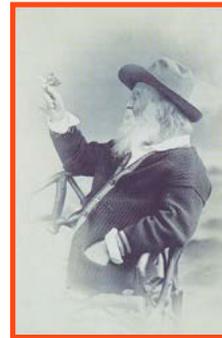


TAKE A NATURE WALK WITH WALT WHITMAN



Portrait of Walt Whitman, Thomas Biggs Harned Collection of the Papers of Walt Whitman: Recovered Cardboard Butterfly and Notebooks, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

GET INSPIRED

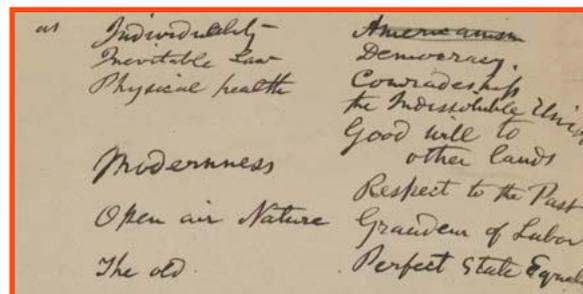
Walt Whitman (May 31, 1819 – March 26, 1892) worked as a school teacher, printer, newspaper editor, journalist, carpenter, freelance writer, civil servant, and Union Army nurse in Washington D.C. during the Civil War, but he is best known as author of *Leaves of Grass* and as one of America's most famous poets—and as a (and at times controversial) poet of democracy. He loved nature!

Before your walk, explain that you will be using words and phrases written by Walt Whitman, a poet who lived many years ago, to explore nature today, including the weather.

Walt Whitman wrote that: “To me, every hour of the light and dark is a miracle” – “Miracles”

🌻 What is the weather today? Is it bright and sunny or dark and cloudy? What makes the sunshine a miracle? What is miraculous, or helpful, about a cloudy day? What is miraculous about the night?

🌻 For older children, examine Whitman's notes on the themes of *Leaves of Grass*, his most famous work. How do these themes fit together? What do they have in common?



Walt Whitman Papers in the Charles E. Feinberg Collection, Themes in *Leaves of Grass*; Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

GET READY

You'll need:

- 🌻 A copy of the nature walk printable
- 🌻 Clipboard and colored pencils/crayons
- 🌻 Magnifying glass or app (optional)

EXPLORE MORE:

After your walk:

- 🌻 Explore questions such as:
 - ~ [What causes flowers to have different colors?](#)
 - ~ [How can you tell the difference between a butterfly and a moth?](#)

And more Everyday Mysteries, compiled by the Library's Science, Technology and Business Division.

- 🌻 Parents and older children may want to take a deeper dive into Walt Whitman's work through this [LibGuide](#) or transcribe his letters and writings in our [By the People crowdsourced transcription project](#).

TAKE A NATURE WALK WITH WALT WHITMAN

READ WHITMAN'S WORDS AND EXPLORE!

“Meditate on each sweet flower, Thinking of each happy hour”
- “I’ll Trace this Garden”

Meditate means to focus your mind for a period of time. What would you notice if you stopped to take a closer look around you?

Find 3 flowers or plants on your nature walk.

- 🌻 What do you notice about them?
- 🌻 How do they smell?
- 🌻 What shape are the petals?
- 🌻 How are they similar or different?



Easter greeting card, 1850.
Thomas Biggs Harned Collection of the
Papers of Walt Whitman: Recovered
Cardboard Butterfly and Notebooks,
Manuscript Division,
Library of Congress

Take pictures or sketch them here:



🌻 What is the same?:

🌻 What is different?:

TAKE A NATURE WALK WITH WALT WHITMAN

“Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons, It is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth.”
“Song of the Open Road”

Throughout your walk, stop for a moment or two, close your eyes, and take a deep breath.

🌼 What do you smell?

🌼 What do you hear when you stop and listen?

🌼 What do you see when you open your eyes again?

Think of 3 words that come to mind as you “grow in the open air.”

1.

2.

3.



Lilacs & lilies, circa 1900. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

“The First Dandelion”

“Simple and fresh and fair from winter’s close emerging...The spring’s first dandelion shows its trustful face.”

🌼 **What signs of the season do you see on your walk?** It might be a dandelion or another flower newly blooming or a bird building a nest. Find your favorite and record it here.



By dandelion post I send this valentine to my friend, Boston : L. Prang & Co., Boston, 1882, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

🌼 **At home:** Use one of the words you thought of in the activities above and use it to create an acrostic poem about that word or about nature or spring.