

Thoreau at Walden Pond

1845 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

observe — look or listen carefully

nature — the living things and physical world around us

reflect — think carefully about an experience or idea

Look closely



Portrait of Henry David Thoreau.

Read the story

Henry David Thoreau moved into a small house near Walden Pond. He observed nature and thought about how people live. He later wrote *Walden*. The pond is in Concord, and his stay lasted about two years.

Transcendentalist ideas existed before Thoreau moved there. He was not completely isolated from society. Compare the actual setting and his relationships with the image of a person living entirely alone.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: Ether anesthesia demonstration

1846

Doctors at Massachusetts General Hospital used ether during a public surgical demonstration. It helped show that surgery could occur with less pain. Many people contributed to the development of anesthesia.

This October demonstration became a major medical milestone, but it was not the first attempt to reduce surgical pain. Historical medical study should recognize collaboration and avoid offering treatment instructions.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Henry David Thoreau moved into a small house near Walden Pond. He observed nature and thought about how people live. He later wrote *Walden*. The pond is in Concord, and his stay lasted about two years. Transcendentalist ideas existed before Thoreau moved there. He was not completely isolated from society. Compare the actual setting and his relationships with the image of a person living entirely alone.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Benjamin D. Maxham active 1848 – 1858 · Public domain

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.