



Henry Hikes to Fitchburg

Interdisciplinary Extension Activities


Exciting opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction are interwoven throughout this short, but powerful book. These activities would work well as part of a larger unit and could be modified for grades three through seven.




Biology Biology is defined as “the study of life.” Make a list of ten living things Henry observed as he hiked to Fitchburg. Categorize the things on your list into two groups: ANIMAL and PLANT. Which list is longer? Why do you think this is?



Ecology Henry David Thoreau was an ecologist. He studied the relationships of living things to their environment. (In fact, he spent two years living alone in a small cabin near Walden Pond. Here he kept his well-known journal recording his observations of the natural life surrounding him.) Create a journal concerning your environment. For two weeks, write about the “natural” things that you observe in the world around you. When does the sun rise? What is the weather like? What living things can be found? How do things change?



Economics *Opportunity Cost* is a term used in economics. It is defined as “the next best alternative that is given up when a choice is made.” What do you think was Henry’s friend’s opportunity cost when he remained in town to work for the train fare? What do you think Henry gave up when he chose to hike rather than travel on the faster train? Can you find any other examples of opportunity cost in the story?



History Henry’s friend remained in Concord, Massachusetts to earn money for a train ticket. While working he fills Mrs. Alcott’s wood box, pulls weeds in Mr. Hawthorne’s garden, and moves bookcases in Mr. Emerson’s study. These are the names of famous writers, thinkers, and educators. Using the encyclopedia or Internet, find out who these people are and why they are well known. (It will help to know that this story takes place in the 1850s.)



Math The author, D. B. Johnson, keeps a running total of the amount of money Henry's friend has earned toward his train fare. Henry's friend must do eight chores to earn the ninety cents he needs for a train ticket. Today a one-way ticket for a thirty-mile train trip costs around \$26.00. How many odd jobs do you think you would need to do to make enough money for a train ticket? List the jobs and estimate the time it would take and the income you would receive. It's probably going to be much easier to earn enough money for a train ticket in the twenty-first century than it was in the nineteenth century. Why do you think this is the case?



Music Create a song based on the book's content. Use a well-known tune such as "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush," "The Farmer in the Dell," or "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat."



Philosophy Henry David Thoreau was a transcendentalist. Transcendentalism is philosophy that emphasizes thoughtful reflections, self-reliance, and the importance of the connection between people and nature. What are some of the examples in the story that show that Henry was thoughtful, self-reliant, and enjoyed observing nature?



Poetry Choose one of D. B. Johnson's illustrations and write a haiku that either reflects the character's physical movement or natural elements in the setting. (A haiku is a three-lined poem containing five syllables in the first line, seven in the middle, and five in the last line.)



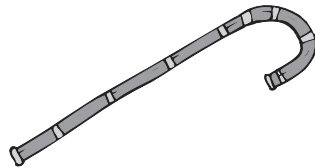
Writing D. B. Johnson illustrated this book using interesting perspectives and vibrant colors. He visually chronicled the activities of the two friends as they worked to reach their goal: getting to Fitchburg. If you open the book at any place and study the activities of the two friends on the pages opposite to each other, they seem to be having similar experiences. Select any pair of illustrations, and write a narrative describing what the two main characters are doing and how these activities mirror each other.



Henry and His Friend Game Cards



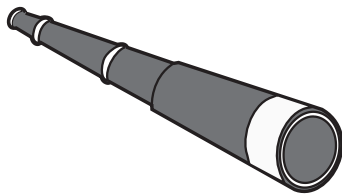
Pocket Watch



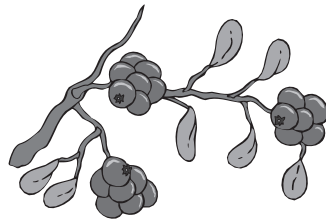
Walking Stick



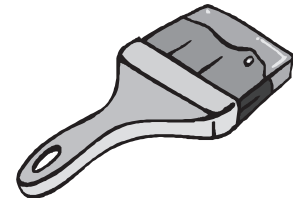
Bird's Nest



Spyglass



Berries



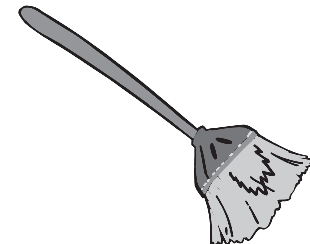
Paint Brush



Backpack



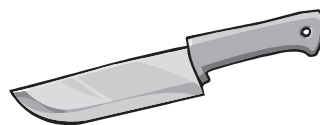
Magnifying Glass



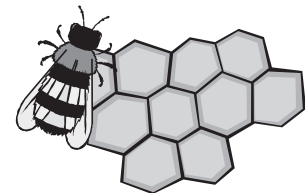
Broom



Journal



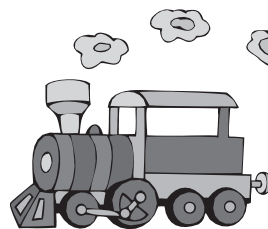
Knife



Honey



Wheelbarrow



Train



Shovel