

# [To write like a transcendentalist](https://assignbuster.com/to-write-like-a-transcendentalist/)

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Upon opening theGoogleDoc that dictated my assignment for the day, I felt instant worry, followed by feelings of inadequacy, stress, and uncertainty.

How was I, a mere high school junior, supposed to imitate the style of great American writers like Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman? After about half an hour of deliberation, I came to a satisfying conclusion. The best way I, a mere high school junior, could show my understanding of these writers’ work was through one style only: my own. In all of his work Emerson leaves his readers with one message, think for yourself. In his eminent essay “ Self-reliance” he states, “ Envy is ignorance, imitation is suicide.” I started this essay feeling envy toward Emerson’s, Thoreau’s, and Whitman’s capacity for original, inventive, and insightful work and in my effort to write in their style, I had nothing to show but a blank page and a feeling of defeat. To me the assignment seemed a bit odd.

Had I really understood Emerson’s work, why would I spend my time imitating his style? Are my own thoughts not enough? Is the style I’m beginning to cultivate not sufficient? The answer is simple: if I truly wanted to commemorate the likes of Emerson I should not “ build the sepulchres of the fathers” but rather stress the importance of myself as an American and as an individual. Why would I copy Emerson when I have the gift of my own experience? As Whitman so eloquently said, “ I am large, I contain multitudes.” The expanse of my perception, my understanding, and my insight is just as important, if not even more important than that of our great transcendentalist “ fathers” because my perception is in this moment and it reflects the now. I rely on my own senses to make meaning of the world around me. I could read old texts for the rest of my life but could never experience nature in the same way as just stepping outside.

The experience I get from running through my father’s farm will always be richer than the experience of reading about what Whitman saw when walking through the hillsides. I do not need Emerson to tell me how to feel, what to think, and how to write, for that I only need myself. Of course, I would have never written this essay or thought in this way had I not read at least a few transcendentalist works. Does that mean this paper is nothing but a faux-product of Emerson’s essays, Thoreau’s novels, and Whitman’s poems? Possibly, but it is my interpretation of the texts that have lead me to this conclusion: that my ideas, my feelings, and my thoughts are just as valid as anything that has come before me. I am not a “ mere high school junior” but rather I am an emerging writer who refuses to imitate dead authors, old poems, and venerated novels. In this refusal, I find something that is much more important: myself.