

An essay on nature by ralph waldo emerson

[Business](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Published in 1836, *Nature* is an essay written by American lecturer and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson that lays down the foundation for transcendentalism. Transcendentalism is a now popular belief system that supports a non-traditional appreciation of the importance of nature, suggesting that God can be found in nature as well as a true understanding of life and reality. The essay covers four elements, Commodity, Beauty, Language and Discipline, and explores the ways that humans utilise nature for their basic needs, their own desire, their communication and their general understanding of the world. The bulk of the essay is an attempt by Emerson to work and solve an abstract query about that fact that he believes humans beings are not fully appreciative and accepting of nature's true beauty.

Emerson holds the belief that people are constantly distracted by the commercial and industrial demands of the world whilst nature continues to give and provide but gets very little from us in return. He expresses the argument that in order to truly experience the total 'wholeness' with nature that humans are naturally suited for, we must strive to separate ourselves from the distractions and imperfections that are imposed on us by contemporary society. Let us take a look at the passage that reads: "To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars." From studying this passage, we can see that Emerson believed that the act of solitude was the one single technique through which a person can be fully and completely engaged in the natural world.

We can also determine that Emerson believes that society as a construct can destroy what he feels to be 'wholeness', whereas nature in its very form is the utter definition of wholeness from the way that the wind helps to sow seeds, the way that ice on one side of the earth turns in to rain for the other side, the way that water feeds plants which in turn feed animals, the overall unbreakable circle of life that continues to feed and nourish each level of the chain. In a more spiritual sense, you could say that Emerson finds in nature a purer, more fluid, all encompassing spirituality than the man made construction imposed by certain human parties like the organised churches. And this theme of spirituality is one that remains extremely prominent throughout the essay, with Emerson's take of transcendentalism revolving around the idea that a person can perceive God as one with nature, becoming part of their surroundings in a very real and tactile way. His attitude towards the all-encompassing property of nature can be best identified in this passage: "From the earth, as a shore, I look out into the silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations; the active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind." This is a prime and concise example of Emerson's belief that humans and the wind, more broadly all of nature, are one.

He stresses the point that nature should be as worshipped and glorified as the figure of Jesus Christ on the cross, postulating that the happiest men in the world are those who can learn the practise of worship through their reverent relationship with the natural world. His defining and echoing statement is that all things must be moral and spiritual, and the most important and ideal balance can be found in the glory of nature.