

# Inspect

## CCR Performance Task

**ELA Grades 11-12: Writing About Literature**

Nature in the Writings of John Muir and Emily Dickinson



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**Professional development embedded** within content that

- shows the relationship between specific skills and higher-order thinking
- includes authentic, permissioned texts of appropriate complexity
- and documents student progress using DOK and learning progressions

**Help for teachers addressing the instructional shifts** with content that elicits evidence of learning from each response

# CCR Performance Tasks

## ELA Grades 11-12: Writing About Literature

Nature in the Writings of John Muir and Emily Dickinson

Student Test Booklet

**Name:**

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## PART 1

**Directions:** Follow your teacher's directions and answer the questions in the test booklet.

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### Excerpt from *My First Summer in the Sierra* by John Muir

- <sup>1</sup> *June 6.* We are now on what may be called the second bench or plateau of the Range, after making many small ups and downs over belts of hill-waves, with, of course, corresponding changes in the vegetation. In open spots many of the lowland compositæ are still to be found, and some of the Mariposa tulips and other conspicuous members of the lily family; but the characteristic blue oak of the foothills is left below, and its place is taken by a fine large species (*Quercus Californica*) with deeply lobed deciduous leaves, picturesquely divided trunk, and broad, massy, finely lobed and modeled head. Here also at a height of about twenty-five hundred feet we come to the edge of the great coniferous forest, made up mostly of yellow pine with just a few sugar pines. We are now in the mountains and they are in us, kindling enthusiasm, making every nerve quiver, filling every pore and cell of us. Our flesh-and-bone tabernacle seems transparent as glass to the beauty about us, as if truly an inseparable part of it, thrilling with the air and trees, streams and rocks, in the waves of the sun,—a part of all nature, neither old nor young, sick nor well, but immortal. Just now I can hardly conceive of any bodily condition dependent on food or breath any more than the ground or the sky. How glorious a conversion, so complete and wholesome it is, scarce memory enough of old bondage days left as a standpoint to view it from! In this newness of life we seem to have been so always.
- <sup>2</sup> Through a meadow opening in the pine woods I see snowy peaks about the headwaters of the Merced above Yosemite. How near they seem and how clear their outlines on the blue air, or rather *in* the blue air; for they seem to be saturated with it. How consuming strong the invitation they extend! Shall I be allowed to go to them? Night and day I'll pray that I may, but it seems too good to be true. Someone worthy will go. . . yet as far as I can I must drift about these love-monument mountains, glad to be a servant of servants in so holy a wilderness. . . .
- <sup>3</sup> Another conifer was met to-day,—incense cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*), a large tree with warm yellow-green foliage in flat plumes like those of arborvitæ, bark cinnamon-colored, and as the boles of the old trees are without limbs they make striking pillars in the woods where the sun chances to shine on them—a worthy companion of the kingly sugar and yellow pines. I feel strangely attracted to this tree. The brown close-grained wood, as well as the small scale-like leaves, is fragrant, and the flat overlapping plumes make fine beds, and must shed the rain well. It would be delightful to be storm-bound beneath one of these noble, hospitable, inviting old trees, its broad sheltering arms bent down like a tent, incense rising from the fire made from its dry fallen branches, and a hearty wind chanting overhead. But the weather is calm to-night, and our camp is only a sheep camp. We are near the North Fork of the Merced. The night wind is telling the wonders of the upper mountains, their snow fountains and gardens, forests and groves; even their topography is in its tones. And the stars, the everlasting sky lilies, how bright they are now that we have climbed above the lowland dust! The horizon is bounded and adorned by a spiry wall of pines, every tree harmoniously related to every other; definite symbols, divine hieroglyphics written with sunbeams. Would I could understand them! The stream flowing past the camp through ferns and lilies and alders makes sweet music to the ear, but the pines marshaled around the edge of the sky make a yet sweeter music to the eye. Divine beauty all. Here I could stay tethered forever with just bread and water, nor would I be lonely; loved friends and neighbors, as love for everything increased, would seem all the nearer however many the miles and mountains between us.

## Option A

**Directions:** Prepare to participate in a class discussion about the excerpt by considering these questions.

---

- 1. How does Muir's background as a naturalist contribute to his strong reaction to the wilderness?**
- 2. What does Muir mean when he describes himself as feeling "transparent as glass" when surrounded by nature?**
- 3. Why is Muir particularly impressed by the cedar he describes near the end of the passage?**
- 4. Why does Muir feel that he would never be lonely if he were to stay in the mountains forever?**

## Option B

**Directions:** Answer these questions about the excerpt.

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- 1. How does Muir's background as a naturalist contribute to his strong reaction to the wilderness?**

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- 2. What does Muir mean when he describes himself as feeling "transparent as glass" when surrounded by nature?**

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- 3. Why is Muir particularly impressed by the cedar he describes near the end of the passage?**

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- 4. Why does Muir feel that he would never be lonely if he were to stay in the mountains forever?**

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## Option C

**Directions:** Now you are going to work with other students to research a topic related to the passage.

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**You will be assigned one of the following topics:**

- John Muir's youth and early relationship with nature
- John Muir's scientific discoveries and contributions
- The experiences of John Muir on his thousand-mile walk
- The environmental activism of John Muir
- The ecology of the Sierra Nevada mountain range
- The history of indigenous societies native to the Sierra Nevada

If you like, you can write some notes to get ready to present your group's work to the class.

### NOTES

## PART 2

**Directions:** Follow your teacher's directions and answer the questions in the test booklet.

---

**"The Wind Begun to Rock the Grass"  
by Emily Dickinson**

The wind begun to rock the grass  
With threatening tunes and low, —  
He flung a menace at the earth,  
A menace at the sky.

5     The leaves unhooked themselves from trees  
       And started all abroad;  
       The dust did scoop itself like hands  
       And throw away the road.

10    The wagons quickened on the streets,  
       The thunder hurried slow;  
       The lightning showed a yellow beak,  
       And then a livid claw.

15    The birds put up the bars to nests,  
       The cattle fled to barns;  
       There came one drop of giant rain,  
       And then, as if the hands

20    That held the dams had parted hold,  
       The waters wrecked the sky,  
       But overlooked my father's house,  
       Just quartering a tree.

## Option A

**Directions:** Prepare to participate in a class discussion about the excerpt by considering these questions.

---

- 1. In the poem, why are the leaves described as "unhook[ing] themselves" and dust as "scoop[ing] itself like hands"?**
- 2. How does the use of different pronouns in the excerpt and the poem affect the writers' depictions of nature?**
- 3. How is language used in the excerpt and the poem to create different images of a storm?**



## Option C

**Directions:** Reread the excerpt and the poem and review your notes and responses from earlier parts of this task. Respond to the prompt on the lines below.

---

**Read this quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Nature."**

Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or mourning piece.

**In a short response, explain how the poem and the excerpt reflect the quote. Use evidence from each text to support your response.**

If you like, you can write some notes to help you prepare your response.

### NOTES



### PART 3

**Directions:** Read the poem and the excerpt again. Follow your teacher's directions and answer the questions in the test booklet.

---

**"Nature, the Gentlest Mother"  
by Emily Dickinson**

Nature, the gentlest mother,  
Impatient of no child,  
The feeblest or the waywardest, —  
Her admonition mild

5     In forest and the hill  
       By traveller is heard,  
       Restraining rampant squirrel  
       Or too impetuous bird.

10    How fair her conversation,  
       A summer afternoon, —  
       Her household, her assembly;  
       And when the sun goes down

15    Her voice among the aisles  
       Incites the timid prayer  
       Of the minutest cricket,  
       The most unworthy flower.

20    When all the children sleep  
       She turns as long away  
       As will suffice to light her lamps;  
       Then, bending from the sky

       With infinite affection  
       And infiniter care,  
       Her golden finger on her lip,  
       Wills silence everywhere.

## Option A

**Directions:** Prepare to participate in a class discussion by considering these questions.

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1. How do the two poems by Dickinson use personification to depict nature in different ways?
2. How is the tone of "Nature, the gentlest mother" different from the tone of Muir's journal excerpt?

### Option B

**Directions:** Read "Nature, the gentlest mother" again and consider the following questions. Then write your answers in the graphic organizer.

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- **What is the theme in "Nature, the gentlest mother"?**
- **Which details from the text are most helpful in determining the theme?**

Theme

Textual Evidence to Support Theme	Textual Evidence to Support Theme	Textual Evidence to Support Theme

## EXTENDED WRITING PROMPT

**Directions:** Reread the excerpt and the poems and review your notes and responses from earlier parts of this task. Respond to this prompt in the space below.

**Compare and contrast how nature is portrayed in the excerpt from Muir and in the two poems by Dickinson, and explain how Muir and Dickinson use language to create and develop the character of nature. Use evidence from the excerpt and poems to support your response.**

Your response will be scored using this rubric.

### 4 Point Response

Student will:

- Make a precise, thorough, and insightful analysis of the ways that Muir and Dickinson use language and imagery to support themes about nature;
- Use well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient details from the excerpts that clearly support the analysis;
- Include major ideas and details from the passages;
- Create a cohesive organization that includes a concluding section that supports the analysis.

### 3 Point Response

Student will:

- Make a clear and accurate analysis of the ways in which Muir and Dickinson use language and imagery to support themes about nature;
- Use relevant details from the excerpts that clearly support the analysis;
- Create an organization that includes a concluding section.

### 2 Point Response

Student will:

- Make an analysis that lacks clarity or complete accuracy, OR fails to make a clear connection between nature and the theme of each passage;
- Exclude some major ideas or details;
- Focus on similarities or differences without analyzing how the authors use language and imagery;
- Fail to provide organization or a conclusion.

### 1 Point Response

Student will:

- Provide a vague or minimal statement about one or more of the excerpts with some support.

### 0 Point Response

- Student provides no response, or the response is off topic.

Lined writing area for student response.

A large rectangular box containing 20 horizontal lines for writing.

# CCR Performance Tasks

## ELA Grades 11-12: Writing About Literature

Nature in the Writings of John Muir and Emily Dickinson

Teacher Guide

### Passage Summary

Title	Text Type	Word Count	Lexile	Levels of Meaning/Purpose	Text Structure	Language Features	Knowledge Demands
Excerpt from <i>My First Summer in the Sierra</i> by John Muir	Literary Text	671	1340L	2	2	3	3
The Wind Begun to Rock the Grass	Literary Text	114	N/A	2	2	2	2
Nature the Gentlest Mother	Literary Text	103	N/A	3	2	3	2

### Passage Placement Rationale

Title	Placement Rationale
Excerpt from <i>My First Summer in the Sierra</i> by John Muir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both the Lexile and qualitative measures indicate that the text is appropriate for grades 11-12.</li> </ul>
The Wind Begun to Rock the Grass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The poem's complexity is appropriate for grades 11-12.</li> </ul>
Nature the Gentlest Mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The poem's complexity is appropriate for the grades 11-12.</li> </ul>

## Key to Qualitative Measures of Text Complexity

Measure	Levels of Meaning/Purpose	Text Structure	Language Features	Knowledge Demands
1	Theme or purpose of text is explicit.	Organization of text is obvious and generally chronological.	Language is explicit and literal; vocabulary is contemporary and familiar; the text contains mainly simple sentences.	The text describes familiar experiences or everyday knowledge.
2	Theme or purpose of text may be more complex or implied but still easy to identify.	<b>Literary text:</b> May include more than one storyline, and may be difficult to predict. <b>Informational text:</b> Connections between some ideas are implicit or subtle; organization of text is generally evident and sequential. Text features and graphics directly support comprehension of text.	Language is largely explicit and easy to understand; vocabulary is mostly contemporary and familiar; the text includes simple and compound sentences.	<b>Literary text:</b> The text describes experiences common to most readers and has a single theme. <b>Informational text:</b> The text includes some discipline- specific knowledge and both concrete and abstract ideas.
3	Theme or purpose of text is implicit and involves several layers of meaning.	<b>Literary text:</b> Organization may include subplots or time shifts. <b>Informational text:</b> Connections among an expanded range of ideas may be deeper and more subtle. Some text features and graphics may be essential to comprehension of text.	Language is complex and contains some abstract and/or figurative language; vocabulary is somewhat complex and is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic or academic; the text includes many complex sentences.	<b>Literary text:</b> The text describes experiences unfamiliar to most readers and includes complex themes. It may include some references to other texts or cultures. <b>Informational text:</b> The text contains moderate levels of discipline-specific content and may include challenging abstract concepts. It may make references to other texts or outside knowledge.
4	Theme or purpose of text is subtle, difficult to determine, and may involve several layers that are difficult to separate and interpret.	<b>Literary text:</b> Organization is intricate. <b>Informational text:</b> Organization is intricate. Connections among an extensive range of ideas are deep, and often implicit.	Language is dense and complex and contains abstract and/or figurative language; vocabulary is generally unfamiliar, archaic, or academic; the text includes mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts.	<b>Literary text:</b> The text describes experiences that are distinctly different for the common reader and includes sophisticated themes. It may make many references to other texts or cultures. <b>Informational text:</b> The text contains extensive discipline- specific content and a range of challenging abstract concepts. It may make many references to other texts or outside knowledge.

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## About the Teacher Guide

This document contains support materials for the *Grade 11-12 Writing About Literature: Nature in the Writings of John Muir and Emily Dickinson* task. This includes:

- (a) An overview of the task
- (b) The standards addressed by this task, including detailed descriptions of the standards
- (c) The scoring rubrics, including sample student responses
- (d) Questions to stimulate further discussion
- (e) Optional extension activities

These specifications are included to help you find the specific causes of student errors and thus guide you in your intervention and reteach strategies.

### PTE8 Grades 11-12 Writing about Literature

## DOK Level and Consortia Claims

### DOK Level: 4

This performance task provides evidence to support the following claims:

#### SBAC claims

##### Primary claim

<b>Claim 2:</b> Students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences.
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##### Secondary claims

<b>Claim 1:</b> Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.	Parts 1, 2, and 3
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<b>Claim 3:</b> Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.	Parts 1, 2, and 3
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#### PARCC claims

##### Primary claim

<b>Major Claim II: Writing</b> —Students write effectively when using and/or analyzing sources.
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##### Secondary claim

<b>Sub Claim I.1: Reading Literature</b> —Students demonstrate comprehension and draw evidence from readings of grade-level, complex literary text.	Parts 1, 2, and 3
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## Overview of Performance Task

**MAJOR OBJECTIVE:** Students will write an extended response to a prompt that asks them to compare attitudes towards nature shown in works by John Muir and Emily Dickinson.

### PRIMARY STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

STANDARD ID	STANDARD DESCRIPTION
W.11-12.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
RL.11-12.9	Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

### Grade 11-12 Writing About Literature: Nature in the Writings of John Muir and Emily Dickinson

The American Romantic movement drew heavily from what writers and artists saw as the power of the natural world. While inspiring people to strong feeling, nature also was used to represent emotion; nature itself appears as a strong character in Romantic writing, whether benevolent and gentle or moody and dangerous. The power and freedom of nature not only continued to inspire writers who followed the Romantics, but became established as important motifs in American literature.

Two important writers of the 1800s, John Muir and Emily Dickinson, were inspired by and wrote about nature in different ways. John Muir, the famous naturalist, writes in *My First Summer in the Sierra* of being overwhelmed by joy while adventuring in the wilderness of the Sierra Nevada. Emily Dickinson, who never left her hometown, offers contrasting views in "Nature, the gentlest mother" and "The wind begun to rock the grass." While Muir is in awe, Dickinson shows two faces of nature: the tender caretaker and the violent destroyer.

By analyzing the excerpt and the poems, students will be able to determine the themes and trace how the authors used language and imagery to develop the themes.

The task consists of three parts; all parts involve student production of work. Parts 1 and 2 include options for activities that may involve group activities or may be completed independently. Parts 1 and 2 lead to the major objective of the performance task: to have the student write explanatory text that draws evidence from literature.

**TEACHER GUIDE****Part 1****CORE TASK**

Read the excerpt from John Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra*.

In addition to performing the CORE TASK, select one or more of these options:

**Option A**

Students discuss the excerpt.

**Option B**

Students respond to questions about the excerpt.

**Option C**

Students research a related topic and report to the class.

**Part 2****CORE TASK**

Read Emily Dickinson's "Nature, the gentlest mother."

In addition to performing the CORE TASK, select one or more of these options:

**Option A**

Students discuss the main themes of both the excerpt and the poem.

**Option B**

Students complete a graphic organizer comparing and contrasting the use of language in the excerpt and the poem.

**Option C**

Students write a paragraph to explain the mystery of nature as described in both the excerpt and the poem.

**Part 3****CORE TASK**

Read Emily Dickinson's "The wind begun to rock the grass."

In addition to performing the CORE TASK, select one or more of these options:

**Option A**

Students discuss the theme and use of language in all three texts.

**Option B**

Students plan the writing response by completing a graphic organizer identifying the theme of "The wind begun to rock the grass" and three examples of how the language in the poem supports the theme.

**Extended Writing Prompt**

Students respond to the writing prompt by comparing and contrasting how the use of language supports the theme in the excerpt and the poems.

## PART 1 Overview

Part 1 focuses on an excerpt from John Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra* and addresses the following general objective.

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will analyze *My First Summer in the Sierra*.

### CORE TASK

Read the excerpt from *My First Summer in the Sierra*.

In addition to performing the CORE TASK, select one or more of these options:

#### Option A

Students analyze the text in a class discussion.

#### Option B

Students write responses to questions about the text.

#### Option C

Students research a topic related to the excerpt and report to the class.

### STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

The tasks in part 1 are aligned with the following standards.

#### PRIMARY STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Standard ID	Standard Description	Where Addressed
RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.	Options A, B
RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.	Options A, B
RL.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)	Options A, B

#### SECONDARY STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Standard ID	Standard Description	Where Addressed
SL.11-12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Option A

**PROCEDURE for Part 1****CORE TASK**

Provide students with a short introduction to John Muir and his writings. Your introduction should include biographical information about John Muir:

- Born in Scotland, he moved to Wisconsin as a child and soon developed a fierce love of nature;
- After an accident almost blinded him as a young man, he was inspired to study and explore the wilderness. He walked 1,000 miles from Indiana to Florida and later traveled to California;
- He was overwhelmed by the beauty of Yosemite and soon returned to work and live there. He studied the wildlife and geology of the area and described this period in *My First Summer in the Sierra*;
- He devoted the rest of his life to preservationist efforts, ultimately using his influence to push Congress to establish Yosemite as a national park. He later co-founded the Sierra Club, an influential environmental organization, and led several more preservationist campaigns until his death in 1914.

In addition, your introduction should include background information on the American Romantic view of nature:

- Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement which originated in late-eighteenth-century Europe and spread to America;
- Romantics valued creativity, self-reliance, and individuality, and shunned conformity. The movement emphasized the importance of passionate emotion as opposed to the cold rationality of science;
- Nature was often the subject of Romantic art and literature, the untamed beauty and mystery of the wilderness appealing to the movement's values. An intimate connection with nature was considered righteous and ideal.

Inform students that this excerpt is from the journal Muir kept while herding sheep in the Sierra Nevada and describes one of the first days of his journey. Instruct students to read the text.

**PROCEDURE for Part 1: Option A**

Organize a classroom discussion about the passage. Ask students to take notes during the discussion. These discussion notes will be used to complete other parts of the overall task and as a work product that can be evaluated.

**Use the following questions to stimulate discussion:**

1. How does Muir's background as a naturalist contribute to his strong reaction to the wilderness?

**Possible Response:** *His scientific understanding allows him to better appreciate the details and complexity of mountain wildlife, as well as to describe different species vividly and accurately in his journal.*

2. What does Muir mean when he describes himself as feeling "transparent as glass" when surrounded by nature?

**Possible Response:** *He feels connected to everything around him, as if he were a part of the natural world alongside "the air and trees, streams and rocks."*

3. Why is Muir particularly impressed by the cedar he describes near the end of the passage?

**Possible Response:** *Its picturesque boughs inspire him with an image of taking peaceful shelter from the rain.*

4. Why does Muir feel that he would never be lonely if he were to stay in the mountains forever?

**Possible Response:** *He is so overwhelmed by the beauty of the mountains that he feels his love for nature would only magnify his sense of connection to all the people he cares about.*

**SCORING RUBRIC for Part 1: Option A**

Use the following rubric to evaluate students' participation in the discussion.

**4 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have meaningful notes for each question addressed in the discussion, which may not be limited to the list in the prompt;
- Participate in the discussion by asking relevant questions and contributing meaningful responses.

**3 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have notes for most questions addressed in the discussion;
- Participate in the discussion by asking relevant questions and/or contributing meaningful responses.

**2 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have notes for some questions addressed in the discussion;
- Participate in the discussion by asking questions and/or contributing responses.

**1 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have few, if any, notes for the questions addressed in the discussion;
- Fail to participate in the discussion in a meaningful way.

**0 Point Response**

Student provides no response, or the response is off topic.

**PROCEDURE for Part 1: Option B**

Ask students to write a short response to the questions discussed in OPTION A. This activity can serve as a review of OPTION A or replace OPTION A.

1. How does Muir's background as a naturalist contribute to his strong reaction to the wilderness?
2. What does Muir mean when he describes himself as feeling "transparent as glass" when surrounded by nature?
3. Why is Muir particularly impressed by the cedar he describes near the end of the passage?
4. Why does Muir feel that he would never be lonely if he were to stay in the mountains forever?

**SCORING RUBRIC for Part 1: Option B**

Use the following rubric to evaluate students' responses to the questions.

**4 Point Response**

Student will:

- Answer the four questions accurately and insightfully;
- Explain how various details and types of figurative language contribute to the development of main ideas;
- Exclude details that do not contribute to the main ideas.

**3 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide mostly accurate answers to three questions;
- Explain how some details and types of figurative language contribute to the development of main ideas;
- Include a few details that do not clearly contribute to the main ideas.

**2 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide mostly accurate answers to two questions;
- Explain how at least one detail or type of figurative language contributes to the development of main ideas;
- Include several details that do not clearly contribute to the main ideas.

**1 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a mostly accurate answer to one question; OR
- Use mostly direct quotations from the text in an attempt to show development of central ideas.

**0 Point Response**

Student will provide no response, the response is incorrect or irrelevant, or the student simply quotes the text.

**PROCEDURE for Part 1: Option C**

Ask students to conduct research related to the main ideas and figures in the text. This activity can replace OPTION A or OPTION B.

Instruct students to work in small groups of 3-4 people to research and report to the class information about one of the following main topics:

- John Muir's youth and early relationship with nature
- John Muir's scientific discoveries and contributions
- The experiences of John Muir on his thousand-mile walk
- The environmental activism of John Muir
- The ecology of the Sierra Nevada mountain range
- The history of indigenous societies native to the Sierra Nevada

**SCORING RUBRIC for Part 1: Option C**

Use the following rubric to evaluate students' presentations.

**4 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a thorough report on the assigned topic with well-chosen details in support;
- Present the report in a focused and coherent manner.

**3 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a general report on the assigned topic with details in support;
- Present the report in an appropriate manner; the presentation shows some focus and cohesion.

**2 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a partial report on the assigned topic with some details;
- Present the report, but the report lacks cohesion or focus.

**1 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a minimal or limited report.

**0 Point Response**

- Student will provide no response, the response is incorrect or irrelevant, or the student simply reads from existing text.

## PART 2 Overview

Part 2 focuses on "The wind begun to rock the grass" by Emily Dickinson, as well as the excerpt by John Muir, and addresses the following general objective.

**OBJECTIVE:** Student will analyze a poem by Emily Dickinson.

### CORE TASK

Read the poem by Emily Dickinson.

In addition to performing the CORE TASK, select one or more of these options.

#### Option A

Students discuss "The wind begun to rock the grass" by Emily Dickinson and analyze the use of language in both the poem and the excerpt by John Muir.

#### Option B

Students complete a chart outlining specific uses of language and their intended effects in both the poem and the excerpt.

#### Option C

Students read a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Nature" and write a short response integrating both the poem and the excerpt.

### STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

The tasks in part 2 are aligned with the following standards.

#### PRIMARY STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Standard ID	Standard Description	Where Addressed
RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.	Options A, B, C
RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.	Options B, C
RL.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)	Options A, B
W.11-12.9a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. Apply grades 11-12 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics").	Options A, B, C

**SECONDARY STANDARDS ALIGNMENT**

Standard ID	Standard Description	Where Addressed
SL.11-12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Option A

**PROCEDURE for Part 2****CORE TASK**

Remind students of the following points made before Part 1 about the American Romantic movement and the Romantic view of nature:

- The American Romantic movement drew from European ideas and reached its peak in the mid-19th century;
- Romantic art and literature emphasized individuality, sincerity, and emotion, particularly the awe inspired by nature.

Provide context for the students by providing biographical information about Emily Dickinson:

- She was born into an influential Massachusetts family in 1830;
- She excelled in school but only briefly pursued higher education, returning home after a few months;
- She wrote short poems prolifically, often using unconventional capitalization and punctuation;
- Throughout early adulthood, she became increasingly withdrawn from society, eventually carrying on most friendships through correspondence and rarely leaving the family home;
- Only a handful of her poems were published during her lifetime, and were heavily edited to conform to standard usage;
- After her death in 1886, her sister discovered hundreds of unpublished poems, which were then collected into volumes and published.

Instruct students to read the texts.

**PROCEDURE for Part 2: Option A**

Organize a classroom discussion about the passage. Ask students to take notes during the discussion. These discussion notes will be used to complete other parts of the overall task and as a work product that can be evaluated.

**Use the following questions to stimulate discussion:**

1. In the poem, why are the leaves described as "unhook[ing] themselves" and dust as "scoop[ing] itself like hands"?

**Possible Response:** *This language creates an image of many elements of nature playing active roles in the storm instead of being passively affected by it.*

OR

**Possible Response:** *This language creates an image of the elements of nature as being alive and acting as humans might.*

2. How does the use of different pronouns in the excerpt and the poem affect the writers' depictions of nature?

**Possible Response:** *In the excerpt, neutral pronouns allow Muir to describe nature in a way that is both appreciative and scientific. In the poem, the use of male pronouns makes the wind seem like a human character, one that is capable of being both aware and hostile.*

3. How is language used in the excerpt and the poem to create different images of a storm?

**Possible Response:** *The excerpt uses comforting imagery and focuses on the pleasant shelter a tree provides, while the poem focuses on the destructive power of the storm and the fear of everyone in its path.*

**SCORING RUBRIC for Part 2: Option A**

Use the following rubric to evaluate students' participation in the discussion.

**4 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have meaningful notes for each question addressed in the discussion, which may not be limited to the list in the prompt;
- Participate in the discussion by asking relevant questions and contributing meaningful responses.

**3 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have notes for most questions addressed in the discussion;
- Participate in the discussion by asking relevant questions and/or contributing meaningful responses.

**2 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have notes for some questions addressed in the discussion;
- Participate in the discussion by asking questions and/or contributing responses.

**1 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have few, if any, notes for the questions addressed in the discussion;
- Fail to participate in the discussion in a meaningful way.

**0 Point Response**

Student provides no response, or the response is off topic.

**PROCEDURE for Part 2: Option B**

Ask students to reread the poem and then to complete the organizer.

Possible student responses:

Excerpt	Trait	Textual evidence to support the trait
<i>My First Summer in the Sierra</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Majestic</li> <li>2. Comforting</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Muir is overcome with joy in the mountains and claims their beauty to be as necessary as food.</li> <li>2. "It would be delightful to be storm-bound beneath one of these noble, hospitable, inviting old trees, its broad sheltering arms bent down like a tent."</li> </ol>
"The wind begun to rock the grass"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frightening</li> <li>2. Destructive</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The sights and sounds of the gathering storm drive people and animals alike to quickly take shelter.</li> <li>2. "The waters wrecked the sky" or "Just quartering a tree."</li> </ol>

**PROCEDURE for Part 2: Option C**

Provide context by explaining that Ralph Waldo Emerson, a leader of the Transcendentalist movement, was a contemporary of Muir and Dickinson. Emerson's writing deeply influenced both authors.

Provide students with the following quote from Emerson's essay "Nature."

"Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or mourning piece."

Ask students to write short responses that examine how the excerpt and poem reflect Emerson's quote, citing evidence from each text.

**SCORING RUBRIC for Part 2: Option C**

Use the following rubric to evaluate students' writing.

**4 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a response that demonstrates an understanding of the texts and clearly explains how the quote relates to each text;
- Include major ideas and details from the excerpt and poem;
- Exclude minor details that do not support the central task.

**3 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a response that explains how the quote relates to each text;
- Include the main ideas from the excerpt and poem;
- Include a few details that do not clearly support the central task.

**2 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a response that explains how the quote relates to one text;
- Exclude some major ideas or details;
- Include details that do not clearly support the central task.

**1 Point Response**

Student will:

- Restate the quote without reflecting on the significance to the excerpt and poem; OR
- Use mostly direct quotations from the texts in an attempt to relate them to the quote.

**0 Point Response**

Student will provide no response, the response is incorrect or irrelevant, or the student simply quotes the text.

## PART 3 Overview

Part 3 focuses on the excerpt from *My First Summer in the Sierra*, "The wind begun to rock the grass," and "Nature, the gentlest mother," and addresses the following general objective.

**OBJECTIVE:** Student will analyze how the use of language in the excerpt and the poems contributes to and supports the themes.

### CORE TASK

Reread the excerpt from *My First Summer in the Sierra* and "The wind begun to rock the grass," and read "Nature, the gentlest mother" by Emily Dickinson.

In addition to performing the CORE TASK, select one or more of these options:

#### Option A

Students discuss the theme and use of language in the poem in comparison with the other two passages.

#### Option B

Students plan their writing responses by completing graphic organizers identifying the poem's theme and three examples of how the language in the poem supports the theme.

#### Writing Prompt

All students write extended responses to a writing prompt that are based on the texts.

### STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

The tasks in part 3 are aligned with the following standards.

#### PRIMARY STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Standard ID	Standard Description	Where Addressed
RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.	Option B Extended Writing Prompt
RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.	Option B Extended Writing Prompt
RL.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)	Options A, B Extended Writing Prompt
W.11-12.9a	Apply grades 11-12 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics").	Options A, B Extended Writing Prompt

**SECONDARY STANDARDS ALIGNMENT**

<b>Standard ID</b>	<b>Standard Description</b>	<b>Where Addressed</b>
SL.11-12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Option A

**PROCEDURE for Part 3****CORE TASK**

Orient students to the poem by Emily Dickinson that they are about to read.

Instruct students to read the poem.

**PROCEDURE for Part 3: Option A**

Organize a classroom discussion about the poem as compared to the other two passages. The discussion should encourage a close reading of the poem and facilitate students' understanding. Ask students to take notes during the discussion. These discussion notes will be used to complete other parts of the overall task and as a work product that can be evaluated.

**Use the following questions to stimulate discussion.**

1. How do the two poems by Dickinson use personification to depict nature in different ways?

**Possible Response:** *In "Nature, the gentlest mother," nature is compared to a kind caretaker who watches over all plants and animals as if they were her children. In "The wind begun to rock the grass," these same "children" flee in fear, as nature is shown as a frightening character.*

2. How is the tone of "Nature, the gentlest mother" different from the tone of Muir's journal excerpt?

**Possible Response:** *Though nature is praised in both texts, Muir is more emotionally overcome and describes nature's beauty with awe and wonder, going so far as to say that he feels he needs it to survive. Meanwhile, "Nature, the gentlest mother" focuses on the comforting order of nature and is more subdued and detached in tone.*

**SCORING RUBRIC for Part 3: Option A**

Use the following rubric to evaluate students' participation in the discussion.

**4 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have meaningful notes for each question addressed in the discussion, which may not be limited to the list in the prompt;
- Participate in the discussion by asking relevant questions and contributing meaningful responses.

**3 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have notes for most questions addressed in the discussion;
- Participate in the discussion by asking relevant questions and/or contributing meaningful responses.

**2 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have notes for some questions addressed in the discussion;
- Participate in the discussion by asking questions and/or contributing responses.

**1 Point Response**

Student will:

- Have few, if any, notes for the questions addressed in the discussion;
- Fail to participate in the discussion in a meaningful way.

**0 Point Response**

Student provides no response, or the response is off topic.

**PROCEDURE for Part 3: Option B**

Ask students to reread the poem and then to complete the organizer.

Possible student responses:

Determining Theme in "Nature, the gentlest mother" by Emily Dickinson

Theme
Nature is like a protective and forgiving mother who rules over the earth and cares for all living things, which are like her children.

Textual Evidence to Support Theme	Textual Evidence to Support Theme	Textual Evidence to Support Theme
She keeps order in her "household" by mildly scolding unruly animals.	The sound of her voice is comforting and beloved to even the lowliest creatures.	The "golden finger" in the last line suggests both affection and authority.

**PROCEDURE for Part 3: Extended Writing Prompt**

(IN STUDENT BOOK: WILL READ, “Reread the excerpt and the poems, and review your notes and responses from earlier parts of this task. Respond to this prompt in the space below.

Compare and contrast how nature is portrayed in the excerpt from Muir and in the two poems by Dickinson, and explain how Muir and Dickinson use language to create and develop the character of nature. Use evidence from the excerpt and poems to support your response.”)

Tell the students to respond to the writing prompt in their test booklets.

**SCORING RUBRIC for Part 3: Extended Writing Prompt**

Use the following rubric to evaluate students’ responses.

**4 Point Response**

Student will:

- Make a precise, thorough, and insightful analysis of the ways in which Muir and Dickinson use language and imagery to support themes about nature;
- Use well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient details from the excerpts that clearly support the analysis;
- Include major ideas and details from the passages;
- Create a cohesive organization that includes a concluding section that supports the analysis.

**3 Point Response**

Student will:

- Make a clear and accurate analysis of the ways in which Muir and Dickinson use language and imagery to support themes about nature;
- Use relevant details from the excerpts that clearly support the analysis;
- Create an organization that includes a concluding section.

**2 Point Response**

Student will:

- Make an analysis that lacks clarity or complete accuracy, OR fails to make a clear connection between nature and the theme of each passage;
- Exclude some major ideas or details;
- Focus on similarities or differences without analyzing how the authors use language and imagery;
- Fail to provide organization or a conclusion.

**1 Point Response**

Student will:

- Provide a vague or minimal statement about one or more of the excerpts with some support.

**0 Point Response**

Student provides no response, or the response is off topic.

**OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES for Part 3**

W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, and focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of language standards 1-3, up to and including grades 11-12.)

Ask the students to revise and edit their responses to the extended prompt based on teacher or peer reviews.