number, are in the possession of Huntington Library. They show how laboriously he rewrote and rearranged his material in the attempt, never entirely successful, to make

an organic whole, and with a purpose, often brilliantly realised, to point his sentences toward the absolute expression of vital truth. Thoreau's strength was in the sentence and paragraph, not in the ordered whole, which is one reason why 'Walden' is one of the most quotable of books. Nevertheless, in spite of its occasional inconsequentiality, it is a real book, focussed upon a great philosophic idea, worked out in incidents always relevant, with descriptions which sometimes represent the sheer joy of observation rather than any controlling idea yet which always enrich the work. It is Thoreau's most mature work.

3.5 "WHERE I LIVED AND WHAT I LIVED FOR": SUMMARY

Thoreau recalls the several places where he nearly settled before selecting Walden Pond. Where should his house be located? This is the question that Thoreau considers. He interacts with all the nearby farmers and imagined buying their houses and living there. He believes a place in the country to be best, far from the village. In his imagination, he lays out the plans of many houses and then decides against building them, because he says true richness is leaving things alone. He quotes the Roman philosopher Cato's warning that it is best to consider buying a farm carefully before signing the papers.

The nearest Thoreau came to possessing a house was when he intended to buy the Hollowell farm despite the many improvements that needed to be made there, but then the farmer's wife changed her mind not to sell. He discusses the virtues of the farm, but in the end is content not to have compromised his poverty by acquiring it, and he says he took with him the beauty of the landscape, which is the best part of the farm. Consequently, Thoreau gave up his claim on the property. Even though he had been prepared to farm a large tract, Thoreau realizes that this outcome may have been for the best.

Forced to simplify his life, he concludes it is best "as long as possible" to "live free and uncommitted." Thoreau takes to the woods, dreaming of an existence free of obligations and full of leisure. He proudly announces he resides far from the post office and all the constraining social relationships the mail system represents. Ironically, this renunciation of legal deeds provides him with true ownership, paraphrasing a poet to the effect that "I am monarch of all I survey." Thoreau's delight in his new building project at Walden is more than merely the pride of a first-time homeowner; it is a grandly philosophic achievement in his mind, a symbol of his conquest of being.

Thoreau begins living in the woods full-time, during nights as well as days on

Independence Day, 1845. When Thoreau first moves into his dwelling on Independence Day, it gives him a proud sense of being a god on Olympus, even though the house still lacks a chimney and plastering. Independence Day has symbolic meaning as the day Thoreau becomes self-reliant and one of nature's inhabitants. The house, not yet finished, is glorious because it is a part of nature, with the wind blowing through it and the company of birds. Taking an optimistic view, he declares that his poorly insulated walls give his interior the benefit of fresh air on summer nights. He justifies its lack of carved ornament bydeclaring that it is better to carve "the very atmosphere," one thinks and feels, in an artistry of the soul. It is for him an immaterial, heavenly house, "as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers." He claims that a paradise fit for gods is available everywhere, if one can perceive it: "Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere."

He prefers to reside here, sitting on his own humble wooden chair, then in some distant corner of the universe, "behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair." He is free from time as well as from matter, announcing grandiosely that time is a river in which he goes fishing. He does not view himself as the slave of time; rather he makes it seem as though he is choosing to participate in the flow of time whenever and however, he chooses, like a god living in eternity. He concludes on a sermonizing note, urging all of us to sludge through our existence until we hit rock bottom and can gauge truth on what he terms our "Realometer," our means of measuring the reality of things.

Thoreau's first impression of the pond, which is sometimes misty in the early morning, sometimes still and clear as when there is a gentle rain, is that it is like a "lower heaven," with the vista and mountains spreading out behind it. Though men are in the habit of imagining faraway lands, Thoreau finds that his new living place, so close by, has all the glories of nature to make him feel away from his previous life.

Morning is Thoreau's invitation to make his life simple and commune with nature. Every morning he bathes in the pond, calling it a "religious exercise." He calls morning the time that all important events, including poetry and art, occur. It is the time that "intelligences wake," as say the Vedas. Thoreau urges each man to awaken fully and "elevate his life by conscious endeavor." It is a man's duty to make every moment of his life meaningful. Thoreau went to the woods to "live deliberately." He has faith in simplicity as the path to spiritual wakefulness.

Thoreau laughs about the absurdity of a man who wakes from a nap and asks

for the news when he is not really awake to life. He rails against the post-office, saying he has never read something truly important in a letter or even in a newspaper, which contains only gossip. Men often confuse the appearance of things with reality, Thoreau believes, but with true wisdom and unhurriedness it is possible to get past "petty pleasures" and perceive matters of true worth. God is in the present moment. In order to experience spiritual truth, one must spend one's days as deliberately as nature.

3.6 "WHERE I LIVED AND WHAT I LIVED FOR": ANALYSIS

The title of this chapter combines a practical topic of residence ("Where I Lived") with what is probably the deepest philosophical topic of all, the meaning of life ("What I Lived For"). Thoreau thus reminds us again that he is neither practical do-it-yourself aficionado nor erudite philosopher, but a mixture of both at once, attending to matters of everyday existence and to questions of final meaning and purpose. This chapter pulls away from the bookkeeping lists and details about expenditures on nails and door hinges, and opens up onto the more transcendent vista of how it all matters, containing less how-to advice and much more philosophical meditation and grandiose universalizing assertion. It is here that we see the full influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson on Thoreau's project. Emersonian self-reliance is not just a matter of supporting oneself financially (as many people believe) but a much loftier doctrine about the active role that every soul plays in its experience of reality. Reality for Emerson was not a set of objective facts in which we are plunked down, but rather an emanation of our minds and souls that create the world around ourselves every day.

Thoreau's building of a house on Walden Pond is, for him, a miniature re-enactment of God's creation of the world. He describes its placement in the cosmos, in a region viewed by the astronomers, just as God created a world within the void of space. He says outright that he resides in his home as if on Mount Olympus, home of the gods. He claims a divine freedom from the flow of time, describing himself as fishing in its river. Thoreau's point in all this divine talk is not to inflate his own personality to godlike heights but rather to insist on everyone's divine ability to create a world. Our capacity to choose reality is evident in his metaphor of the "Realometer," a spin-off of the Nilometer, a device used to measure the depth of the river Nile. Thoreau urges us to wade through the muck that constitutes our everyday lives until we come to a firm place "which we can call Reality, and say, This is." The stamp of existence we give to our vision of reality—"This is"—evokes God's simple language

in the creation story of Genesis: "Let there be. . . ." And the mere fact that Thoreau imagines that one can choose to call one thing reality and another thing not provides the spiritual freedom that was central to Emerson's Transcendentalist thought. When we create and claim this reality, all the other "news" of the world shrinks immediately to insignificance, as Thoreau illustrates in his mocking parody of newspapers reporting a cow run over by the Western Railway. He opines that the last important bit of news to come out of England was about the revolution of 1649, almost two centuries earlier. The only current events that matter to the transcendent mind are itself and its place in the cosmos. Thoreau's pleasure in considering where to live is, therefore, not in the actual acquisition of material goods to which he is averse, but in the contemplation of what a life could be like there. He seeks a place that is separate from society. For Thoreau, being close to nature is the best part of his choice of place to live. Acquiring the material possession of a house is something he must put up with in order to live in nature.

Thoreau's close observation of nature testifies to his profound relationship with it, characterized both by awe of its spiritual greatness and intimacy with its everyday workings. Thoreau criticizes society's taste for travel because they could be experiencing the full effect of their nearby surroundings, for which he has great respect. Nature is his spiritual guide, leading him in its simple natural rhythms toward his own spiritual path and his proper work. Transcendentalism sets out Thoreau's spiritual goals; self-reliance, and the simplicity it entails, is the method he uses to go after them. Interest in the news is a sign that a man is concerned with the petty dealings of society over his own spiritual life. The post-office is just another distracting modern invention. Thoreau emphasizes that men, especially his readers, can change their lives and awaken to the profound possibilities of everyday life if they emulate nature.

Dear learner, let us take another break now. Hope you are not much tired. You can now attempt answering these questions to ensure that you are familiar with the summary and analysis of Henry David Thoreau's essay "Where I Lived and What I Lived For". Treat yourself to two samosas if you score 50 percent. Never mind if score is less, attempt again as we all know PRACTICE MAKES A PERSON PERFECT.

3.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

State whether True or False:

1. Thoreau stayed at Walden from 4 July 1845-6 September 1847. (True/False)

2. “A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers” was written at Walden. (True/False)

3. “Realometer” as per Thoreau is an escape from reality. (True/False)

4. Thoreau delivered his influential lecture “Slavery in Massachusetts” in 1831. (True/False)

5. Thoreau was influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson. (True/False)

6. Thoreau did not consider being close to nature as the best part of his choice of place to live. (True/False)

7. Thoreau appreciates society’s taste for travel. (True/False)

8. Thoreau considers nature as his spiritual guide. (True/False)

9. *Walden* was published in the year 1850. (True/False)

10. The Transcendentalists’ literary journal was titled *The Dial.* (True/False)

3.8 THEMES

Nature

Thoreau holds nature in great respect and sees nature as providing an inexhaustible source of wisdom, beauty, and spiritual nourishment. He has an intimate familiarity and comfort with nature and many chapters in the book are dedicated to his fond, painstaking observations of the natural world, from the way the ice breaks up on the pond in springtime, to the habits of the rabbits and fish and geese, which he sees as cohabitating with him, to the war between two races of ants that takes place on the ground right outside his cabin. Nature becomes a central figure in his life as it provides him with shelter, food, fuel, and it fulfills all his other physical needs. Nature, open to all and free of excess, is the model for his life and the epitome of simplicity and independence.

Transcendentalism, Spirituality, and the Good Life

As a Transcendentalist, Thoreau has faith in self-reliance over societal institutions and focusing on the goodness of humankind and the profound lessons it can learn from nature. He values individuality, conviction, and focus as cardinal virtues. He crafts a life with a perpetual sense of striving towards something greater, such that all of his activities take on spiritual significance. Even his washing himself in Walden Pond is nothing less than a “religious experience.” Byquoting Hindu scripture he tries to establish the pond as part of the sacred water of the Ganges River. Nature’s

activities, for him, are sacred rites, and he pays them due attention, believing that the present moment is the culmination of the spiritual and is as divine as all time. Furthermore, he holds that true richness has nothing to do with material wealth but with a hunger for truth and beauty. In the end, Thoreau finds living by these principles to be an essential duty, a challenge that people have an obligation to match. Walden is Thoreau's attempt to wake ordinary men from their sleep and call them to live better lives, more deliberate and more fulfilled.

Solitude and Society

Thoreau deeply values both solitude and society and brings these two seemingly contradictory impulses together in creative, paradoxical ways. On one hand, his purpose in going to Walden, where he stayed for more than two years, is to be alone, so he can "transact some private business." The book is for the most part a record of a man's time spent in solitude, and the reflections he has in that state. He stresses the importance of an independent life, in which he relies on no one for his everyday existence, and he writes that society's changing taste is a distraction to personal development. Solitude leaves him open to commune with nature, yet he writes that he is really never alone because he always has the sweet company of the natural world. On the other hand, he entertains many guests in his cabin, sometimes one or two at a time and sometimes in groups of dozens. In addition, he lives not in the wilderness but on the edge of a pond close to the town, which he visits from time to time.

Self-reliance

Thoreau's life at Walden Pond embodies a philosophy set out most famously and directly in Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, "Self-Reliance. Self-reliance is a set of ideals according to which one must have unfailing trust in oneself and confidence in one's faculties, choosing individuality over conformity to society. By leaving society and living in solitude, Thoreau makes the ultimate commitment to self-reliance. He stresses the importance of living independently, as he builds his own house and lives off his own land. Self-reliance is based on a critical stance toward society, which Thoreau believes forces people into making compromises that trap them and make them unhappy. Self-reliance places value on one's own worth and individuality.

Work

Thoreau sees work as the basis of self-reliance, a source of spiritual fulfillment, and a path to a morally good life. His central motivation in going to Walden is to figure out what kind of life he should be living (what he calls his attempt to "live

deliberately"), and in large part that attempt comes down to determining what kinds of work he should be pursuing. Thoreau believes that work should not be difficult or excessive or distract from one's proper pursuits but instead be indistinguishable from leisure, because all parts of life should be rewarding. The contentment and self-respect that a person earns through this kind of work, he believes, can elevate him and bring him closer to nature and to himself.

The individual must discover what work is right for him, Thoreau writes. He focuses on two kinds of work: physical labor and intellectual pursuits. On one hand, he builds his own house, a modest cabin made of wood and brick. He takes pride in earning his living by his own hands, and it is his physical labor that provides him with shelter, food, and the other necessities that make his time at Walden possible. On the other hand, he devotes himself to reading, has great reverence for literature and philosophy which he believes enrich him spiritually. Thoreau seeks a lifestyle that combines these two kinds of work, each with their own type of nobility, in a mutually beneficial and complementary way.

Simplicity over 'Progress'

Thoreau believes that the best life is the simplest life. He rails against the luxuries that most men find so important, believing that they complicate their lives, and he criticizes the pretensions of his society, which spends so much time and energy pursuing an artificial and overblown notion of "progress." Thoreau argues for a separation between material wealth and spiritual growth, engaging in what he calls "voluntary poverty," which is how believes the wisest people in history have lived. He seeks to discern the "necessities of life," the barest conditions under which he can thrive, and then to live that lifestyle. For food, he subsists mostly on rice and rye meal, he makes bread whose only ingredient is flour, and he advocates for vegetarianism, which lets him avoid the trouble of catching animals and the moral dubiousness of killing them. He keeps meticulous financial records and finds that he can build his house, which he can live in forever, for as much money as a townsman rents his home for a year. For clothing, he has only the fewest and most utilitarian garments. Thoreau sees this kind of living as purifying, leaving him time to pursue his true work and leaving his mind free.

3.9 AMERICAN TRANSCENDENTALISM AND THOREAU

The heyday of Transcendentalism was in the 1830's and the 1840's and to later generations of Americans its interior life has seemed of greatest interest. The external story was not spectacular. It concerned mainly young people in the

Boston and Cambridge area during the Age of Jackson who were mostly educated at Harvard, theologically trained, middle-class, and Puritan and Unitarian in background. A brief chronology would perhaps begin in 1832, when Emerson left the ministry, and proceed swiftly to 1836, the annus mirabilis of the movement, during which Emerson published Nature, the Transcemdentalists' Bible, Ripley published Discourses on the Philosophy of Religion, Brownson published New Views of Christianity, Society, and the Church, Alcott published Record of Conversations on the Gospel, and the Transcendentalist Club met for the first time, then move to 1837, when Emerson delivered his Phi Beta Kappa address on "The American Scholar" at Harvard, which Lowell called "an event without any former parallel in our literary annals"; to 1838, the year of Emerson's Divinity School Address at Harvard which touched off a great storm in religious circles; 1840, the founding of the Dial, a Transcendental magazine; 1841, the launching of Ripley's Brook Farm experiment; 1842, Alcott's experiment at Fruitlands; 1845, Thoreau went to Walden; and 1846, Thoreau went to jail. The Transcendental story, externally, centered largely on conversations, exchanges of letters, lecture engagements, publication dates, and journal entries. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, somewhat to their own surprise, becoming increasingly involved in abolitionism, attending rallies, participating in demonstrations, and delivering speeches at antislavery meetings.

Transcendentalism was a religious, philosophical, and literary movement and it is located in the history of American thought as post-Unitarian and freethinking in religion, as Kantian and idealistic in philosophy, and as Romantic and individualistic in literature. The religious impulse, however, was primary; piety concerned the Transcendentalists, especially in the beginning, even more than moralism. By the 1830's, the Unitarian consensus which educated and established people in the Boston area found comfortable and satisfying had lost its emotional appeal for thoughtful and sensitive young people.

The Transcendentalist revolt began as a quest for new ways of conceiving the human condition to replace old ways that no longer carried conviction. It also involved the search for new vocations since the clerical profession for which so many of the Transcendentalists had ceased to be a live option for most of them. Transcendentalism, in short, was mainly an enterprise undertaken by bright young Unitarians to find meaning, pattern, and purpose in a universe no longer managed by a genteel and amiable Unitarian God.

There was, to be sure, no one precise "cause" for the genesis of Transcendentalism. With the New Views, as with other patterns of ideas that suddenly catch on with sizable numbers of people, chance, coincidence, and the accidental concentration of severalindependent events probably explains what happened. Several tendencies of thought and action seem to have converged in the 1830's in New England to precipitate the solution which we call Transcendentalism: the steady erosion of Calvinism; the progressive secularization of modern thought under the impact of science and technology; the emergence of a Unitarian intelligentsia with the means, leisure, and training to pursue literature and scholarship; the increasing insipidity and irrelevance of liberal religion to questioning young minds; the intrusion of the machine into the New England garden and the disruption of the old order by the burgeoning industrialism; the impact of European ideas onAmerican traveling and studying abroad; the appearance of talented and young people like Emerson and Thoreau on the scene; and the imperatives of logic itself for those who take ideas seriously. Perhaps youth-if it is serious enough, sufficiently talented, adequately informed, and willing to work hard-is the indispensable element for stirring the various tendencies of thought into a new heady brew for the emerging generation to quaff. The Transcendentalists, at any rate, seem to have thought so. They were not radicals in the political sense; but the questions they asked of their country and their age were devastating. Many of the questions the Transcendentalists posed- and the answers they proposed-have passed into the mainstream of American critical thought and continue to challenge America's more conventional wisdom.

Thoreau occupies a unique position among transcendentalists. Thoreau's transcendentalism differs considerably from that of Emerson. He alienated himself from the church in order to keep on his religious quest with freedom. He lived out Emerson's doctrines of non – conformity and self – reliance and the individuality that Thoreau practiced even beyond that which Emerson advocated. Without bothering himself about the signs and symbols, revealed by nature, he plunged into the depths of nature. At every step in his life, he established commendable self – reliance. He said in a letter to Charles C. Morse in 1860: "I am in the lecture field, but my subjects are not scientific, rather transcendental and aesthetic." He did not preach transcendentalism, because he lived it and discovered it for himself. Thoreau held the concept of the immanence of God in nature and in man.

Dear Learners, hope you are not sleepy. If sleepy, wake up! Here is another interesting exercise for you.

3.10 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. Why didn't Thoreau buy the Hollowell farm as he had originally intended? _____
   a It was too expensive
   b It needed many improvements
   c The seller pulled out
   d It wasn't remote enough

2. Thoreau lived far from the constraining social relationships represented by _____
   a the town center
   b the post office
   c the theatre
   d his family

3. On which holiday did Thoreau first move to Walden Pond? _____
   a Memorial Day
   b Independence Day
   c Labor Day
   d Easter Sunday

4. At Walden Pond, Thoreau sees time as a river inwhich he _____
   a goes fishing
   b dips his toes
   c bathes
   d dives and resurfaces

5. What term does Thoreau use for our internal means of measuring the reality of things? _____
   a Still, small voice
   b Conscience
   c True Compass
   d Realometer

6. What does Thoreau believe is necessary to understand what is truly worthwhile? _____
   a Finding a fulfilling career path
   b Forming deep connections with other people

c Gaining wisdom and living deliberately
d Experiencing worldly adventures

7. What does Independence Day, 1845 symbolize for Thoreau?

_____

a The day he celebrates his nation's history
b The day he becomes a full-time farmer
c The day he becomes self-reliant and a part of nature
d The day he completes the construction of the house

8. What, in the chapter "Sounds," does Thoreau describe as having the roar of a fierce beast? _____

a A wolf
b A moose
c A train
d A riverboat

9. In what town did Thoreau spend most of his life? _____

a Boston
b Concord
c Plymouth
d Providence

10. What college did Thoreau attend? _____

a Amherst
b Harvard
c Oxford
d Yale

11. In what season does Thoreau conclude his stay at Walden Pond?

_____

a Summer
b Winter
c Autumn
d Spring

12. When did Thoreau move in to his house at Walden Pond?

_____

a 1836
b 1845
c 1848

d 1854

13. What, according to Thoreau, do the mass of men lead? _____

a Lives of quiet deprecation
b Lives of quiet derivation
c Lives of quiet desperation
d Lives of quiet deviation

14. Which of the following was closest to Thoreau's house at Walden Pond? _____

a A canal
b A mill
c A railroad
d A school

15. What was the approximate maximum number of visitors that Thoreau received in his house at a single time?_____

a One
b Three
c Thirteen
d Thirty

16. Which crop did Thoreau raise in the greatest quantity? _____

a Beans
b Peas
c Potatoes
d Turnips

17. What war was the United States involved in during Thoreau's stay at Walden Pond? _____

a The Civil War
b The French and Indian War
c The Mexican War
d The Spanish-American War

3.11 ANSWER KEY

3.3 Check Your Progress

1. Walden Pond

2. Concord
3. Concord, Merrimack
4. Ralph Waldo Emerson
5. “Sympathy”
6. July 4, 1845
7. “A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers”
8. “Civil Disobedience”
9. American nature writing
10. Slavery in Massachusetts

3.7 Check Your Progress

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. True
9. False
10. True

3.10 MCQs

1. c	2. b	3. b
4. a	5. d	6. c
7. c	8. c	9. b
10. B	11. d	12. b
13. c.	14. c	15. d
16. a	17. c	

3.12 GLOSSARY

sophomore: a student in the second year of a course of study at a college or university

tumultuous: marked by disturbance

protégé: a young person who is helped or trained for their career by a more experienced

person

bequeath: to arrange for something to be given to somebody after you have died

fastidious: excessively careful or detailed

sojourn: to stay for a short time in a place away from your home

excursion: a short journey or trip

erudite: having or showing great knowledge that is based on careful study

meticulous: showing great attention to detail

Unitarian: a person who asserts the unity of God and rejects the Christian doctrine of the Trinity

3.13 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

a. Why did Thoreau move to the woods of Walden Pond?

b. What is the significance of the title of the work?

c. Comment upon Thoreau's treatment of nature in "Where I Lived and What I Lived For."

d. Examine Thoreau as a social critic and moral prophet based upon your reading of "Where I Lived and What I Lived For."

e. Examine Thoreau as a Transcendentalist with reference to "Where I Lived and What I Lived For."

f. What does Thoreau mean when he says "to live deliberately?"

3.14 LET US SUM UP

Dear Learner, hope you enjoyed reading this lesson. In this section, we are going to recapitulate what we have read. As you are now aware that "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" is a chapter in Henry David Thoreau's Walden. The work recounts Thoreau's lived experiences in a cabin on his own away from the civilised world. The chapter "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" is significant because in this chapter, Thoreau identifies his location, Walden Pond. And explains that he chose this place because he "wished to live deliberately," and to simplify everything in his life to the barest of necessities so that he could really live, that is, live away from the stifling constraint of modern life. Thoreau emphasises that nature exerts a spiritual influence on man and to live close to nature means to live freely. He also

talks about his ideas of self-reliance, solitude, and transcendentalism in this chapter.

3.15 SUGGESTED READING

Thoreau's vision: the major essays by Charles R. Anderson. Prentice-Hall, 2016.

Critical essays on American Transcendentalism by Philip F Gura and Joel Myerson. G.K. Hall, 2002.

Critical Essays on Henry David Thoreau's Walden by Joel Myerson. G.K. Hall, 2000.