Tuesday: Read, re-read, and annotate *Ralph Waldo Emerson* pages 480-486; “Nature” pages 487-513

Thursday: Read, re-read, and annotate “The American Scholar” pages 514-525 and The Poet, page 554. Please continue with Emerson’s writings (An Address p 526; Self-Reliance, page 537; Experience, page 568, poems p 584) if you have the energy & time.

Writing Part One: Choose one of the following and compose ½ page (single-space) response:
- Explain Emerson’s understanding of *beauty* to a 21st century non-academic.
- Explain Emerson’s treatment of language: *words are signs of natural facts; every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact* to a 21st century LBCC writing student.

Writing Part Two: Choose one of the following and compose ½ page response:
- The challenge in reading Emerson is to “recover the originality of his now-familiar ideas.” Can you recognize Emerson’s principles/philosophy in your own values/principles/philosophy? Discuss in what specific ways.
- In what specific ways have you been inspired by Emerson’s writings? Or, if you do not find Emerson’s writings *transcending time and place* for YOU, explain why not.
- Creative Option: mimic his style and purpose (be specific about the essay section you’re being influenced/inspired by) and write a poem or prose in response.

“Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour and is not reminded of the flux of all things? Throw a stone into the stream and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence.”

- **Read slowly; read creatively.** In “The American Scholar,” Emerson writes: “One must be an inventor to read well . . . There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world.”
- **Use a dictionary.** Explore the meanings of Emerson’s words. For example, look up the word *nature* and consider all his possible meanings.
- **Annotate the text; take notes. Be a critical reader.** In Emerson’s words, be an active soul: “Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul” (“The American Scholar” 517).
- **Appreciate Emerson’s style.** Note the explanation of his democratic thinking/writing style: “aggregates of sentences and paragraphs – a collection of insights . . . Like nineteenth-century American culture itself, Emerson’s essays seem to have little patience with a single idea. Flashes of truth and moments of insight encourage a sense of surprise and intellectual discovery in his readers” (484).
- **Appreciate Emerson’s widespread influence.** Our editors explain that Emerson’s “Nature” provides the theoretical underpinnings for developing what became an indigenous American literature in the nineteenth-century” (482), that “Nineteenth and twentieth-century American art and culture has its symbolic birth” in Emerson. Furthermore, his influence was widespread in his own time; and it was not only his American contemporaries who were influenced by his ideas, but European writers as well.
- **Read with a purpose.** Use the previous writing prompts to guide your reading.