

# **TOOLKIT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

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The Walden Woods Project, Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, University of Massachusetts Lowell Honors College, and Massachusetts Center for the Book are thrilled to announce the **Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read** in celebration of the 200th birthday of the great American writer and philosopher *Henry David Thoreau*.

The goal of the Statewide Read is to have *every* town or city in Massachusetts participate by coordinating at least one event in 2017 that brings community members together to read a work by Thoreau.

In the spirit of self-determination championed by Thoreau, the coordinators of each town/city's Read event can choose *when* in 2017 they want to carry out their Read; *how* they want to implement their Read (book group, public reading, a day of activities, etc.); and *which* Thoreau piece they will read. With that said, to facilitate some shared experience among participants across the state, one brief excerpt from *Walden* is provided in this toolkit (p. 17) that your community can read in addition to their chosen piece.

To promote and coordinate, a calendar of Read-related events will be maintained throughout the year (as part of a larger, global Bicentennial events calendar). By utilizing this tool, each community can share information about their Read, see what other communities are doing and maybe even discover opportunities for multi-site collaboration! To access the calendar, visit [www.thoreaubicentennial.com](http://www.thoreaubicentennial.com).

Thank you for your interest in becoming a partner in this project and for helping to celebrate Henry. The Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read is funded in part by support from the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area.



MASSACHUSETTS  
CENTER *for the* BOOK



## About the Toolkit

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This toolkit is provided to public libraries throughout Massachusetts to aid in their planning of events for the Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read. In this toolkit, you will find helpful hints for how you can publicize your Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read event(s), ideas about how you can use Thoreau's works to host a variety of activities at your library, potential grants you can use to support your read, suggestions for children's accompanying books and activities, and where you might be able to get copies of Thoreau's works. You will also find a discussion guide to five of Thoreau's major works.

## About Henry David Thoreau

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Social reformer — Naturalist — Philosopher — Transcendentalist — Scientist. These are just some of the terms by which Henry David Thoreau can be categorized.

Henry David Thoreau lived in the mid-nineteenth century during turbulent times in America. He said he was born "in the nick of time" in Concord, Massachusetts, during the flowering of America when the transcendental movement was taking root and when the anti-slavery movement was rapidly gaining momentum.

Thoreau's contemporaries and neighbors were Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and his mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was at once philosopher and naturalist; abolitionist and teacher; scientist and moralist; poet and surveyor; pencil maker and author. It is perhaps the many "lives" of Thoreau, both individually and collectively, that beckon such a diversity of people to his writings.

Unquestionably, Thoreau enjoys greater national and international popularity today than ever before. His books are selling at an unprecedented rate. People are particularly drawn to his belief of finding spirituality in nature – a philosophy woven throughout his books and essays. As our lives become ever more complex, we hunger for simplicity and a communion with nature that Thoreau insists will lead to truth and spiritual renewal.

- *Adapted from the Walden Woods Project's website*

## Community Activities

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You're encouraged to choose a work from Thoreau that would mean the most to your city or town. The Walden Woods Project is happy to help you choose which work you may want to focus on for your community, as well as provide assistance with any questions you may have about the works, or Thoreau himself.

The following is a list of suggested activities that can enhance the reading experience:

1. Host a movie night that highlights Thoreau's work and life, or relates to his ideals. Suggested films: *Holiday* (1938), *New Walden* (1991), *Little Women* (1994), *Into the Wild* (2007), *Marbles with Thoreau* (2009), *The Lorax* (2012).
2. Host a story time for children with a suggested children's book from this toolkit (p. 7).
3. Encourage your community to take nature walks and write about their findings or thoughts in a journal. You can also partner with someone in your community who could lead a nature walk or host a journaling activity.
4. Musical programs (Performance of music from time period).
5. Host a field trip to Walden Pond or the Walden Woods Project. For information on tours email [education@walden.org](mailto:education@walden.org)
6. Host an interactive Skype session with Jeffrey Cramer, Walden Woods Project's Thoreau Institute Library Curator and renowned Thoreau scholar. For more information, visit:  
<https://education.microsoft.com/Story/SkypeLesson?token=13e60>
7. Create a bulletin board at the library, blog or Facebook page asking for historical human-interest stories, photos, or family heirlooms from Thoreau's time period (early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century). You might find some amazing things!
8. Create a simple coloring contest for the children in your town for a prize. Children could also participate in the Walden Woods Project's "Art of Nature Poster Project." For more information, visit  
<https://www.walden.org/education/art-of-nature-poster-project>
9. Sponsor an essay contest for the older kids and challenge them to write about Thoreau or Walden Pond for a scholarship. You can also have youth participate in the Walden Wood's Project's Annual Live Deliberately Essay Contest! For more information, visit <https://walden.org/education/essay-contest>.

10. Host a Thoreau scholar to give a presentation or a talk at your library. Email [education@walden.org](mailto:education@walden.org) for more details or suggestions.
11. Host a Thoreau Bicentennial kickoff party.
12. Create a summer reading challenge.
13. Host a Thoreau Discussion Group in conjunction with the book clubs at your library and/or in your town. Use the discussion questions found in this toolkit as a guide (p. 15).
14. Host a craft night. Make small-scale replicas of the cabin at Walden Pond with popsicles sticks, or a Ginger Bread House.
15. Reach out to a community garden and plant a bean field like Thoreau did at Walden Pond. Or plant watermelons and have an end-of-summer melon party, as Thoreau was known to do!
16. Encourage communities to give readings of Thoreau's Works. Students from UMass Lowell Honors College are trained to facilitate discussions and activities. If you need help from one of these students, contact the Walden Woods Project by emailing [education@walden.org](mailto:education@walden.org) to arrange to have one of them be in touch with you.

*“The Library is a wilderness of books.”*

*— Journal, 16 March 1852*

## Recommended Editions of Thoreau's Works

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It is recommended that you select an annotated version of one of Thoreau's works to read. Some of the books below are compilations of multiple books or essays. Thoreau's works are also available for **free online**:

<https://www.walden.org/thoreau/the-writings-of-henry-david-thoreau-the-digital-collection>

*Cape Cod*. Ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer. Princeton University Press, 2004. Print.

*Cape Cod*. Illustrated ed. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008. Print. Photographs by Scot Miller.

*Henry David Thoreau: A Week, Walden, The Maine Woods, Cape Cod*. Ed. Robert F. Sayre. New York, NY: Library of America, 1985. Print.

*The Maine Woods: A Fully Annotated Edition*. Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer.

*The Maine Woods*. Ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2004. Print.

*The Portable Thoreau*. Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer. New York: Penguin, 2012. Print.

**Contents:** "Natural History of Massachusetts," *A Winter Walk*, "Ktaadn (From *The Maine Woods*)," "Civil Disobedience," "The Journal: Selections from Thoreau's Journal on the Art of Writing," Selected Poems, *Walden*, *Cape Cod*, Correspondence: Selections from Thoreau's Letters to H.G.O. Blake, "The Last Days of John Brown," "Walking," "Life Without Principle."

*Thoreau Essays: A Fully Annotated Edition*. Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer.

**Contents:** "Natural History of Massachusetts," *A Winter Walk*, "A Walk to Wachusett," "Paradise (to be) Regained," "Wendell Phillips Before Concord Lyceum," "Thomas Carlyle and His Works," "Resistance to Civil Government [Civil Disobedience]," "Slavery in Massachusetts," John Brown Essays ("A Plea for Captain John Brown," "The Last Days of John Brown"), "An Address on the Succession of Forest Trees," "Walking," "Autumnal Tints," "Wild Apples," "Life Without Principle."

*Walden: A Fully Annotated Edition* Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer. Yale University Press, 2006. Print.

*Walden*. Ed. J. Lyndon Shanley. Princeton, NJ: Princeton U Pres, 2004. Print.

*Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings: Authoritative Texts, Journal, Reviews and Posthumous Assessments, Criticism*. Ed. William John. Rossi. Norton Critical Editions, 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. Print.

## Thoreau-related Books for Children

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### Pre-School and Elementary Ages:

- 1) Dunlap, Julie, and Marybeth Lorbiecki. *Louisa May & Mr. Thoreau's Flute*. Illus. Mary Azarian. New York: Dial Book for Young Readers, Penguin Putnam, Inc., 2002.

Young Louisa May Alcott has difficulty at home what with all of her chores and her parents' desire for her to act like a proper young lady. Above all else she has difficulty writing. This changes when she starts going on excursions with her strange neighbor, Henry David Thoreau. Ages 3-7.

- 2) Johnson, D.B.

- a) *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.

Henry makes a bet with a friend that he can reach Fitchburg faster by walking there rather than by taking the train. While Henry walks, his friend spends the day earning wages to pay for his train ticket. Who will get there first, Henry or his friend? Ages 3-7.

- b) *Builds a Cabin*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002.

Henry builds his cabin in the woods, but all his friends think that it is too small. They ask, where shall he eat? Where shall he read? Where shall he dance? But Henry has an answer for all of them and proves he doesn't need much space to live. Ages 3-7.

- c) *Henry Climbs a Mountain*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003.

While going out for a walk, Henry discovers he only has one shoe. He goes to the shoemaker to get the other one but is stopped by Sam Staples for not paying his tax and is thrown in jail. In his cell, Henry discovers that he is as free there as he is outside of his cell. Ages 3-7.

- d) *Henry Works*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

Henry is walking to work when he passes through Concord. He stops to help his neighbors and they all ask him to stay, but he tells them he is on his way to work. At the end of his journey, he reaches his cabin and finally gets a chance to sit down to work. Ages 3-7.



- 3) Johnson, D.B., and Linda Michelin. *Henry's Night*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009.

Henry goes out in search of the whip-poor-will, the illusive owner of the sweet call that he hears at night. He searches and searches, asking the creatures of the forest if they have seen the whip-poor-will, but none have. But Henry is persistent and tirelessly seeks the lark of the night. Ages 3-7.

- 4) Locker, Thomas. *Walking with Henry: Based on the Life and Works of Henry David Thoreau*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2002.

Explore the grandeur of nature alongside Henry David Thoreau as he walks through the woods. The book is beautifully illustrated and allows the reader to appreciate nature with Thoreau. Ages 3-6.

- 5) Montague, Bill. *Little Mouse: The Mouse who Lived with Henry David Thoreau at Walden Pond*. Illus. Maxine Payne. Ed. Christopher Roof. Concord, MA: The Concord Mouse Trap, 1997.

Little Mouse moves to the shores of Walden Pond and builds her home there. While she is making her own home, a man—a creature she has never seen before—comes to the woods and builds his own home. They fast become friends, and this mysterious man, Henry David Thoreau, helps Little Mouse to open her eyes and explore. Ages 5-9.

- 6) Smith, Corinne Hosfield. *Henry David Thoreau for Kids: His Life and Ideas with 21 Activities*. Chicago: Chicago Press Review, 2016.

The book is a condensed biography of the “bard of Walden” that extends far beyond his two years respite at Walden Pond. This child’s biography of Thoreau includes excerpts from Thoreau’s work and from his contemporaries. Within are also fun activity ideas for children to explore the deeper meaning of Thoreau. Ages 7-13.

- 7) Steve Lowe, text selector. *Henry David Thoreau: Walden*. Illus. Robert Sabuda. New York: Philomel Books, 1990.

Excerpts from *Walden* are used within the picture book. The essence of *Walden* is kept and the language whittled so that a younger audience would understand. Ages 5-7.

- 8) Steve Schnur, ed. *Henry David's House*. Illus. Peter Fiore. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, 2002.

Replete with excerpts from *Walden*, this visually gratifying picture book will capture the attention of young readers. Ages 5-9.

### Middle School and Young Adult:

- 1) Armistad, Cal. *Being Henry David*. USA: Albert Whitman & Company, 2013.

“Hank,” who calls himself Henry David, wakes up in Penn Station in New York not knowing his name or anything else about his past; all he carries with him is a worn copy of *Walden* and an innate fear of his unknown past. He decides to travel to Walden Pond to discover himself and meets with danger and obstacles along the way. Follow Hank as he discovers his past and what it means to follow the path of Thoreau. **DISCLAIMER:** strong language and graphic imagery. Ages 15-18 (young adult).

- 2) Smith, Corinne Hosfield. *Henry David Thoreau for Kids: His Life and Ideas with 21 Activities*. Chicago: Chicago Press Review, 2016.

The book is a condensed biography of the “bard of Walden” that extends far beyond his two years respite at Walden Pond. This child’s biography of Thoreau includes excerpts from Thoreau’s work and from his contemporaries. The activities can be used for a wide age range and gives flexibility to instructors to make the activities their own. Ages 7-13.

*“Books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations.”*  
— *Walden*

# Coloring book

FORTHCOMING

## Publicizing your Statewide Read event(s)

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An easy way to promote your event to the public is with a news release to your local paper(s). A sample release is included below. Be sure to submit it at least three weeks prior to your event (or the first day of your event). A call to your newspaper will help you determine to whom your release should be sent.

The same release should be sent to local radio stations. Your local National Public Radio station(s) or other local stations may be helpful when it comes to promoting events such as this. Very often there will be a community affairs person who might agree to have you on for an interview. The same is also true for traditional radio, if they still have a local connection.

Church bulletins, labor newspapers, some cable access TV systems, and any other local media may be able to provide you with free promotion. As the town public library, you may want to contact the town offices to help in promoting the Statewide Read. They will probably be happy to place signage or flyers in their buildings for you. Talk with the town clerk to see if they'd like to do more by partnering with you.

Social media is a good tool to promote your participation in the Statewide Read. If you have a Facebook page for your agency, post every day about the Statewide Read and the book's message. Ask your "friends" to share your posts. Encourage your staff as well as volunteers to post to their Facebook pages too. Use Twitter to keep your message in front of people. The key to using social media is to use it consistently. If your agency allows, please like and follow the Statewide Read sponsoring organizations. For their Facebook addresses and twitter handles, see the following page.

## Sample Facebook Posts

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*(Your program name)* invites you to join us as for the Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read, brought to you by @WaldenWoodsProject, @Freedom'sWayNationalHeritageArea, @umlhonors, and @masscenterforthebook, as we read *(work you have chosen)* by Henry David Thoreau. Community discussion will be held on *(date)* at *(time)* in the *(location)*. We will be discussing chapters *(the numbers)*. For details call *(---) -----*.

Have you read *(work you have chosen)* by Henry David Thoreau? Our *(students, staff, volunteers, etc.)* are reading it now! Join us for the Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read, brought to you by @WaldenWoodsProject, @Freedom'sWayNationalHeritageArea, @umlhonors, and @masscenterforthebook as we discuss chapters *(the numbers)* on *(date)* at *(time)*. We'll meet at *(location)*. Everyone is welcome!

Do you have an interest in great American literature? Then join us on *(date)* at *(time)* in the *(location)* to read *(work you have chosen)* by Henry David Thoreau for the Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read, brought to you by @WaldenWoodsProject, @Freedom'sWayNationalHeritageArea, @umlhonors, and @masscenterforthebook. If you'd like to know more about this, please call us at *(---) -----*.

**Facebook pages: @WaldenWoodsProject @Freedom'sWayNationalHeritageArea @umlhonors @masscenterforthebook**

## Sample Tweets

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Celebrate Thoreau's 200th birthday with us and all of MA. We're participating in the #ThoreauBicentennialRead <http://bit.ly/2chaR3d>

Are Thoreau's works relevant to you? Read *(your selected work)* along with us to find out *(insert event URL)*

Need a reason to celebrate? Celebrate Thoreau's 200th birthday throughout the year <http://bit.ly/2ccdFQT>

You're invited! Celebrate Thoreau's 200th birthday with us *(add details about your event and URL)*

**Twitter handles: @TheWaldenWoods @Freedom'sWayNHA @HonorsUML @MassBook**

## Sample News Release Format

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For Immediate Use through *(end date of your Read event)*

Contact: *(Person in your organization who can give more info. and his/her phone number)*

***(Your organization name)*** is reading ***(work you have chosen)*** as part of the  
Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read, celebrating  
Henry David Thoreau's 200th birthday

*(Your town/city, MA)* The students and volunteers *(or book club or whoever)* of *(your organization's name)* are reading *(work you have chosen)* by Henry David Thoreau as part of the Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read, with events taking place in every city/town in Massachusetts throughout 2017. The Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read is part of a global celebration that highlights the continued relevance of Thoreau's writings and philosophical contributions, even 200 years after his birth (July 12, 1817).

*(Your town)* will host our reading of Thoreau on *(Date, time, place)*, reading *(work you have chosen)*. *(Insert more information about your Read event here, if applicable; e.g., children's activities, how to register, etc.)* Please join us in celebrating this great American author, philosopher, and poet. His message still rings clear in our hectic society, and perhaps some of his words might help to alleviate the pressures of modern-day life.

The Walden Woods Project (Lincoln, MA), Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (Devens, MA), University of Massachusetts Lowell Honors College (Lowell, MA), and Massachusetts Center for the Book (Boston, MA) are co-sponsors of the Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read. Their goal is to have every town or city in Massachusetts participate by coordinating at least one event in 2017 that brings community members together to read a work by Thoreau.

In the spirit of self-determination championed by Thoreau, the coordinators of each town/city's Read event can choose when in 2017 they want to carry out their Read; how they want to implement their Read (book group, public reading, a day of activities, etc.); and which Thoreau piece they will read. With that said, to facilitate some shared experience among participants across the state, organizers will provide a brief excerpt from Walden for all participants to read, providing a connecting thread between all Read events across the state.

For more information about the Read event in *(your city/town)*, please contact *(insert contact person and information)*.

For more information about the Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read as a whole, please contact the Walden Woods Project at [education@walden.org](mailto:education@walden.org) or visit <https://www.walden.org/bicentennial/read>.

## Limited Copies of *Walden*/"Civil Disobedience" Available!

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Thanks to a very generous donation from Eagle Hill School in Hardwick, MA, we have about 140 copies of a Signet Classics edition of *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience" that we will give to participating communities through an application process! Find out more at: <https://www.walden.org/bicentennial/read/book-application/>.

## Grants to Fund Read Events

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### Local Cultural Council Program

Each area in Massachusetts has its own cultural council, which is able to give out grants ranging from \$4,400 to \$179,000, depending upon the revenue of the town. In order to see how much your town or region has, visit:

[http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/lcc\\_allocations.asp](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/lcc_allocations.asp) and find either your town, or the region in which you reside to find your allocation of potential grant money.

To apply for a grant from your locale, visit: [https://www.mass-culture.org/lcc\\_public.aspx](https://www.mass-culture.org/lcc_public.aspx)

### Adams Arts Program

The Adams Arts Program provides support to projects that revitalize communities through the creative economy and to programs that increase engagement by Massachusetts residents and visitors in cultural activities. For more information about this grant and how to apply, visit: <http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/adamsarts.asp>.

### Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund

The Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund provides grants to support projects and programs that foster the creation of jobs in construction and cultural tourism; expand access to the arts, humanities, and sciences; and improve the life and education of residents across the Commonwealth. For more information about this grant and to apply, visit: <http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/facilities/facilities.htm>.

### Cultural Investment Portfolio

The Cultural Investment Portfolio supports the efforts on non-profit organizations throughout the Commonwealth that provide public programs in the arts, sciences, and humanities. Through their investment, the CIP was able to boost local economies and received well over what they had originally given. For more information, visit: [http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/cultural\\_investment\\_portfolio.asp](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/cultural_investment_portfolio.asp)

## Discussion Guides

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To get readers started, the Walden Woods Project has provided discussion questions for some of Thoreau's more popular works. However, you are more than welcome to choose other works from Thoreau and the Walden Woods Project would be happy to create additional discussion guides upon request. In the future, a link will be provided on the Bicentennial website to more in-depth discussion guides.

### **Walden:**

- Why do you think Thoreau moved closer to nature to conduct his experiment?
- How does Thoreau suggest we live life? What was his main message? Why?
- What do you think it means to "live deliberately"? How does Thoreau accomplish this? Do you live deliberately?
- Thoreau refers to Walden Pond as a mirror. In what ways does it—and nature in general—serve as a mirror?

### **"Walking":**

- How does Thoreau connect the experiences of walking and writing?
- Thoreau often makes use of metaphor to link various aspects of his surroundings with themes of religion and faith. What is he trying to say? How does Thoreau relate walking to a sacred journey (pilgrimage)?
- What is the difference between wilderness and wildness?
- Thoreau recalls walking on Spaulding's Farm. How and why does he add a sense of nobleness to the simplicity he sees around him?
- What does Thoreau mean when he compares Knowledge and Ignorance?

### **"Ktaadn":**

- Solitude is a common theme in "Ktaadn." Where does Thoreau see solitude? How does he connect solitude with wilderness? How does he seem to feel about solitude? Do you agree with him?
- What do you think Thoreau thought about Native Americans and their way of life?
- Thoreau writes about passing through the villages of Stillwater and Oldtown. What does he think about their lumber business? Can you make connections to environmental problems today?



### ***Cape Cod:***

Suggested chapters: "The Shipwreck" (**Disclaimer:** graphic descriptions of death), "The Wellfleet Oysterman", and "The Highland Light"

- In "The Shipwreck," as well as other chapters, Thoreau describes horrible and heart-wrenching scenes of death, while also showing the business-like manner with which people attended to the dead. How does Thoreau contrast death with the business of life?
- In "The Wellfleet Oysterman," the old oysterman shares his life's experiences with Thoreau. What do you think are some of the reasons that Thoreau seems to like and respect him? What are your favorite interactions that Thoreau has with the oysterman?
- The oysterman enjoys reading the Bible, but did not enjoy attending church. Why do you think that is?
- Throughout *Cape Cod*, Thoreau comments on nature interfering with human endeavors, whether it is as violent as a storm wrecking a ship or as gradual as coastal erosion. What does Thoreau think about this relationship between nature and humans? What do you think he wants to show readers?

### **"Civil Disobedience":**

- Thoreau discusses his frustrations with the government during his time. What are some of the problems you see in government and society today? What are some ways you can live your own life to promote change?
- We live in a democratic country, where the majority rules on important issues. What value does Thoreau see in the minority? In the individual?
- Why does Thoreau not seem to mind that he had to spend the night in jail?
- "Civil Disobedience" has inspired people throughout history – from Gandhi to Martin Luther King Jr. to protesters of the Vietnam War. What do you think is inspirational about Thoreau's writing?

## Excerpts from *Walden*

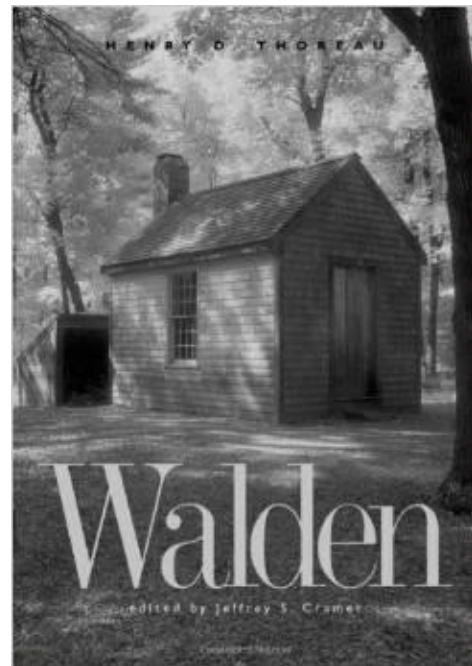
While we support each town/city/community in choosing the larger work that will be the focus of their Read event, we do hope for some shared experience among Statewide Read participants across the Commonwealth. With that in mind, we offer the following excerpts, both from *Walden*, which we encourage you to incorporate into your Read event in some way.

### From “Economy”

*The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.*

### From “Conclusion”

*Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he bears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?*



## Frequently Asked Questions

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**Q. What are the goals for the read?**

A. The goal is for members of every community in Massachusetts to have the opportunity to participate in a Read at some point in 2017. Each location will get to choose what work they wish to read, when they wish to read it and in what manner they wish to do it. Thus, you could read *Cape Cod* in the summer via a book club, "A Winter Walk" in mid-January with a historical re-enactor, or anything in between. The choice is up to you.

**Q. What do we (the libraries or other planning bodies) get out of it?**

A. You get to enjoy reading Thoreau! Besides that... this is a wonderful opportunity for participants to connect with other individuals, libraries, and organizations who/that are passionate about Thoreau. You get to be part of an exciting large-scale initiative to get people reading, thinking, and discussing, with the benefit of having many of the plans laid out for you in this toolkit. The Thoreau Bicentennial sponsors also hope to get media coverage of the Statewide Read and your community could be featured in that coverage.

**Q. Will you be supplying copies of books to us?**

A. Thanks to a very generous donation, we actually have about 140 copies of a Signet Classics edition of *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience" that we will give to participating communities through an application process! Find out more at: <https://www.walden.org/bicentennial/read/book-application/>.

Additionally, this toolkit provides links to some grant resources that might aid you in purchasing books and other supplies (p. 14).

**Q. Do you have suggestions for children's programs to go along with an adult Read?**

A. Yes! This toolkit has a section (p. 7) that lists recommended children's books that are based on Henry David Thoreau and would make great complements to an adult Read event. You can also reference the Activities page for some ideas suited for kids (p. 4).

**Q. What sort of advertising will be done?**

A. The Statewide Read sponsors will make posts regularly that highlight upcoming Read events. If you'd like to try to get press coverage for your particular event, you can use the templates provided in this toolkit (p. 11). Most importantly, please list your activities online on the Statewide Read calendar so others can see what you are planning! You can add your activity here: [www.thoreaubicentennial.com](http://www.thoreaubicentennial.com). Be sure to select "MA Statewide Bicentennial Read" as the category when you submit your event!

**Q. We are a very small town. Is there anyone who might be able to help us with our discussion/read?**

A. Yes! Students from the UMass Lowell Honors College are trained to facilitate discussions and activities. If you need help from one of these students, email [education@walden.org](mailto:education@walden.org) to arrange to have one of them be in touch with you. It is also encouraged that small towns join together or with bigger adjacent towns for their Read event.

**Q. We are a big town/city. Are we limited to having just one Read event in our community?**

A. By all means, no! There may be towns/cities where different groups may want to host different Read events. However, it is preferred that if you know of another group/organization planning a Read event in your community, you coordinate so they aren't concurrent (that is, of course, unless they are coordinated – e.g., if a school planned to do a Read event for kids in the community at the same time as a library did an event for adults, in a coordinated day of programming, that's fantastic!). Students from the UMass Lowell Honors College are trained to facilitate discussions and activities, so if you would like help with a Read event, email [education@walden.org](mailto:education@walden.org) to arrange to have one of them be in touch with you.

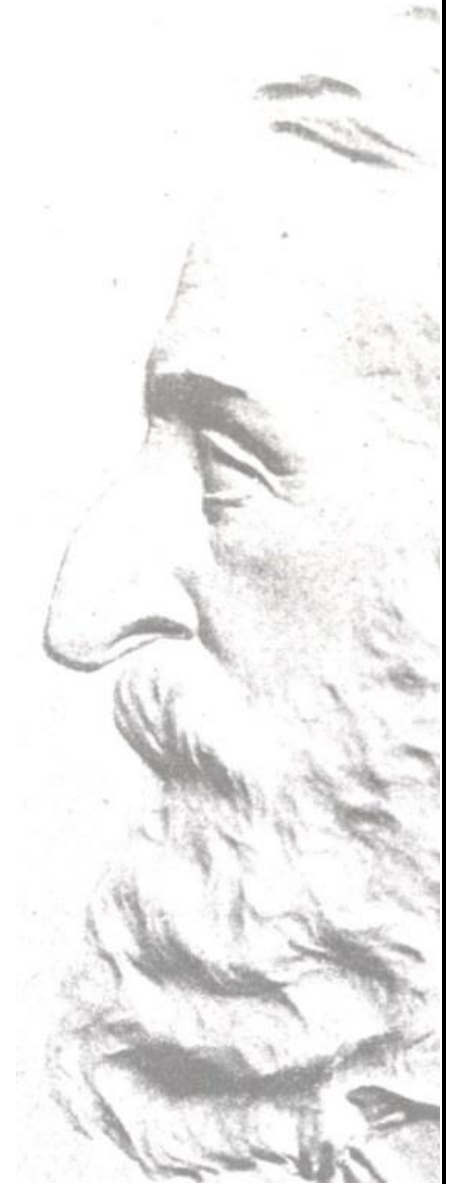
**Q. Do you have a website link with more information?**

A. Yes! <https://www.walden.org/bicentennial/read>.

*The universe is wider than our views of it.*

— *Walden*

*"If I do not see any inquiry there,  
I cannot answer it."  
Henry D. Thoreau*



**If you have a question about Thoreau, please ask it.  
Email or text: [curator@walden.org](mailto:curator@walden.org)**

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