

Study Questions for Thoreau's "Walking"

1. What do you immediately and consistently notice about the prose style of Thoreau's essay, "Walking?"
2. Identify in your own words Thoreau's thesis of this essay.
3. In Parts 1 and 3 of "Walking," but particularly Part 1, Thoreau discusses the city and the wild. Compare and contrast these two environments that Thoreau describes.
4. Very early in "Walking," Thoreau traces the etymology *sauntering*. Describe the characteristics of what Thoreau characterizes as walking/sauntering, and why does he place such emphasis on the synonym *sauntering*?
5. Part 2 begins on page 56, identified by the extra paragraph gap. Describe the shift that Thoreau makes, and why do you think he takes the essay in this direction?
6. Thoreau writes, "Of course it is no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit" (52). What does Thoreau mean by this observation and why is he frustrated by the experience?