

TEACHING THE LITERATURE

ing and Analyzing

y Analysis **APHORISM**

orism is a brief statement that es a truth about life. "Self-e" is full of statements that e classified as aphorisms. As s read, they should write down ms.

e Unit Three Resource Book p. 13
more practice.

Reading **SUMMARIZING**

ducing summaries of texts s identifying main ideas and ing details. Ask students to rize the first two paragraphs of "Self-Reliance" using this technique.

e Response: Each person must ly rely on himself or herself, e nothing good comes of envy-mitating someone else, and a can only profit from his or her rk. One must accept one's place in the world and have at God is working through one-unique way.

e Unit Three Resource Book p. 12
more practice.

FOR READING

sible Response: One's own s must be honored as if they om God; following your nature l in order to be a self-reliant al.

sible Response: It is easy to our own ideas when alone and rm when you are with others. person refuses to conform even vd.

FROM

Self-Reliance

RALPH
WALDO
EMERSON

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. . . .

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. . . .

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?" my friend suggested—"But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. . . .

WORDS
TO
KNOW

bestowed (bĭ-stōd') adj. applied; used bestow v.
predominate (prĭ-dŏm'a-nāt') v. to have controlling power or influence
nonconformist (nŏn'kən-fŏr'mĭst) n. one who does not follow generally accepted beliefs, customs, or practices
absolve (ab-zŏlv') v. to clear of guilt or blame

GUIDE FOR READING



9 the divine providence: God.

12-13 betraying . . . trustworthy: revealing their awareness that God.

16 immortal palms: everlasting triumph and honor. In ancient times, people carried palm leaves as a symbol of victory, success, or joy.

19 suffrage: approval; support.

21 wont to importune me: accustomed to trouble me.

26-29 What is implied by Emerson's use of the word sacred? Why does he believe that one should follow his or her own nature?

29 after my constitution: consistent with my physical and mental nature.

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ching Options



Preteaching Vocabulary

USING CONTEXT CLUES Students can determine the meanings of unfamiliar words by using context clues that suggest cause-and-effect relationships. Write the following sentence on the chalkboard and ask a volunteer to identify a cause-and-effect relationship in it. Have students use the meaning of the sentence to suggest meanings for the word *bestow*.

The wealthy family plans to *bestow* money on the museum so that it can expand and add new art.

Cause: Money will be bestowed.

Effect: The museum will expand as a result of money being bestowed.

Exercises Ask students to use their understanding of cause-and-effect relationships to figure out the meanings of underlined terms.

1. Her ideas seem to predominate, so she will probably win the election next week.
2. After the judge decided to absolve the prisoner, he was released from prison.
3. Because she has an aversion to loud noise and crowds, she never attends concerts.

Use Unit Three Resource Book p. 14 for additional support.

A lesson on using context clues appears on p. 326 in the Pupil's Edition.



Kindred Spirits (1849), Asher B. Durand. Oil on canvas, collection of The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.


Customizing Instruction

Less Proficient Readers

Set a Purpose Have students read and learn Emerson's beliefs about conformity, or refusing to do what one else does.

Students Acquiring English


Students may find Emerson's long, complex sentences challenging. They may wish to help them paraphrase certain passages aloud to ensure comprehension.

 Use **Spanish Study Guide** for additional support, pp. 91–93.

Gifted and Talented

Students may be interested in reading more of "Self-Reliance" and evaluating the relevance of Emerson's ideas to high school students today.

Students Acquiring English

 Explain that *arduous* means "difficult." Ask students to explain the difference between *actual life* and *intellectual life*. Help them paraphrase this sentence.

30 **W**hat I must do is all that concerns me, not what the
people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and
in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction
35 between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you
will always find those who think they know what is your duty
better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the
world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but
the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with
perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. . . .



33 meanness: the state of being inferior in quality, character, or value.

35–38 What does Emerson say is easy to do? What does he say a great person is able to do?



SELF-RELIANCE 365



Viewing and Representing

Kindred Spirits by Asher B. Durand

ART APPRECIATION Asher Durand (1796–1886) was a leader of the Hudson River School of painting. These artists portrayed the grandeur of nature and the concept of a wilderness in which people were an insignificant intrusion in the landscape.

Instruction Encourage students to analyze the ideas represented in this painting. How are natural elements portrayed? What does the composition of the painting suggest about the importance of people in this landscape?

Possible Responses: The people are small and

not the focus of the painting. Their faces are not clear, while the details of their natural surroundings—running water, contour of the rocks, leaves on the trees—are quite clear and occupy most of the canvas.

Application What do you suppose the people are talking about? What sounds do you imagine the people are hearing? If you were in that setting, what would you feel?

Possible Response: Accept all reasonable responses. Students might say the people hear the sounds of moving water and birds.

SELF-RELIANCE

ng and Analyzing

Analysis **APHORISM**

students to explain what makes
ement particularly memorable.

Response: the strong image
world "whipping" someone who
fit in

FOR READING

able Responses: displeasure of
sour faces; aversion

able Response: because incon-
would expose us to
from others

LITERARY LINK

g Skills and Strategies: RE

udents compare the theme of
erpt from "Memoirs" to that of
liance"

Response: The theme of
irs" is that truth is the most
nt thing, even when it is diffi-
ear. In "Self-Reliance," Emerson
es a similar idea in his empha-
inding what is true for oneself
ique individual.

et Fuller

ly a journalist and critic, Fuller
The Dial, the journal of
n's Transcendental Club. Fuller's
t views are expressed in her
Woman in the Nineteenth
published in 1845.

A For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure.
And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour
face. The by-standers look askance on him in the public
street or in the friend's parlor. If this **aversion** had its origin in
contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home
with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like
their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as
the wind blows and a newspaper directs. . . .

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consis-
tency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of
others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past
acts, and we are loth to disappoint them. . . .

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored
by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consis-
tency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well
concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you
think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow
thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you
said today.—"Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood."—
Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misun-
derstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus,
and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that
ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood. ♦

39-42 What does Emerson say is
one consequence of being a
nonconformist?

41 **askance** (e-skāns'): with
disapproval, suspicion, or distrust.

47-52 Why does consistency scare
us from trusting ourselves?

50 **loth** (lōth): unwilling; reluctant.

51 **hobgoblin**: a source of fear or
dread. Notice that Emerson does
not criticize all consistency, only
"foolish" consistency that does not
allow for change or progress.

52 **divines**: religious leaders.

58-60 **Pythagoras . . . Newton**:
great thinkers whose radical
theories and viewpoints caused
controversy.

LITERARY LINK

from *Memoirs*

MARGARET FULLER

In the chamber
of death, I prayed
in very early years,
"Give me truth;
cheat me by no illusion."
O, the granting of
this prayer is
sometimes terrible to me!

I walk over the
burning ploughshares,¹
and they sear²
my feet. Yet nothing but
the truth will do.

1. **ploughshares** (plou'shārz): the cutting blades
of plows.

2. **sear**: scorch; burn.

WORDS
TO
KNOW **aversion** (e-vūr'zhən) *n.* a strong dislike

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aching Options

NIZE THE AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW AND

SE Some standardized tests ask stu-
to show that they can recognize the
's point of view and purpose. To provide
ts with practice, read aloud or write on
alkboard the following questions:
can tell from "Self-Reliance" that the
or believes some traditions and old
trines
are worth preserving and using as a
guide for behavior.

Assessment Standardized Test Practice

- help shape the lives of great thinkers.
- keep people from following their own
impulses and seeking out their own
truths.
- help him look within himself to find his
own place and function in the world.

Answer: C

- The author's main purpose in warning
people against "foolish consistency" is to
A. encourage people to be open-minded
and willing to contradict their past atti-

tudes.

- help people earn more respect among
their peers.
- encourage a return to traditional beliefs
and attitudes.
- warn people against listening too closely
to the inaccurate advice of others.

Answer: A

Reading Tips

Sprinkled throughout this essay are short statements of general truth or wisdom called **aphorisms**. One way to get the main points of what Emerson is saying is to look for these kinds of statements.

- Identify the sentences that sound like aphorisms to you. They will usually be fairly short.
- Restate the main idea of each aphorism in your own words.

As the essay begins . . .

- Emerson describes his belief in the importance of the individual.
- He outlines steps for becoming self-reliant and explains why people should become self-reliant.

What Does It Mean?

Imitation is suicide means that people should avoid copying what others do and think. Imitating others destroys a person's uniqueness and individuality.

FROM


Self-Reliance

Ralph Waldo Emerson

PREVIEW Ralph Waldo Emerson was a well-known writer and lecturer in the United States in the 19th century. He believed strongly in the need for every person to develop his or her potential as an individual. Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance" is a collection of his thoughts on the importance of the individual and the need to think independently.

FOCUS

In these paragraphs, Emerson explains what he means by an independent, or self-reliant, person.

 **WORK TIP** Underline the passages that you think contain the main ideas in these paragraphs. An example is highlighted.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. . . .

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. . . .

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who

WORDS TO KNOW

bestowed (bĭ-stōd') *adj.* applied; used **bestow** *v.*
predominating (prĭ-dŏm'ə-nāt'ing) *adj.* having controlling power or influence **predominate** *v.*
nonconformist (nŏn'kən-fŏr'mĭst) *n.* one who does not follow generally accepted beliefs, customs, or practices

GUIDE FOR READING

Use this guide for help with unfamiliar words and difficult passages.

11 **iron string**: the divine nature that is part of every person; self-knowledge
12 **the divine providence**: God
13–17 **great men . . . being**: Great men have always recognized and made the most of the particular strengths and unique characteristics of the time period they were born into. By doing so, they show their understanding that God (**the absolutely trustworthy**) is within them, working through them and controlling all parts of their lives.

English Learner Support

CULTURE

Individuality Emerson stresses the importance of *individuality* rather than *community*. Individuality is an important value in American culture.



MARK IT UP WORD POWER

Mark words that you'd like to add to your **Personal Word List**. After reading, you can record the words and their meanings beginning on page 476.

What Does It Mean?

Contemporaries means "people who are about the same age or who live in the same period of time."



MARK IT UP Reread Lines 11–18

Star one sentence that is an aphorism.


would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?" my friend suggested—"But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. . . .

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. . . .

Pause  Reflect

FOCUS

In this section, Emerson talks about obstacles facing the person who is trying to be self-reliant.

 **WORK IT UP!** Underline one obstacle that is created by other people and one that comes from within an individual.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The by-standers look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversion had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but

WORDS
TO
KNOW

absolve (əb-zōlv') *v.* to clear of guilt or blame
aversion (ə-vûr'zhən) *n.* a strong dislike

GUIDE FOR READING

19 **immortal palms**: everlasting triumph and honor. In ancient times, people carried palm leaves as a symbol of victory, success, or joy.

22 **suffrage**: approval; support.

24 **wont to importune me**: accustomed to trouble me.

33 **after my constitution**: goes along with my physical and mental nature.

37 **meanness**: the state of being inferior in quality, character, or value.

39–42 Emerson says it is easy to go along with popular opinion when you are with other people. It is also easy to follow your own ideas when you are alone. A great person, however, remains independent even in a crowd.

43–48 Emerson notes that those who are nonconformists will meet with negative reactions from other people.

47 **askance** (ə-skāns'): with disapproval, suspicion, or distrust.

Reading Check

How does Emerson describe a great person?

Reading Tip

Emerson's writing includes words and phrases not commonly used today. His sentences are also long and complex. Break up longer sentences into parts and summarize the main idea.

Pause Reflect

Look at the passages you underlined as you read. Two of Emerson's main ideas about self-reliance are

and

(Main Idea)

As the essay ends . . .

- Emerson explains that sometimes it is difficult to become self-reliant.
- Emerson encourages his readers by referring to great thinkers in history.

English Learner Support

LANGUAGE

Metaphor In the highlighted sentence, people's scorn and dislike toward the nonconformist are compared to a whipping.

the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. . . .

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them. . . .

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said today.—“Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.”— Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

Pause & Reflect

GUIDE FOR READING

58 **loth** (lôth): unwilling; reluctant

59 **hobgoblin**: a source of fear or dread

Notice that Emerson does not criticize all consistency, only "foolish" consistency that does not allow for change or progress.

60 **divines**: religious leaders

67-70 **Pythagoras . . . Newton**: great thinkers whose new theories and viewpoints caused controversy.

What Does It Mean?

Emerson uses the words *sour faces* to describe the public's negative feelings toward those who choose not to conform to societal norms and beliefs. The wind is compared to the public's views, which change depending on the views of outside authorities such as newspapers. Emerson infers that the public thinks neither deeply nor independently.

Pause Reflect

1. Look back at the two obstacles that you underlined as you read. The obstacles are _____

and _____

(Clarify)

2. Emerson states that great thinkers may change their minds and seem to contradict themselves as they develop new ideas. According to Emerson, is such willingness to change a good or a bad trait? *Good/Bad*, because _____

(Infer)

CHALLENGE

Based on this essay, does Emerson think it would be easy or difficult for most people to become self-reliant? Mark passages that give you clues about his view.

(Author's Perspective)