



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2023 Volume II:

Why Nature? Noticing and Writing in the Wild

Guide for Curriculum Unit 23.02.01, published September 2023

by Brandon Barr

This unit considers the benefits of spending regular periods of time in nature. The approaches and concerns of three different people who frequented nature are considered in great detail: Transcendentalists like Emerson and Thoreau, Rachel Carson, and J Drew Lanham. From their teachings and concerns, it is hoped that students will recognize the importance of observing carefully and developing a sense of responsibility to address problems related to nature like environmental injustice and climate change. Finally, students will engage in nature writing after reading mentor texts that create strong details in the reader’s mind from their own observations during “spirit walks” and other guided observation activities.

(This unit would be appropriate for middle school or early high school English Language Arts or Social Studies classes.)

(Developed for Reading and Writing, grade 6; recommended for English, grades 6-10)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use