**Tide Pools from and beyond John Steinbeck’s *Cannery Row***

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For NEH 2016 Summer Institute: “John Steinbeck: Social Critic and Ecologist”

**I. Introduction:**

**A. Novel:**

John Steinbeck wrote *Cannery Row* in 1944 after he returned to the U.S. after serving as a war correspondent in Europe. The novel, published in 1945, reminds us of war as well as helps to forget war by focusing on the paradoxical and complex lives of people and wildlife living on or near Cannery Row in 1940’s Monterey, California.

Besides Doc, the central characters in the novel are those in contact with him, Mack and the Boys, among others. Time changes when Doc appears; he not only accepts, but embraces the peculiar, idiosyncratic characters that surround him. Steinbeck celebrates these people with his straightforward plot of planning and having two parties – one of sadness, one of exuberance.

The central metaphor, the tide pool, simultaneously refers to Doc’s marine specimens as well as the mosaic of characters living near his marine laboratory. The collection of life in the tide pool goes beyond marine life to include other creatures (frogs, cats, dogs, gophers, rats, snakes) and of course the people living nearby. It is no accident that Steinbeck begins and ends his novel referring to the tide pools. The life in and out of the pools, human and non-human, fragile and robust, “crawl” out onto the pages of this novel.

**B. Teaching:**

This novel’s focus on life as it is provides students with a number of learning opportunities. The activities presented, not only help students to examine the novel, but also assist them in looking and exploring life around them on their own. With Steinbeck as our guide in how to observe and connect with life, students will be able to cultivate their own reading, writing, and observing skills.

**II. Objectives:**

**Students will be able to:**

****Isolate and explain major images of novel

Explain tone of passages

Analyze and articulate major insights of novel

Observe natural world and create field notes

**III. Essential questions:**

 What makes a home?

 How is place important for any living being?

How does Steinbeck show humans and wild life living together as part of

the natural world?

**IV. Activities:**

1. **Practice identifying tone**. Students can be divided up into groups with each group given one of the sample quotes from the book. (Appendix B.) See examples and tone words in Appendix A for assisting student in capturing Steinbeck’s attitude toward his subject.
2. **Students create chapter titles**. This can be done in study groups, partners, or

individually. See Appendix C for possible chapter titles. Practicing together as

a class for the first two to three chapters is encouraged. Creating titles helps to

summarize, capture tone, and create meaning for each chapter.

1. **Create study groups** with each group responsible to respond to one of the

essential questions while reading the novel.

1. **Students respond to one of the** **longer quoted passages (Appendix D)**:

a. Groups can sign up or be assigned a passage (A-N)

b. Respond to at least five questions about the passage (See nine questions

at the end of Appendix D.)

c. Journal response – students may use questions about the passages

to create journal entries; these could be used as a basis for class discussion.

d. Oral or written responses to essential questions of the novel. Student

responses to the passage questions would lead to the essential questions.

e. Oral group presentation to the class. Have student groups summarize

their understanding of the passage for the class. Read the passage aloud

and lead the class in relating the passage to the whole novel.

1. **Descriptive writing activity** based on novel. See **Appendix E** for topics.
2. **Review of novel** via novel study questions. (**See Appendix F.**)These can be assigned to groups while reading the novel, each group may sign up for a fixed number of questions, or an ongoing discussion of the questions could be used while reading the novel. Along with the essential questions individual questions or combination of questions could be used for essay evaluation.
3. **Writing a nature journal**: Students go on class nature walks on school

grounds and then go on walks with partner. See **Appendix G** for additional

information. This assignment or variation of it can be adapted to suit local

environment.

**V. Resources:** In addition to the novel the sources noted provide further insights into place and humans interacting with the natural world.

“Black Marigolds” See Sacred Texts: Hinduism for complete “Black Marigolds” poem quoted at end of novel: http://www.sacredtexts.com/hin/bilhana/index.htm#contents

*Cannery Row*, John Steinbeck. Penguin Books, New York, New York. 1945, 1973. Introduction by Sue Shillinglaw, Viking Penguin, 1994.

Poetryoutloud.org. The poetry Outloud website provides much more than a list of tone words. Students, besides the yearly contest, could use the website to find poems showing human connections with nature.

*A Sense of Wonder,* Rachel Carson. Photographs by Nick Kelsh. Introduction by Linda Lear. Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1998.

*Walking*, Henry David Thoreau. Cricket House Books, Middletown, DE, 2010.

Wildlife: Birds, plants, trees, animals. There are a great variety of good sources to better understand our natural world. On-line sources, various guidebooks, or consultations with science teachers for identifying wildlife are recommended if you have students develop a nature journal.

**Appendix A: Tone**

**For a literary work tone is an author’s attitude toward the subject and the readers.**

Identifying the tone is helpful in understanding the writer’s purpose and the meaning. Identifying particular words and the mood of the writing piece will help to explain tone. Some tone words may need closer study, looking up the meaning in a dictionary. There may be more than one tone (bitter/hopeful) and the tone may change in the piece of writing.

**A list of tone words from the poetryoutloud.org website:**

(Many more words may be added to this partial list.)

1. abashed 26. benevolent 51. critical 76. exultant

2. abrasive 27. biting 52. curt 77. facetious

3. abusive 28. bitter 53. cutting 78. fanciful

4. acquiescent 29. blithe 54. cynical 79. fearful

5. accepting 30. boastful 55. defamatory 80. flippant

6. acerbic 31. bored 56. denunciatory 81. fond

7. admiring 32. brisk 57. despairing 82. forceful

8. adoring 33. bristling 58. detached 83. frightened

9. affectionate 34. brusque 59. devil-may-care 84. frivolous

10. aghast 35. calm 60. didactic 85. ghoulish

11. allusive 36. candid 61. disbelieving 86. giddy

12. amused 37. caressing 62. discouraged 87. gleeful

13. angry 38. caustic 63. disdainful 88. glum

14. anxious 39. cavalier 64. disparaging 89. grim

15. apologetic 40. childish 65. disrespectful 90. guarded

16. apprehensive 41. child-like 66. distracted 91. guilty

17. approving 42. clipped 67. doubtful 92. happy

18. arch 43. cold 68. dramatic 93. harsh

19. ardent 44. complimentary 69. dreamy 94. haughty

20. argumentative 45. condescending 70. dry 95. heavy-hearted

21. audacious 46. confident 71. ecstatic 96. hollow

22. awe-struck 47. confused 72. entranced 97. horrified

23. bantering 48. coy 73. enthusiastic 98. humorous

24. begrudging 49. contemptuous 74. eulogistic 99. hypercritical

25. bemused 50. conversational 75. exhilarated 100. indifferent

**Tone words continued:**

101. indignant 126. poignant 151. self-pitying 176. tired

102. indulgent 127. pragmatic 152. self-satisfied 177. touchy

103. ironic 128. proud 153. sentimental 178. trenchant

104. irreverent 129. provocative 154. serious 179. uncertain

105. joking 130. questioning 155. severe 180. understated

106. joyful 131. rallying 156. sharp 181. upset

107. languorous 132. reflective 157. shocked 182. urgent

108. languid 133. reminiscing 158. silly 183. vexed

109. laudatory 134. reproachful 159. sly 184. vibrant

110. light-hearted 135. resigned 160. smug 185. wary

111. lingering 136. respectful 161. solemn 186. whimsical

112. loving 137. restrained 162. somber 187. withering

113. marveling 138. reticent 163. stern 188. wry

114. melancholy 139. reverent 164. straightforward 189. zealous

115. mistrustful 140. rueful 165. stentorian

116. mocking 141. sad 166. strident

117. mysterious 142. sarcastic 167. stunned

118. naïve 143. sardonic 168. subdued

119. neutral 144. satirical 169. swaggering

120. nostalgic 145. satisfied 170. sweet

121. objective 146. seductive 171. sympathetic

122. peaceful 147. self-critical 172. taunting

123. pessimistic 148. self-dramatizing 173. tense

124. pitiful 149. self-justifying 174. thoughtful

125. playful 150. self-mocking 175. Threatening

**Appendix B: Six quotes from *Cannery Row* for practice in identifying tone:**

Descriptive passages and page numbers for both the shorter passages and the longer passages (Appendix D) of *Cannery Row* are from this edition: Penguin Classics: *Cannery Row*, John Steinbeck. Penguin Books, New York, New York. 1945, 1973. Introduction by Sue Shillinglaw, Viking Penguin, 1994.

1. “How can the poem and the stink and the grating noise – the quality of light, the tone, the habit and the dream – be set down alive? When you collect marine animals there are certain flat worms so delicate that they are almost impossible to capture whole, for they break and tatter under the touch. You must let them ooze and crawl of their own will onto a knife blade and then lift them gentle into your bottle of sea water. And perhaps that might be the way to write this book – to open the page and to let the stories crawl in by themselves.” (6-7)

2. Doc straightened up. The waves were beginning to break over the barrier of the Great Tide Pool. The tide was coming in and little rivers from the sea had begun to flow over the rocks. The wind blew freshly in from the whistling buoy and the barking of sea lions came from around the point. Doc pushed his rain hat on the back of his head. ‘We’ve got enough starfish.” (Chapter 6: 35)

3. “The little octopi live among the boulders imbedded in sand. Being timid and young, they prefer a bottom on which there are many caves and little crevices and lumps of mud where they may hide from predators and protect themselves from the waves.” (Chapter 17: 97)

4. “The two little boys played in the boat works yard until a cat climbed the fence. Instantly they gave chase, drove it across the tracks and there filled their pockets with granite stones from the roadbed. The cat got away from them in the tall weeds but they kept the stones because they were perfect in weight, shape, and size for throwing. You can’t ever tell when you’re going to need a stone like that. They turned down Cannery Row and whanged a stone at the corrugated iron front of Morden’s Cannery. A startled man looked out the office window and then rushed for the door, but the boys were too quick for him. They were lying behind a wooden stringer in the lot before he even got near the door. He couldn’t have found them in a hundred years.” (Chapter 26: 153)

5. “A squadron of huge brown beetles hurled themselves against the light and then fell to the ground and moved their legs and felt around with their antennae. A lady cat strolled lonesomely along the gutter looking for adventure. She wondered what had happened to all the tom cats who had made life interesting and the nights hideous.” (Chapter 29: 171)

6. “Doc closed the book. He could hear the waves beat under the piles and he could hear the scampering of white rats against the wire. He went into the kitchen and felt the cooling water in the sink. He ran hot water into it. He spoke aloud to the sink and the white rats, and to himself:

Even now,

I know that I have savored the hot taste of life

Lifting green cups and gold at the great feast.

Just for a small and a forgotten time

I have had full in my eyes from off my girl

The whitest pouring of eternal light –

He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. And the white rats scampered and scrambled in their cages. And behind the glass the rattlesnakes lay still and stared into space with their dusty frowning eyes.” (Chapter 32: 184-185)

**Appendix C: Titles**

Possible chapter titles after introductory *Cannery Row* chapter

(Starred ★ ones can be considered interchapters.)

1. Lee Chong and Neighbors

2. Our Father Who Art in Nature★

3. Dora’s Bear Flag Restaurant and death

4. Old Chinaman and Andrew★

5. Doc’s Western Biological Lab

6. The Great Tide Pool with Doc and Hazel

7. The Palace Flophouse, Mack, and Party Ideas

8. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Malloy’s Boiler Home★

9. Mack and the Boys – Frogs for Doc

10. Frankie “helping” Doc

11. The Boys Fixing A Model T Ford Truck

12. Josh Billings and the Hotel del Monte★

13. Camping out and Mack’s Great Talent

14. Soldiers and Early Morning Cannery Row★

15. Whiskey and Frogs

16. Sardines and Epidemic★

17. Doc’s Collecting Trip with Beer Milk-shake

18. Octopi Hunting Shock

19. Flagpole Skater ★

20. A Party for Doc

21. Doc’s Return

22. Henri the Artist★

23. Palace Flophouse Gloom and Darling’s Sickness

24. Mrs. Tom Talbot★

25. A New Gladness and Mack’s Method

26. Joey and Willard★

27. Everyone for Doc

28. Frankie’s Clock

29. Party Anticipation

30. The Party

31. The Gopher Story★

32. The Day After

**Appendix D: Longer novel** **passages and questions**

**A. Fishing and town activities:**

“In the morning when the sardine fleet has made a catch, the purse-seiners waddle heavily into the bay blowing their whistles. The deep-laden boats pull in against the coast where the canneries dip their tails into the bay. The figure is advisedly chosen, for if the canneries dipped their mouths into the bay the canned sardines which emerge from the other end would be metaphorically, at least, even more horrifying. Then cannery whistles scream and all over town men and women scramble into their clothes and come running down to the Row to go to work. Then shining cars bring the upper classes down: superintendents, accountants, owners who disappear into offices. Then from the town pour Wops and Chinamen and Polaks, men and women in trousers and rubber coats and oilcloth aprons. They come running to clean and cut and pack and cook and can the fish. The whole street rumbles and groans and screams and rattles while the silver rivers of fish pour in out of the boats and the boats rise higher and higher in the water until they are empty. The canneries rumble and rattle and squeak until the last fish is cleaned and cut and cooked and canned and then the whistles scream again and the ripping, smelly, tired Wops and Chinamen and Polaks, men and women, straggle out and droop their ways up the hill into the town and Cannery Row becomes itself again – quiet and and magical. Its normal life returns.” (5-6)

**B. Doc**

“Doc is the owner and operator of the Western Biological Laboratory. Doc is rather small, deceptively small, for he is wiry and very strong and when passionate anger comes on him he can be very fierce. He wears a beard and his face is half Christ and half satyr and his face tells the truth. It is said that he has helped many a girl out of trouble and into another. Doc has the hands of a brain surgeon, and a cool warm mind. Doc tips his hat to dogs as he drives by and the dogs look up and smile at him. He can kill anything for need but he could not even hurt a feeling for pleasure. He has one great fear – that of getting his head wet, so that summer or winter he ordinarily wears a rain hat. He will wade in a tide pool up to the chest without feeling damp, but a drop of rain water on his head makes his panicky.” (Chapter 5: 29-30)

**C. Doc and marine life**

“Doc was collecting marine animals in the Great Tide Pool on the tip of the Peninsula. It is a fabulous place: when the tide is in, a wave-churned basin, creamy with foam, whipped by the combers that roll in from the whistling buoy on the reef. But when the tide goes out the little water world becomes quiet and lovely. The sea is very clear and the bottom becomes fantastic with hurrying, fighting, feeding, breeding animals. Crabs rush from frond to frond of the waving algae. Starfish squat over mussels and limpets, attach their million little suckers and then slowly lift with incredible power until the prey is broken from the rock. And then the starfish stomach comes out and envelops its food. Orange and speckled and fluted nudibranchs slide gracefully over the rocks, their skirts waving like the dresses of the Spanish dancers. And black eels poke their heads out of crevices and wait for prey. The snapping shrimps with their trigger claws pop loudly. The lovely, colored world is glassed over. Hermit crabs like frantic children scamper on the bottom sand. And now one, finding an empty snail shell he likes better than his own, creeps out, exposing his soft body to the enemy for a moment, and then pops into the new shell. A wave breaks over the barrier, and churns the glassy water for a moment and mixes bubbles into the pool, and then clears and is tranquil and lovely and murderous again. Here a crab tears a leaf from his brother. The anemones expand like soft and brilliant flowers, inviting any tired and perplexed animal to lie for a moment in their arms, and when some small crab or little tide-pool Johnnie accepts the green and purple invitation, the petals whip in, the stinging cells shoot tiny narcotic needles into the prey and it grows weak and perhaps sleepy while the searing caustic digestive acids melt its body down.” (Chapter 6: 31-32)

**D. Marine life action:**

“Then the creeping murderer, the octopus, steals out, slowly, softly, moving like a gray mist, pretending now to be a bit of weed, now a rock, now a lump of decaying meat while its evil goat eyes watch coldly. It oozes and flows toward a feeding crab, and as it comes close its yellow eyes burn and its body turns rosy with the pulsing color of anticipation and rage. Then suddenly it runs lightly on the tips of its arms, as ferociously as a charging cat. It leaps savagely on the crab, there is a puff of black fluid, and the struggling mass is obscured in the sepia cloud while the octopus murders the crab. On the exposed rocks out of water, the barnacles bubble behind their closed doors and the limpets dry out. And down to the rocks come the black flies to eat anything they can find. The sharp smell of iodine from the algae, and the lime smell of calcareous bodies and the smell of powerful protean, smell of sperm and ova fill the air. On the exposed rocks the starfish emit semen and eggs from between their rays. The smells of life and richness, of death and digestion, of decay and birth, burden the air. And salt spray blows in from the barrier where the ocean waits for its rising-tide strength to permit it back into the Great Tide Pool again. And on the reef the whistling buoy bellows like a sad and patient bull.”

(Chapter 6: 32)

**E. Stink bugs’ behavior:**

“On the black earth on which the ice plants bloomed, hundreds of black stink bugs crawled. And many of them stuck their tales up in the air. ‘Look at them stink bugs,’ Hazel remarked, grateful to the bugs for being there.

‘They’re interesting,’ said Doc.

‘Well, what they got their asses up in the air for?’

Doc rolled up his wool socks and put them in the rubber boots and from his pocket he brought out dry socks and a pair of thin moccasins. ‘I don’t know why,’ he said. ‘I looked them up recently – they’re very common animals and one of the commonest things they do is put their tails up in the air. And in all the books there isn’t one mention of the fact that they put their tails up in the air or why.’

Hazel turned one of the stink bugs over with the toe of his wet tennis shoe and the shining black beetle move madly with floundering legs to get upright again. ‘Well, why do *you* think they do it?

‘I think they’re praying,’ said Doc.

‘What!’ Hazel was shocked.

‘The remarkable thing,’ said Doc, ‘isn’t that they put their tails up in the air – the only incredibly remarkable thing is that we find it remarkable. We can only use ourselves as yardsticks. If we did something inexplicable and strange we’d probably be praying – so maybe they’re praying.’

‘Let’s get the hell out of here,’ said Hazel.” (Chapter 6: 37-38)

**F. Carmel Valley, River, and wildlife:**

“In Carmel Valley the artichoke plants stood gray green, and the willows were lush along the river. They turned left up the valley. Luck blossomed from the first. A dusty Rhode Island red rooster who had wandered too far from his own farmyard crossed the road and Eddie hit him without running too far off the road. Sitting in the back of the truck, Hazel picked him as they went and let the feathers fly from his hand, the most widely distributed evidence on record, for there was a little breeze in the morning blowing down from Jamesburg and some of the red chicken feathers were deposited on Pt. Lobos and some even blew out to sea.

The Carmel is a lovely river. It isn’t very long but in its course it has everything a river should have. It rises in the mountains and tumbles down a while, runs through the shallows, is dammed to make a lake, spills over the dam, crackles among round boulders, wanders lazily under sycamores, spills into pools where trout live, drops in against banks where crayfish live. In the winter it becomes a torrent, a mean little fierce river, and in the summer it is a place for children to wade in and for fishermen to wander in. Frogs blink from its banks and the deep ferns grow beside it, Deer and foxes come to drink from it, secretly in the morning and evening, and now and then a mountain lion crouched flat laps its water. The farms of the rich little valley back up to the river and take its water for the orchards and the vegetables. The quail call beside it and the wild doves come whistling in at dusk. Raccoons pace its edges looking for frogs. It’s everything a river should be.

A few miles up the valley the river cuts in under a high cliff from which vines and ferns hang down. At the base of the this cliff there is a pool, green and deep, and on the another side of the pool there is a little sandy place where it is good to sit and to cook your dinner.” (Chapter 13: 72-73)

**G. Late afternoon and cooking:**

“There is no golden afternoon next to the cliff. When the sun went over it at about two o’clock a whispering shade came to the beach. The sycamores rustled in the afternoon breeze. Little water snakes slipped down to the rocks and then gently entered the water and swam along through the pool, their heads held up like little periscopes and a tiny wake spreading behind them. A big trout jumped in the pool. The gnats and mosquitoes which avoid the sun came out and buzzed over the water. All of the sun bugs, the flies, the dragonflies, the wasps, the hornets, went home. And as the shadow came to the beach, as the first quail began to call, Mack and the boys awakened. The smell of the chicken stew was heartbreaking. Hazel had picked a fresh bay leaf from a tree by the river and he had dropped it in. The carrots were in now. Coffee in its own can was simmering on its own rock, far enough from the flame so that it did not boil too hard. Mack awakened, started up, stretched, staggered to the pool, washed his face with cupped hands, hacked, spat, washed out his mouth, broke wind, tightened his belt, scratched his legs, combed his wet hair with his fingers, drank from the jug, belched and sat down by the fire. ‘By God that smells good,’ he said.” (Chapter 13: 74)

**H. Town waking:**

“Early morning is a time of magic in Cannery Row. In the gray time after the light has come and before the sun has risen, the Row seems to hang suspended out of time in a silvery light. The street lights go out, and the weeds are a brilliant green. The corrugated iron of the canneries glows with pearly lucence of platinum or old pewter. No automobiles are running then. The street is silent of progress and business. And the rush and drag of the waves can be heard as they splash in among the piles of the canneries. It is a time of great peace, a deserted time, a little era of rest. Cats drip over the fences and slither like syrup over the ground to look for fish heads. Silent early morning dogs parade majestically picking and choosing judiciously whereon to pee. The sea gulls come flapping in to sit on the cannery roofs to await the day of refuse. They sit on the roof peaks shoulder to shoulder. From rocks near the Hopkins Marine Station come the barking of seal lions like the baying of hounds. The air is cool and fresh. In the back gardens the gophers push up the morning mounds of fresh damp earth and they creep out and drag flowers into their holes. Very few people are about, just enough to make it seem more deserted than it is. . . . Lee Chong brings the garbage cans out and stands them on the curb. The old Chinaman comes out of the sea and flap-flaps across the street and up past the Palace. The cannery watchmen look out and blink at the morning light. The bouncer at the Bear Flag steps out on the porch in his shirtsleeves and stretches and scratches his stomach. The snores of Mr. Malloy’s tenants in the pipes have a deep tunnelly quality. It is the hour of the pearl – the interval between day and night when time stops and examines itself.” (Chapter 14: 81-82)

**I. Frog hunting:**

“Every frog leaped, plopped into the pool, and swam frantically to the bottom. Then into the pool plunged the line of men, stamping, churning, moving in a crazy line up the pool, flinging their feet about. Hysterically the frogs displaced from their placid spots swam ahead of the crazy thrashing feet and the feet came on. Frogs are good swimmers but they haven’t much endurance. Down the pool they went until finally they were bunched and crowded against the end. And the feet and wildly plunging bodies followed them. A few frogs lost their heads and floundered among the feet and got through and these were saved. But the majority decided to leave this pool forever, to find a new home in a new country where this kind of thing didn’t happen. A wave of frantic, frustrated frogs, big ones, little ones, brown ones, green ones, men frogs and women frogs, a wave of them broke over the bank, crawled, leaped, scrambled. They clambered up the grass, they clutched at each other, little ones rode on big ones. And then – horror on horror – the flashlights found them. Two men gathered them like berries. The line came out of the water and closed in on their rear and gathered them like potatoes. Tens and fifties of them were flung into the gunny sacks, and the sacks filled with tired, frightened, and disillusioned frogs, with dripping, whimpering frogs. Some got away, of course, and some had been saved in the pool. But never in frog history had such an execution taken place. (Chapter 15: 89)

**J. Doc collecting marine specimens**:

“It was good hunting that day. He got twenty-two little octopi. And he picked off several hundred sea cradles and put them in his wooden bucket. As the tide moved out he followed it while the morning came and the sun arose. The flat extended out two hundred yards and then there was a line of heavy weed-crusted rocks before it dropped off to deep water. Doc worked out the barrier edge. He had about what he wanted now and the rest of the time he looked under stones, leaned down and peered into the tide pools with their brilliant mosaics and their scuttling, bubbling life. And he came at last to the outer barrier where the leathery brown algae hung down into the water. Red starfish clustered on the rocks and the sea pulsed up and down against the barrier waiting to get in again. Between two weeded rocks on the barrier Doc saw a flash of white under water and then the floating weed covered it. He climbed to the place over the slippery rocks, held himself firmly, and gently reached down and parted the brown algae. Then he grew rigid. A girl’s face looked up at him, a pretty, pale girls with dark hair. The eyes were open and clear and the face was firm and the hair washed gently about her head. The body was out of sight, caught in the crevice. The lips were slightly parted and the teeth showed and on the face was only comfort and rest. Just under water it was and the clear water made it very beautiful. It seemed to Doc that he looked at it for many minutes, and the face burned into his picture memory.” (Chapter 18: 104-105)

**K. A Girl:**

“Very slowly he raised his hand and let the brown weed float back and cover the face. Doc’s heart pounded deeply and his throat felt tight. He picked up his bucket and his jars and his crowbar and went slowly over the slippery rocks back toward the beach.

And the girl’s face went ahead of him. He sat down on the beach in the coarse dry sand and pulled off his boots. In the jar the little octopi were huddled up each keeping as far as possible from the others. Music sounded in Doc’s ears, a high thin piercingly sweet flute carrying a melody he could never remember, and against this, a pounding surf-like wood-wind section. The flute went up into regions beyond the hearing range and even there it carried its unbelievable melody. Goose pimples came out on Doc’s arms. He shivered and his eyes were wet the way they get in the focus of great beauty. The girl’s eyes had been gray and clear and the dark hair floated, drifted lightly over the face. The picture was set for all time. He sat there while the first little spout of water came over the reef bringing the returning tide. He sat there hearing the music while the sea crept in again over the boulder flat. His hand tapped out the rhythm, and the terrifying flute played in his brain. The eyes were gray and the mouth smiled a little or seemed to catch its breath in ecstasy.”

(Chapter 18: 105-106)

**L. Morning in the marine lab and neighborhood:**

“In the back room of the laboratory the white rats in their cages ran and skittered and squeaked. In the corner of a separate cage a mother rat lay over her litter of blind naked children and let them suckle and the mother stared about nervously and fiercely.

In the rattlesnake cage the snakes lay with their chins resting on their own coils and they stared straight ahead out of their scowling dusty black eyes. In another cage a Gila monster with a skin like a beaded bag reared slowly up and clawed heavily and sluggishly at the wire. The anemones in the aquaria blossomed open, with green and purple tentacles and pale green stomachs. The little sea water pump whirred softly and the needles of driven water hissed into the tanks forcing lines of bubbles under the surface.

It was the hour of the pearl. Lee Chong brought his garbage cans out to the curb. The bouncer stood on the porch of the Bear Flag and scratched his stomach. Sam Malloy crawled out of the boiler and sat on his wood block and looked at the lightening east. Over on the rocks near Hopkins Marine Station the sea lions barked monotonously. The old Chinaman came up out of the sea with his dripping basket and flip-flapped up the hill.” (Chapter 21: 121-122)

**M. Gopher home:**

“A well-grown gopher took up residence in a thicket of mallow weeds in the vacant lot on Cannery Row. It was a perfect place. The deep green luscious mallows towered up crisp and rich and as they matured their little cheeses hung down provocatively. The earth was perfect for a gopher hole too, black and soft and yet with a little clay in it so that it didn’t crumble and the tunnels didn’t cave in. The gopher was fat and sleek and he had always plenty of food in his cheek pouches. His little ears were clean and well set and his eyes were as black as old-fashioned pin heads and just about the same size. His digging hands were strong and the fur on his back was glossy brown and the fawn-colored fur on his chest was incredibly soft and rich. He had long curving yellow teeth and a little short tail. Altogether he was a beautiful gopher and in the prime of his life. . . .

As he dug down into the coal-black earth he found it even more perfect, for there were great rocks under the soil. When he made his great chamber for the storing of food it was under a rock so that it could never cave in no matter how hard it rained. It was a place where he could settle down and raise any number of families and the burrow could increase in all directions.

It was beautiful in the early morning when he first poked his head out of the burrow. The mallows filtered green light down on him and the first rays of the rising sun shone into his hole and warmed it so that he lay there content and very comfortable. ” (Chapter 31: 179-180)

**N. Gopher Troubles:**

“When he had dug his great chamber and his four emergency exits and his waterproof deluge room, the gopher began to store food. He cut down only the perfect mallow stems and trimmed them to the exact length he needed and he took them down the hole and stacked them neatly in his great chamber, and arranged them so they wouldn’t ferment or get sour. He had found the perfect place to live. There were no gardens about so no one would think of setting a trap for him. Cats were there, many of them, but they were so bloated with fish heads and guts from the canneries that they had long ago given up hunting. The soil was sandy enough so that water never stood about or filled a hole for long. The gopher worked and worked until he had his great chamber crammed with food. The he made little side chambers for the babies who would inhabit them. In a few years there might be thousands of his progeny spreading out from this original hearthstone.

But as time went on the gopher began to be a little impatient, for no female appeared. He sat in the entrance of his hole in the morning and made penetrating squeaks that are inaudible to the human ear but can be heard deep in the earth by other gophers. And still no female appeared. Finally in a sweat of impatience he went up across the track until he found another gopher hole. He squeaked provocatively in the entrance. He heard a rustling and smelled female and then out of the whole came an old battle-torn bull gopher who mauled and bit him so badly that he crept home and lay in his great chamber for three days recovering and he lost two toes from one front paw from that fight.

Again he waited and squeaked beside his beautiful burrow in the beautiful place but no female ever came and after a while he had to move away. He had to move two blocks up the hill to a dahlia garden where they put out traps every night.”

(Ch. 31 180-181)

**Questions for each passage:**

1. What happens in this passage?

2. What images or sensory words are the most impressionable? What do the

descriptions reveal about the importance of place?

4. What is unique about this passage?

5. What is the tone? (See list from Poetry OutLoud)

6. What does the passage reveal about humans?

7. What does the passage reveal about the animal, non-human world?

8. Does this passage give any insight into how the human and natural world are

mirrors of each other? Explain why or why not.

9. What does the passage reveal about life in Cannery Row?

**Appendix E: Writing opportunities:**

1. Describe a place that you know which has its own unique animal life.

2. Describe an early morning setting showing the slow waking up of a place.

3. Using wild life books or credible on-line sources describe a place using the

proper names for plants and animals.

4. Observe and write in detail about a place after having visited the place multiple

times. (3 or more times for extended periods)

5. Observe a living animal closely and describe the creature in physical detail,

actions, behavior, interactions with other animals or humans, sounds…

6. Observe one living human closely and describe the person in physical detail,

actions, behavior, interactions with others, sounds, …..

7. Create a poem showing how humans and animal behavior is full of variety.

8. Describe how a particular person (or persons) interacts with wildlife. Using

details appealing to the five senses.

9. Describe a personal response to nature you have experienced which has had

a lasting impact on you.

10. Observe animals or humans in conflict and describe in detail what you observe.

11. Observe animals or humans in a harmonious relationship and describe in detail

what you observe.

**Appendix F: Study questions for whole novel**

1. How does the author reveal different “homes” in the novel? How may this

idea serve as a unifying force of the novel?

2. How does the author show place to be important? What does he

reveal about the variety of places?

3. How does the author show space (both physically and emotionally)

as significant for people and animals?

4. How do human and wildlife act individually and collectively?

5. How does Steinbeck reveal the complexity of life?

6. How are “eyes” significant in revealing the life of Cannery Row?

7. How does the tidal pool metaphor serve to unite the novel?

8. How is the animal world like the human world and how is the human

world like the animal world?

9. How does Steinbeck treat the subjects of his writing in a sacred or

spiritual manner?

10. Despite all the detailed stories of marine life and characters how is this

a timeless novel?

11. How does Steinbeck capture both the scientific and poetic outlooks?

12. Why does Steinbeck have “interchapters” – chapters that do not

appear to be part of the main plot? How do they complement the plot

and insights of the novel?

(See chapters 2, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 19, 22, 24, 26, 31)

13. What does the author show us about isolation, loneliness, defeat,

celebration, acceptance, and joy?

14. Steinbeck depicts some most unusual characters. What is he showing

us about humans, about our attitudes, our outlook on life?

15. John Steinbeck dedicated this novel to his marine scientist friend, Ed

Ricketts. Steinbeck creates Doc, a fictional character, but one who is

clearly inspired by his friend Ed. What qualities does Doc display that

makes him a memorable, likeable, and dignified person?

**Appendix G:** **Walden Walks**

These activities are an adaptation of a project developed in July, 2015, inspired by a week long study of Henry David Thoreau. I am grateful for the leadership and expertise of Whitney Retallic and Jeffrey Kramer at the Walden Institute in Concord, Massachusetts. As noted, these activities could be adapted for particular neighborhoods or landscapes across our country and beyond.

**Our Land and Our Writers:**

**Discovering Barnstable’s Conservation Lands Through Multiple Lenses**

The activities for this thematic approach are for high school students during their year of studying American literature, 11th grade at Barnstable High School. Students will become familiar with a particular area of the town, namely conservation land that has been set aside for recreational, non-commercial use. Each student will walk a trail at least four times over the course of the school year, once for each of the four seasons, starting in September and concluding in June. Students will observe and take field notes on their walks. Observations will be summarized with writing and possibly drawings and photographs in their Journal. A class nature walk will take place during the first week of school in order to provide training in observing and recording information. This will take place at nearby Dunns Pond, adjacent to Barnstable High School. Classroom readings by various American nature writers will be read over the course of the year in order to develop observation skills as well as literary competency and imaginative possibilities for each student. Journal entry responses to various American writers will complement the field notes and Journal summaries. The series of assignments will culminate in a student created portfolio and presentation for the class on the topic “Barnstable’s Conservation Land and Insights from our Nature Writers.”

**Essential Questions:**

**** What is the purpose of setting aside conservation land in the town of

Barnstable? What are the challenges of setting aside this land?

 What uses can conservation land provide for residents?

 What benefits are gained by walking, observing, and recording observations in

the town’s conservation lands?

 What are some of the flora and fauna in the particular conservation land?

 What changes in flora and fauna have taken place in the observed land

during the four seasons?

 Has your ability to walk, observe, and write about a natural environment

evolved or changed in any way over the course of the year? Explain.

 How have various writers portrayed nature in their writings?

 In his essay “Walking” what view of walking in nature has Thoreau depicted?

What does he consider human’s relationship to nature?

 Based on your walks, observations, and readings this year what have you

learned about how you approach living in the natural environment ?

**Learning Outcomes/Objectives:** Students will be able to:

 Discover the social, natural, intellectual, and physical benefits of walking in the

woods

 Identify and practice writing field notes

 Develop skills in recognizing and naming various flora and fauna

 Acquire knowledge of various American nature writers from a variety of

disciplines (ecology, literary, history, creative writing, environmental, …) and

how the writers portray the relationships between people, place, community,

and nature

 Develop interpretive skills in observing, writing, questioning

Apply observational and literary techniques based on the various writers

Analyze the political and cultural decisions, benefits, and challenges of setting

aside conservation land in our community

 Critique Thoreau’s essay “Walking” and interpret how the essay may or

may not be relevant to one’s own life

 Evaluate my own relationship to the natural environment and summarize

my own philosophy of nature

 Produce a portfolio of observations and reflections based on seasonal

walks in the woods, nature readings and authors’ use of nature in literature

**Procedures:**

Lesson 1: Class walk

Within the first week of school the class will go on a nature walk to nearby Dunns Pond to practice observing and recording what is witnessed. Students will have a field note book and a journal. Students will first record their observations and reactions in their field notebook and then summarize in their Journal responding to the topics on the Field Note Guidelines and the Journal questions.

Lesson 2: Summer walk: By the end of September students will go on their first independent walk. Each student will select one of the ten conservation land areas and go for a minimum ½ hour walk on one of the trails. Phones and other technology will not to be used except for taking pictures or recording sounds. Recording information in a field notebook will be used and then transferred to their journal upon completion of the walk. Using the Field Note Guidelines will be used for this and other walks.

Lesson 3: Autumn walk: This walk will take place during the month of October when foliage is in transition and not all the leaves are off the trees. Record observations in field guide notebook and then complete write up in Journal. In the Journal some questions to respond to include:

1. What have I noticed differently during the second walk?
2. What changes have taken place since the first walk? Be specific.
3. Have any of the class readings by naturalists or literary artists influenced

my observations or thoughts or writings?

Lesson 4: Winter walk: This walk is to take place sometime from December through

February, preferably when there is snow on the ground and it is cold outside.

The same procedure for field notes and journal writing continues. Respond to questions number one to three again (from the Autumn walk) with specifics from the observations and readings.

Lesson 5 Spring walk: This walk is to take place during April to mid May with the same guidelines as the Winter walk, except this walk ought to include the transition where some leafing out is taking place in plants and trees, but not a full leafing out has taken place. The same questions one to three from the Autumn walk are also incorporated into the Journal entry.

Lessons 6-10: (possibly more) Readings and responses: Throughout the year, before and after the various walking assignments, a variety of readings will be assigned. American authors’ use of nature, directly or indirectly, will be examined and analyzed. These will include naturalists and environmentalists as well as literary writers who describe nature as part of a larger narrative. Besides essays, the genres will include short stories, poems, and novels. Student partners may be assigned a particular author for research and presentation to the class. The primary methods of evaluating will be reading quizzes and journal entries responding to writers. More time will be spent on Thoreau’s “Walking” essay as a means of reflecting on and synthesizing students’ field studies and their readings.

**Evaluation:**

Quiz grades for completion of field notes and journal: range from ten to twenty

five points. This includes the class nature walk.

 Nature readings by various authors: reading quizzes and/or journal

responses evaluated for comprehension and completion. Quiz and Journal

grades will range from five to twenty points, based on length of reading or

assigned entry.

 Final portfolio: typed up journal entries, drawings and/or photographs, and a

reflective essay based on students walks and responses to the ideas, outlook,

and techniques of the various writers. A creative artistic piece, either a visual

product or fully developed poem will be included in the portfolio that is

presented to the class. A rubric will be handed out displaying the various

components and evaluation of the portfolio. Evaluation will be equal to a test

grade of 100 points.

**Resources:**

Handout on how to take field notes

 Excerpts, quotes, and writings of various American nature writers. Selections

from the following writers will be sources for examining diverse viewpoints

on nature. These include fiction and nonfiction writers:

Henry Beston Aldo Leopold

Bill Bryson Jack London

Rachel Carson William Least Heat Moon

Willa Cather John Muir

Annie Dillard Kathleen Norris

Ralph Waldo Emerson O.E. Rolvaag

Louise Erdrich Chief Seattle

Zora Neale Hurston Wallace Stegner

Peter Jenkins Henry David Thoreau

Jon Krakauer Terry Tempest Williams

 In addition to “nature” writers literary fiction writers will be read over the

course of the school year. Examining how authors use nature as a primary,

secondary, or complementary focus will be analyzed. Works of literature and

authors include: F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, John Steinbeck’s *The*

*Grapes of Wrath*, Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*, Mark Twain’s *The*

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*.

 Various poets, Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, to name two, will also be

read and critiqued for the authors’ attitudes towards nature. Figurative

language and other techniques by the writers will be analyzed for creative

expressions regards nature.

Henry David Thoreau’s essay “Walking” pages 557-589 in

*The Portable Thoreau* edited with an introduction by Jeffrey S. Cramer

Penguin Books, New York, New York, 2012.

 Town of Barnstable Conservation Lands: Names, trail maps, guides, and

descriptions can be found at the town of Barnstable web site:

<http://www.town.barnstable.ma.us/Conservation/trailguides.asp>

A three ring binder copy of the website pages will be available in the

classroom. The conservations trails listed are:

Bridge Creek Otis Atwood

Crocker Neck Sandy Neck

Hathaway’s Pond Santuit Pond Reserve

Long Pond West Barnstable

Old Jail Lane Whelan

**Field Notes Guidelines:**

Using a pocket-sized notebook is recommended for taking field notes while walking in the woods. At least one-half hour to one hour is required for each of the walks. You are welcome to do more than the required four, but each one needs to be one of enjoyment and close observation. Pen or pencil may be used, drawing or taking pictures and/or recording sounds is encouraged. Remember, this is to be a place free from the distractions of modern technologies. (No use of phones, listening to tunes, etc.) This is the place to record your first hand observations while exploring. You are encouraged to stop, sit, listen and use all your senses in writing your observations. Please do not taste or eat plants not known as safe! The purpose of the field notes is to simply record as many observations you can make while enjoying the walk. Later, you will summarize your findings in your journal entry. This is best done as soon as possible while the experience is still fresh. Try naming as many plants as you can, but drawing or photographing, and later finding the proper name is recommended. Creating sketches or diagrams may be helpful in recording observations. Consult with science teachers as well as on-line or other reliable sources for the names of animals, plants, trees, birds, insects, sky conditions, or other knowledge. Field notes will also be turned in for evaluation and comments.

The following topics can serve as a checklist for your walk and note taking:

1. Identify the place, date, time, and length of walk – particular locations

Identify road, where you started and finished. Be specific enough so someone

else could easily find the location with your directions.

2. What are the weather conditions? Temperature, wind, sky, rainy, snowy? foggy?

3. What is the terrain? hilly, swampy, rocky, flat, Changeable ….?

4 . What type of soil? Firm ground? Rocky? Soft? Marsh? Gravel, Sand? Various...?

5. If near water what kind of water? Salt? Fresh? Brackish? Clear? Muddy?

Flowing? Calm? Windswept? ….? What is the shape and size of the water area?

6. Record sensory impressions (sights, sounds, textures, smells, taste).

Identify colors, shapes, sizes. Be as specific as possible.

7. What activities are going on? Birds, animals, insects? Does time of day or

weather affect activities? Wind? Calm? Quantify and record accurately as much

as possible. How many squirrels, birds, animals? What is moving? Staying still?

Changing? Staying the same?

8. Include whatever else is important. Are there other people on the trail? Did you

have conversations with others? Or yourself? Any other observations?

9. Include your thoughts and reactions. Be sure to distinguish these from actual

factual observations. Intuitions, questions, speculations, and connections you

make are appropriate for your notes

**Journal Writing Guidelines:**

1.Transfer your field notes into your Journal in a readable paragraph format.

Drawings and photographs may be included. If you find out the name of

something later include the new information.

2. Be sure to include all information from the field notes. Further questioning,

connecting thoughts, and speculating may occur here as well.

3. Besides the recording of your walk observations and thoughts, consider the

following topics in the journal entries:

a. Were any aspects of the walk influenced by class readings, discussions,

authors’, teacher’s comments?

b. What has changed since you last visited your walking place?

c. Were you distracted during your walk by something taking place

in your life? Or the weather? Or busy schedule?

d. What is your personal reaction to the assignment? Be honest in this

assessment and see if it changes over time.

e. What skills do you need to become a better observer and thinker about

nature?

f. What was the most memorable moment during the walk?

**Practical tips for walks:**

 Bring trail map so you don’t get lost. There may be side trails not on the trail

guides so knowing where you are is important. With people making additional

trails it may be possible the trail guides may not be 100% accurate.

 Partner walks are perfectly acceptable, but remember the field notes and

observations are your own as well as your journal entries.

 Plan ahead so you are not caught in the dark or a major storm.

 Know when hunting season takes place. Even though hunting may not

be allowed on the conservation land there may be adjacent land where

hunting is permitted.

 Wear appropriate clothing and check for ticks. Long pants and shirts plus

good walking shoes are recommended. Dress properly for the season.

 Plan for mosquitos and other insects during the warm seasons.

**Chart on Various Writers, Books, and Passages** commenting on nature or revealing strong nature descriptions (to be created by the reader/writer)

**Authors: Writings : Passages and page numbers:**

Henry Beston

Bill Bryson

Rachel Carson

Willa Cather

Annie Dillard

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Louise Erdrich

Zora Neale Hurston

Peter Jenkins

Jon Krakauer

Aldo Leopold

Jack London

William Least Heat Moon

John Muir

Kathleen Norris

O.E. Rolvaag

Chief Seattle

Wallace Stegner

Henry David Thoreau

Terry Tempest Williams

**Additional writers:**