

Title: Meditative Moments in Travels with Charley and A Sand County Almanac

Introduction: The idea for this lesson plan arose from my experience as a participant in the NEH John Steinbeck, Social Critic and Ecologist institute in the summer of 2022. It is designed for an elective ecology class but could be adapted for other subject areas as well. Inherent in the design of this lesson is the hope to explore some important ideas in ecology found in each book. The design can be modified or extended based in the needs and interests of the teachers and students. During this lesson plan there will be some background research of the individual writers, of the specific texts, and of the species incorporated in the reading selections.

Texts:

Travels with Charley by John Steinbeck

A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold

Part One:

Task One: Use the internet to research and record five different images of Aldo Leopold. Try to find images from different points in his life.

Task Two: Use the internet to find and record ten facts about Aldo Leopold. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

Task Three: Use the internet to find and record ten facts about the book A Sand County Almanac. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

Task Four: Use the internet to find and record ten facts about the gray wolf. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

Task Five: Research and record five different images of the gray wolf.

Task Six: Use the internet to research and record five species not already mentioned that the gray wolf interacts with and briefly describe this interaction.

Task Seven: Observe the following video and record ten facts about the video about Aldo Leopold. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

[Aldo Leopold: A Prophet for All Seasons - YouTube](#)

Task Eight: Read together as a class the following excerpt from A Sand County Almanac:

[Aldo Leopold – Thinking Like a Mountain | Genius](#)

When finished reading record your impressions/thoughts of this moment.

Resource Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKhmtwlzOtg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-lbLhJBV0c>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhPXVf1wGE>

[A Dust Bowl chicken coop became Aldo Leopold's beloved house - YouTube](#)

Part Two:

Part One:

Task One: Use the internet to research and record five different images of John Steinbeck. Try to find images from different points in his life.

Task Two: Use the internet to find and record ten facts about John Steinbeck. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

Task Three: Use the internet to find and record ten facts about the book Travels with Charley. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

Task Four: Use the internet to find and record a map of the journey that John Steinbeck took during the writing of Travels With Charley.

Task Five: Use the internet to find and record ten facts about the coyote. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

Task Six: Use the internet to find and record five images of the coyote.

Task Seven: Observe the following video and record ten facts about the video. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww\\_3ewK2qGk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww_3ewK2qGk)

Task Eight: Read together as a class the following excerpt from Travels With Charley:

Chapter 12, Part 3 (You may advance to the portion referring to Steinbeck's encounter with two coyotes.)

When finished reading record your impressions/thoughts of this moment and the writers reflections on this moment.

Resource Videos:

[John Steinbeck - A Historical Documentary - YouTube](#)

[Explorations Read-Aloud: Travels With Charley in Search of America by John Steinbeck, read by J Coté - YouTube](#)

[Retracing John Steinbeck's 'Travels with Charley' trip: Sag Harbor House - YouTube](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SKEODtaQUU>

[Carlsbad Reads Together - Thomas Steinbeck - "Travels with Charley" Part 1 - YouTube](#)

[Carlsbad Reads Together - Thomas Steinbeck - "Travels with Charley" Part 2 - YouTube](#)

Part Three

Task One: The previous two portions of this lesson plan involved two different authors writing about their encounter with a wolf and a coyote. These encounters had some common features and some different features. (Compare)Record a list of three common features in the two encounters. (Contrast) Then record a list of three different features in the two encounters. These may be used to generate some class discussion.

Task Two: Write a reflection of the two different moments described by the two authors. Try to include and highlight any important ideas from ecology in your reflection. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

Task Three: Research and record a song with lyrics that might in some way connect with or reflect the moment described in each of the two book portions. These can be used to generate some class discussion.

Part Four: (optional) Imagine yourself as a playwright with the task of representing one of these two moments. Use the text as a guide and write a short staging of the chosen/assigned text portion. Try to

include any of the ideas and information already encountered in the prior tasks of this lesson plan. The goal will be to present a staging or a staged reading of your work. Music helps. Props help.