

The Walden Woods Project prides itself on being a premier resource that offers extensive information about Thoreau, ideas for teaching Thoreau and guided talks and experiences that engage students in the land, literature and legacy of Thoreau!

Below are sense-of-place/ place-based curricula (featuring Cape Cod) created by Approaching Walden alumni. Approaching Walden is a professional development program that provides teachers with the skills they need to lead their students in the study of their home community.

### **Cape Cod, A Place to Call Home: Connecting to a Sense of Place on Cape Cod through Literature, the Environment, and Cultural History**

Elaine Aschettino, 2011  
Chatham High School  
Chatham, MA

American Literature, Grade 11, Honors

This unit is a local journey, both physical and metaphorical, for grade 11 students. It is a trip that will enable them to discover a sense of place on Cape Cod by exploring some of the area's natural environs and an historic landmark and relating those discoveries to the work of Transcendentalists and other writers. The goal is for students to better appreciate and understand the richness of the place they call home.

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### **The Academy of Art, Science, and Technology and Henry David Thoreau's Life**

Nancy Flasher, 2005  
Provincetown High School: Academy of Art, Science and Technology  
Cape Cod, MA  
Interdisciplinary, Grades 9-12

This unit is designed to cultivate student interest in the life of Henry David Thoreau not only as a local resource to draw upon, but especially as an excellent and timeless model of a spirited self-directed and lifelong learner. It is composed of three core lesson plans: the first focuses on some of the initial activities that will assist students in creating a "toolbox" of lifelong learning skills, knowledge and habits; the second focuses on teaching and guiding students to keep a lifelong learning project journal, a thorough, reflective and relevant documentation of their individualized study; the final plan focuses on using the journal to review, isolate, choose and further develop key information and inquiries found in

imbedded in project journals (editing, revision, and exploring a variety of means for presenting info).

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### **Nature, Magic & Reality on Cape Cod: How Setting Creates Meaning in Literature and Life**

Heather Murphy-Lessard, 2018  
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School  
Acton, MA  
2AE American Literature, Grade 10

The unit focuses heavily on the importance of place within Alice Hoffman's *Blackbird House*, a novel made up of twelve separate short stories, all which are set on Cape Cod at the fictional Blackbird House. Students will review the concept of setting and be introduced to the aesthetic of Cape Cod by reading excerpts of Henry David Thoreau's *Cape Cod*. Analyzing these passages will serve several purposes: a) students will be introduced to the life and writing style of one of the course's major authors, b) students will learn the skills of passage analysis, and c) students will gain prior knowledge of the novel's setting, particularly the aesthetic of the landscape and dwellings, the power and majesty of the ocean, and the sense of community here. Students will specifically know how the author constructs place by infusing her setting with evocative nature imagery. Students will be introduced to the concept of magical realism, a term used to define literature or art that blends dreamlike elements into realistic settings to produce a deeper sense of reality. At the end of the unit, students will be asked to reflect on a place that has had impact in their lives, and describe that place in their identity journals. They will be invited to use techniques from the unit to describe and create their chosen setting.

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