Where will you choose to notice, wonder, and reflect?

Henry David Thoreau was a writer, philosopher, and activist. He wanted a place to notice, wonder, and reflect. Thoreau built a small cabin at Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts in the mid-1800s. While at Walden, Thoreau's time in nature inspired his thinking and writing.

Your "Walden" might look very different.

It could be a backyard, a park, or a favorite tree. You can choose any location. The important part is to be deliberate and pay attention.

This guide is for grown-ups and kids to explore the world together, just as Thoreau did.



Henry David Thoreau

Noticing means slowing down, looking closely, and discovering details in everyday things that you might not have seen before.

Ask Together
What do you see? Feel? Hear? Smell?

For Kids
Slow down. Use descriptive words to describe what you see.

For Grown-Ups
Pause. Let them answer first. Repeat what they say before adding your own thoughts.

Try Together
Find one thing you didn't see at first.



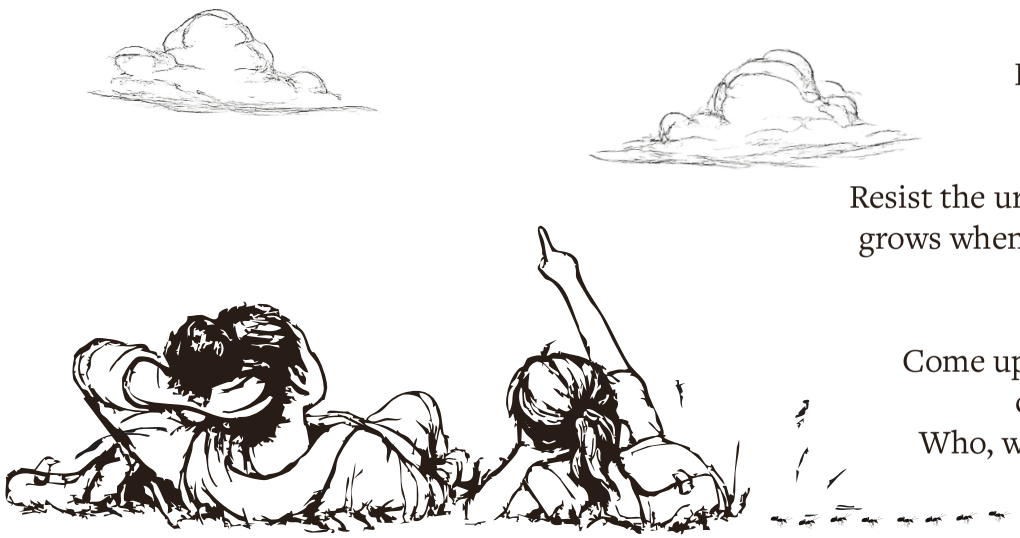
Wondering means asking questions, imagining possibilities, and thinking about what something could be, become, or do.

Ask Together
What do you see that makes you wonder?

For Kids
How did it end up here?

For Grown-Ups
Resist the urge to explain. Curiosity grows when answers aren't rushed.

Try Together
Come up with one question you can ask again and again. Who, what, when, where, why?



Reflecting means thinking about what you noticed and paying attention to how it felt.

Ask Together
What surprised you? Did you notice more at the end or the beginning?

For Kids
Think about what you experienced.

For Grown-Ups
Ask follow-up questions that begin with How or What or Why.

Try Together
Walk silently for one minute.



Come Back Again

Thoreau returned to the same place many times. That's how he noticed patterns and change. Come back another day.

What changed?
What stayed the same?
What do you notice now that you didn't before?

Reflection grows when we return.

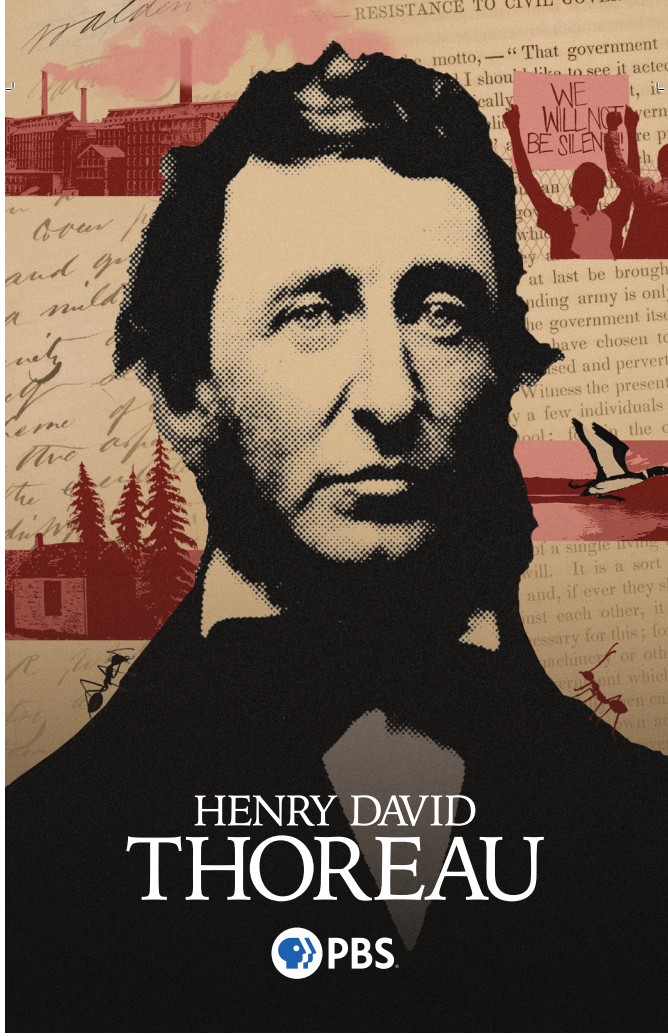
Where's Your Walden?

Created by The Walden Woods Project, ***Where's Your Walden?*** invites people to share how places in nature inspire them.

Scan the QR code to share a photo of your Walden and why it is important to you.

THINK LIKE THOREAU was developed by WUCF in partnership with The Walden Woods Project and WETA to accompany HENRY DAVID THOREAU, a three-part PBS series directed by Erik Ewers and Christopher Loren Ewers and executive produced by Ken Burns and Don Henley.

Major funding for HENRY DAVID THOREAU was provided by The Better Angels Society, Jeff Skoll, the Mansueto Foundation, Tyson Foods, and The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations. Funding was also provided by the Tyson Family Foundation, The Neil and Anna Rasmussen Foundation, and The Better Angels Society members: The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment and Mark A. Tracy. Additional funding was provided by Roxanne Quimby Foundation, Jim and Mona Mylen through The HeartSpace Fund, and Elizabeth Kenny.



THINK LIKE THOREAU

An intergenerational field guide for noticing, wondering, and reflecting

pbs.org/thoreau