Island Civilization

Developed by Chris Street

Reading Selection for This Module:


Module Description

Island Civilization would be appropriate for eleventh grade students toward the end of the year in the following courses: English language arts, science, political science, philosophy, sociology, American studies, American history, or environmental studies. This module would likely take between two to six weeks to complete, depending on the amount of time available to the teacher and the number of related readings included. The module asks students to consider the “history and future of wilderness and civilization on planet Earth.” Presented by an internationally known professor emeritus of history and environmental studies, this transcript engages students in the complex cognitive task of entering an ongoing conversation about issues that face all of humanity. Through a close study of the often controversial views presented by the author, students have the opportunity to challenge the viewpoints of the author while also developing, refining, and conveying their own solutions to the challenging issues presented in this reading.

Module Background

Environmental issues are a burning topic for high school students. They are the ones who will be inheriting the Earth from the current generation. As such, students have a vested interest in shaping the world they will be asked to inhabit.

Like many op-ed style pieces, “Island Civilization” sparks controversy and elicits strong feelings. Roderick Nash

Acknowledgments

The contents of this curriculum module were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Funding was provided for the initial development of this curriculum module by the Merced County P-16 Education and Community Council through an Advanced Placement Incentive Program grant.

Additional funding was provided by The California State University. Funding was also provided by the Fresno County Office of Education through an Investing in Innovation Development Grant, including these foundation partners: The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, California Community Foundation, and James Irvine Foundation.
uses this presentation to support his argument that humans must radically alter the way they live now; otherwise, the future of our species looks bleak. The author uses both historical and anecdotal evidence to make his points, providing students with an accessible model of how academic arguments are constructed.

The piece raises several questions: What effect has human civilization had on planet Earth, and what should we do about it? What effects will human civilization likely have on planet Earth in the future, and what can humans do now in anticipations of those effects? What will wilderness and civilization look like on planet Earth in the distant future? Students have the opportunity to answer these questions for themselves as they express their own solutions to the challenges presented in this module.

Module Objectives

In addition to the focus on the Common Core State Standards, the unit also emphasizes the following.

Students will be able to
• Identify the main ideas, including the author’s main argument/claim within a text
• Use context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary
• Evaluate the credibility of the overall text
• Annotate the text in a purposeful manner
• Summarize the text in a concise and accurate manner
• Formulate a response to the text based on personal experience as it relates to the text
• Evaluate the credibility of different types of evidence
• Engage in a written conversation with the author of the article or develop an op-ed essay
• Revise a letter to the author or an op-ed essay with a focus on developing and supporting a position

About the Author


A national leader in the field of environmental history and management and environmental education, Dr. Nash has a special interest in problems relating to wilderness and its preservation. He played a leading role in Santa Barbara’s response to the oil spill of 1969, writing the internationally publicized Santa Barbara Declaration of Environmental Rights. In 1970, Dr. Nash led the way in the creation of a problem-oriented, interdisciplinary major called Environmental Studies at UCSB. He chaired the program for five years. Recognized as one of the first and most comprehensive undergraduate programs of its kind, Environmental Studies has graduated more than 3,000 students.

Roderick Nash is considered America’s foremost wilderness historian. Among his ten books and over 150 essays, Professor Roderick Frazier Nash is best known for Wilderness and the American Mind, which has received many reprints, revised editions, and foreign translations.
Dr. Nash, a past Lindbergh Fellow, serves on the editorial boards of the following publications: *Journal of Environmental Education, Environmental Review, Journal of American Culture, Environmental Ethics,* and *Pacific Historical Review.* He is associate editor of the *International Journal of Wilderness* and teaches on occasion for the Aspen Institute. He has been president of the Wilderness Public Rights Fund and has helped direct the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, the Yosemite Institute, the American Studies Association, and the Southern Utah Wilderness Association. He has served the Rockefeller Foundation as a consultant on global environmental problems. He is presently a member of Harvard University’s Committee on the Environment.

His lecture “The Meaning of Wilderness and the Rights of Nature,” is in wide demand from historical and environmental audiences.

**Selected Publications**


*Note:* The activities for students provided in the Student Version for this module are copied here in the Teacher Version for your convenience. The shaded areas include the actual activities the students will see. The use of italics in the shaded areas generally indicates possible student responses and may be interspersed with notes to the teacher that are not shaded. If there are notes to the teacher within the shaded areas, they are indicated by italics and parentheses.
Reading Rhetorically
Prereading

Getting Ready to Read

“Island Civilization: A Vision for Human Occupancy of Earth in the Fourth Millennium” is a dense text that is layered with historical references and rich vocabulary. In sum, the text expects a great deal from readers. As such, it is crucial for teachers to spend considerable time in the prereading phase, preparing students to read this text.

One way to prepare students to read this text is by using an Anticipation/Reaction Guide to assess students’ prior knowledge and attitudes on the future of civilization on planet Earth. Students will complete Column I of the Guide before they read; Column II is for the students’ “reactions” after they read Nash’s presentation.

Activity 1: Getting Ready to Read

This module asks you to consider the “history and future of wilderness and civilization on planet Earth.” Written by an internationally known professor emeritus of history and environmental studies, this presentation will engage you in the complex cognitive task of entering an ongoing conversation about issues that face all of humanity. Through a close study of the often controversial views presented by the author, you will have the opportunity to challenge the viewpoints of the author while also developing, refining, and conveying your own solutions to the challenging issues presented in this reading.

You may encounter this module in an English language arts class, a science course, a political science class, a philosophy class, a sociology class, an American studies class, an American history class, or in an environmental studies class.

Question at issue: What will civilization look like on planet Earth in the distant future?

Read each statement. Then, in Column I, write a plus sign if you agree with the statement, a minus sign if you disagree, or a question mark if you are unsure about your opinion. For most statements, there are no right answers. After reading the text of the presentation, you will indicate your reactions in Column II.

Agree = +         Disagree = -         Don’t know = ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Humans lack foresight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Future generations will be thankful for the manner in which we treated the Earth “on our watch.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. _____ _____ In 1,000 years, life will be better for humans than it is today.
4. _____ _____ In 1,000 years, the Earth will be a healthier planet than it is today.
5. _____ _____ Having a goal is a vital first step to solving problems.
6. _____ _____ “Wilderness” and “civilization” can coexist in harmony.
7. _____ _____ Life in modern cities is preferable to the life of hunter-gatherers, who live off the land.
8. _____ _____ “Nature” is an oppressed minority that needs to be liberated.
9. _____ _____ Civilization is vulnerable and may not last.
10. _____ _____ Wilderness is vulnerable and may not last.
11. _____ _____ Human progress should take precedence over the rights and needs of other species.
12. _____ _____ Humans in the future will have the ability to control nature completely.
13. _____ _____ If humans plan well now, life in the year 3010 will be better for humans and all other life forms on planet Earth

Exploring Key Concepts

After students complete column one of the Anticipation Guide and have had a chance to briefly discuss their reactions with their classmates, the activity that follows can serve as a nice extension activity, allowing students to elaborate on their initial impressions of the topic. Furthermore, this activity allows students to gain a richer sense of two concepts that are of vital importance to an understanding of this reading: wilderness and civilization.

Activity 2: Exploring Key Concepts—Quickwrite

React to this statement from the Anticipation/Reaction Guide: “‘Wilderness’ and ‘civilization’ can coexist in harmony.” Respond in a five-minute quickwrite. Explain why you agree or disagree with this particular statement—or why you are unsure about your response. Discuss your completed quickwrite in groups.

You may alternatively choose to have students complete the Anticipation/Reaction Guide by participating in “Take a Stand.” In this activity, place a sign for “agree” on one side of the classroom and a sign for “disagree” on the other side.
All students begin by standing in the middle of the room. Then, you read each Anticipation/Reaction Guide statement aloud to the students who must respond by walking to the side of the room that expresses their viewpoint on the statement. After the students take a stand on an individual statement, a maximum of three volunteers from each side can explain why they agree or disagree with the statement, with the minority side sharing first.

Students then move back to the center of the room for the next statement. While students cannot debate with the other side, they may change sides if they are persuaded by their peers’ comments.

This activity encourages students to express multiple viewpoints regarding the key concepts from the text. The process of writing and/or discussing these concepts allows students to broaden their perspectives regarding these key ideas from the reading.

**Surveying the Text**

Before having students read “Island Civilization,” ask students to scan—or just glance over—the entire reading. For this activity the HTML version of the reading may be best to use, since the author biography appears alongside the online presentation transcript: <http://www.applythebrakes.com/leader_detail.asp?id=11>.

Students can then use their first impressions of the topic and style of the text to make predictions about its content. (This activity works well as a small group activity, with teams of three to four students focusing on one question each.) When each small group discussion is completed, each group should report its conversation to the rest of the class. This ensures that the entire class has had the opportunity to engage with all of the questions.

**Activity 3: Surveying the Text**

Before you read Nash’s “Island Civilization: A Vision for Human Occupancy of Earth in the Fourth Millennium,” discuss the following questions:

1. What does the title, “Island Civilization: A Vision for Human Occupancy of Earth in the Fourth Millennium,” tell you about Nash's position on this issue?

   *It seems like Nash wants to send a message about how humans should be living on the Earth in the future. He is probably against humans being in complete control of nature since he uses the term “occupancy” in his title. Since this is a “vision of the future,” it seems like Nash's vision may be just one of many possible scenarios for the future.*

2. Why does Nash use the term “island” when describing his vision of civilization in the future? What does it mean to live on an island?
The term “island” implies that you are surrounded by something else, typically water. To live on an island means that you are cut off from others and need to be somewhat self-reliant. Sometimes people start to get “island fever” when they feel too cooped up on an island. To live on an island might be fun for a while, but living on an island forever might get kind of tiresome.

3. Why are there two parts to Nash’s title (one before and one after the colon)? What does the subheading, “A Vision for Human Occupancy of Earth in the Fourth Millennium,” suggest?

It sounds like he’s asking and answering his own question. Where do humans belong in the future? On an island! The second part of the title seems to be asking the question of where humans belong, and the first part of the title provides Nash’s response: On an island, perhaps separated from the rest of the world.

4. Take a quick look at the author’s biography that is next to the presentation transcript. What do you think is Nash’s purpose for writing this piece?

I think his purpose is to cause us to consider how we as a species are interacting with other species on our planet. I think he wants to present us with an option for how we as a species might live in the future so that we can better respect the planet and the nonhuman forms of life that inhabit the world with us.

Making Predictions and Asking Questions

Project for the class the following passages from the reading with the students. Uncover each passage one at a time (or place the passages on a PowerPoint) so that students experience an “interrupted” reading of some of the major points from the text. Since this is such a dense reading, make sure that you allow plenty of time to discuss these sections. Students will require time to process the concepts raised in the text. They will also likely have many questions about the references to outside authors, historical events, and concepts that may be foreign to them.

Ask the students what they notice about each passage as you reveal it to the class. Allow time for students to discuss words that seem important, ideas that are interesting, or questions that they may have.

Activity 4: Making Predictions and Asking Questions

Read each section of the text below, one at a time. Before you continue on to the next passage, answer these questions: (1) What do you notice? (2) What words and ideas seem to be important? (3) What do you predict the next section will be about?

• “The new third millennium we are just entering affords an excellent opportunity to think big about the history and future of wilderness and civilization on planet Earth.” (par. 1)
Wow! This is a pretty heavy sentence. It seems really important. The first word that I notice is millennium. I think it refers to the future in some way, but I am not quite sure how. I hope the word millennium gets defined soon because it seems really important. I think I know what he means by wilderness and civilization. They seem to be opposites of one another. I am guessing that all three of these key terms (millennium, wilderness, and civilization) will be discussed throughout the text.

- “opportunity to transcend our species’ characteristic myopia” (par. 1)

Now I am lost. I do not know what transcend or myopia mean. I think he means that our species has the chance to move beyond our species’ short sightedness, but I am not sure. Based on his biography, the title of the text, and his organization’s (Apply the Brakes) commitment to controlling population growth, I am betting that myopia is not a flattering term for our species. I think it probably does refer to humans’ lack of foresight as a species. I think he is asking us to get past this limitation as a species and ask the really big questions about our future on this planet now, while there is still time to do something to change the course of events in the future.

- “So my mission here is to review the history of human-nature relations and to extend our concern to the big picture. What could the human tenure on Earth be like a thousand years from now—at the start of the Fourth Millennium? My proposal involves some really major changes and will be controversial.” (par. 2)

I notice his conversational tone. I like it. These sentences are easy to understand. I see the word millennium again. Now I think I know that it means a thousand years. I am used to thinking in time periods of minutes, hours, days, and maybe a few years. I have never even tried to think about what life on Earth might be like in a thousand years. This kind of time frame makes all of my worries seem kind of petty.

I also notice how Nash is setting us up for controversy. He expects his ideas to be controversial. Now I am wondering what kind of big, controversial ideas he will be discussing. Maybe he will be explaining what he means by “island civilization.” Perhaps that is what is going to be so controversial.

- “As a starting point, let’s consider wilderness. It’s a state of mind, a perception, rather than a geographical reality, and prior to the advent of herding and agriculture about ten thousand years before the present, it didn’t exist.” (par. 3)

I notice that term wilderness again. He seems to be setting up wilderness on one side and civilization on the other. Maybe they are supposed to balance with one another? I guess he is right about wilderness being a state of mind. I mean, would Bear Grylls from Man vs. Wild define wilderness the same way a city dweller would? Central Park might be wilderness to a city dweller while to someone out in the wild a city park might be considered very tame.

I notice the term advent, and I think he means the beginning since that would make sense within the context of this sentence.
I also notice his use of “As a starting point…” to introduce this paragraph. Maybe this means that his introduction is over and he is presenting his first major point. I am predicting that the idea of wilderness will be crucial to an understanding of this text.

Pairs Conversation: Now make a prediction with a partner about the rest of the piece. What type of a future do you think the text of the presentation might describe? What do you think the text might say humans should be thinking about now in order to plan for the future of our species?

During these pairs conversations, you may benefit from moving throughout the class, listening in on conversations in order to get a sense of the points being raised. A whole class discussion might then be used to discuss major points, answer questions, and clarify misconceptions, etc.

This kind of informal assessment process can serve as a useful formative assessment strategy, offering you a glimpse into the thinking processes of your students.

Understanding Key Vocabulary

The following words represent key concepts from Nash’s article that students will address in their class discussions and writing. Students will need to spend considerable time with the various concepts that Nash uses throughout his presentation.

This is a text that uses rich vocabulary. Many of these words will be unfamiliar to students. This will require spending considerable time ensuring that students have a basic familiarity with the words prior to beginning the reading.

The vocabulary self-assessment activity will allow students to determine whether these words are familiar or foreign to them. Since the words are listed and defined within this activity, students will also know which words are important to pay attention to once they begin reading.

It is important to draw students’ attention to these words because without an understanding of these terms, students will have a very difficult time making sense of Nash’s text.

Once students have completed the chart, ask them to share their knowledge of the words with the class. This sharing will allow students to acknowledge that many of these terms are foreign to them. This is the place to initiate a class discussion, making clear references to examples and insights raised in the class discussion as a way to highlight and elaborate on these terms.

A few concepts may be totally foreign to students (i.e., intellectual baggage, land ethic). For these concepts, devote class time to teaching these ideas to students.
Due to the number of words on the list, it might be best to allow students to work in small groups, with each small learning team (three to four students) being responsible for defining a small number of words from the list below. Since there are 50 words on the self-assessment chart below, you might have ten teams of three or four students each work on defining a few terms. They can use one another or the Internet as resources, as well as any other resources that they have available to them. Then, each group should submit their definitions to you. Assuming the definitions are appropriate, you could then assemble a class list of the concepts with their definitions and compare their definitions with the ones listed in the teacher version of this activity.

Notes
- This list of words is arranged sequentially, according to the order in which these terms appear in the text.
- If you feel this list of words is too broad, feel free to narrow it to the central terms your students need.

Activity 5: Introducing Key Vocabulary

Read through the list of words in the self-assessment chart. Identify your familiarity of each word by checking the appropriate column: Know It Well, Heard of It, or Don’t Know It.

Vocabulary Self-Assessment Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Know It Well</th>
<th>Heard of It</th>
<th>Don’t Know It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>millennium</td>
<td>a period of 1000 years <a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/millennium">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/millennium</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wilderness</td>
<td>a wild and uncultivated region, as of forest or desert, uninhabited or inhabited only by wild animals; a tract of wasteland <a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/wilderness">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/wilderness</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilization</td>
<td>a human society that has highly developed material and spiritual resources and a complex cultural, political, and legal organization; an advanced state in social development <a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/civilization">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/civilization</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Know It Well</td>
<td>Heard of It</td>
<td>Don’t Know It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transcend</td>
<td>to go above or beyond (a limit, expectation, etc.), as in degree or excellence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myopia</td>
<td>lack of foresight or discernment; obtuseness; narrow-mindedness; intolerance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legacy</td>
<td>something handed down or received from an ancestor or predecessor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenure</td>
<td>the period or term of holding something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advent</td>
<td>a coming into place, view, or being; arrival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unencumbered</td>
<td>not burdened, impeded, or hampered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pastoral</td>
<td>characterized by or depicting rural life, scenery, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mandate</td>
<td>to order or require</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>antipode</td>
<td>a direct or exact opposite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Know It Well</td>
<td>Heard of It</td>
<td>Don't Know It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intellectual baggage</td>
<td>the entirety of one's intellectual experiences in life (education, reading, etc.); “preconceived notions” in an intellectual sense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bias</td>
<td>a particular tendency or inclination, especially one that prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question; prejudice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irony</td>
<td>the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning; the irony of her reply, “How nice!” when I said I had to work all weekend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>untempered</td>
<td>unrestrained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>primeval</td>
<td>referring to the first period of the world: primeval forms of life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frontier</td>
<td>the edge of the settled area of a country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative valuations</td>
<td>comparative valuations: the relative merits of democracy and monarchy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scarcity theory of value</td>
<td>as something becomes more scarce, it becomes more valuable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Know It Well</td>
<td>Heard of It</td>
<td>Don’t Know It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angst</td>
<td>an acute but nonspecific sense of anxiety or remorse&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/angst">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/angst</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anthropocentric</td>
<td>viewing and interpreting everything in terms of human experience and values&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/anthropocentric">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/anthropocentric</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utilitarian</td>
<td>practical, useful, functional&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/utilitarian">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/utilitarian</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biocentric rationale</td>
<td>centered in life; having life as its principal fact&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Biocentric">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Biocentric</a>&lt;br&gt;the fundamental reason or reasons serving to account for something&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/rationale">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/rationale</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intrinsic</td>
<td>belonging to a thing by its very nature: the intrinsic value of a gold ring&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intrinsic">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intrinsic</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manifested</td>
<td>to make clear or evident to the eye or the understanding; show plainly: He manifested his approval with a hearty laugh&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/manifested">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/manifested</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reverence</td>
<td>a feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe; veneration&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/reverence">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/reverence</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dominion</td>
<td>rule; control; sphere of influence; area of control&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/dominion">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/dominion</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Know It Well</td>
<td>Heard Of It</td>
<td>Don’t Know It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theological holism</td>
<td>based upon the nature and will of God as revealed to humans &lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Theological+">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Theological+</a>&lt;br&gt;A holistic investigation or system of treatment &lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/holism">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/holism</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articulator</td>
<td>a person or thing that articulates; a speaker or person who gives voice to ideas &lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/articulator">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/articulator</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>land ethic</td>
<td>the land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrition</td>
<td>deeply felt remorse; penitence &lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/contrition">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/contrition</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biotic arrogance</td>
<td>the attitude of man’s place in nature, which had been very self serving to the human species while ignoring the needs of the rest of our biotic community members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conservation</td>
<td>protection, preservation, and careful management of natural resources and of the environment &lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/conservation">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/conservation</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theologians</td>
<td>someone who is engaged in the disciplined study of religious questions, such as the nature of God, sin, and salvation &lt;br&gt;<a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/theology">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/theology</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Know It Well</td>
<td>Heard Of It</td>
<td>Don't Know It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biotic community</td>
<td>(ecology) a group of interdependent organisms inhabiting the same region and interacting with each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biocentrism</td>
<td>considering all forms of life as having intrinsic value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temperate latitudes</td>
<td>the most hospitable areas for human settlements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specter</td>
<td>some object or source of terror or dread: the specter of disease or famine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contiguous</td>
<td>touching; in contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deficit environmental financing</td>
<td>a lack of paying for and paying attention to the environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vanguard</td>
<td>the leading position in any movement or field, or the people who occupy such a position: the vanguard of modern literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biotic</td>
<td>relating to life or living organisms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sapient</td>
<td>having or showing great wisdom or sound judgment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homogenization</td>
<td>the state of making uniform or similar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Know It Well</td>
<td>Heard of It</td>
<td>Don’t Know It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proviso</td>
<td>a stipulation or condition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matrix</td>
<td>a surrounding substance within which something else originates, develops, or is contained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleistocene</td>
<td>the earlier of the two epochs of the Quaternary Period, from about 2 million to 10,000 years ago (The Pleistocene Epoch was characterized by the formation of widespread glaciers in the Northern Hemisphere and by the appearance of humans.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megafauna</td>
<td>large or relatively large animals of a particular place or time period (e.g. Saber-toothed tigers and mastodons belong to the extinct megafauna of the Oligocene and Pleistocene Epochs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pinnacles</td>
<td>the highest or culminating point, as of success, power, fame, etc.: the pinnacle of one’s career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oppositional language is language an author uses to help make a point and compare and contrast various positions when trying to persuade.

The author often uses oppositional language to present contrasts and to highlight differences. Understanding the differences between the words in list A and list B can help students appreciate the oppositional language that Nash uses to help make his points.

For this activity, students will work in pairs. There will be one list A student and one list B student per pair.
Use an overhead or LCD projector to share the following words from the presentation transcript with the students.

**Technology Application:** If working with the web-based version of this text, have students conduct a search for their word(s) within the body of the text so that they can also consider the context in which those words appear.

**Activity 6: Understanding Key Vocabulary**

For this activity, you will work in pairs. There will be one list A student and one list B student per pair.

List A students will write down one word from list A. Student one takes number one, student two takes word two, etc.

List B students will write down one word from list B. Student one takes number one, student two takes word two, etc.

Once you have a word chosen, you will meet with your oppositional team member. For example, the two students who have been assigned to cover word one will meet and discuss their words: *wilderness* (list A word) and *civilization* (list B word).

Within these paired conversations, you should consider the meaning of your word when set against the oppositional word that your partner has. You should be able to discuss the meaning of your word and also be able to appreciate how your partner’s word acts as an antonym for your word. You should discuss why the author might have used this kind of oppositional language throughout his presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List A</th>
<th>List B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. wilderness</td>
<td>1. civilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. uncontrolled</td>
<td>2. controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. wild</td>
<td>3. tame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. hunter gatherers</td>
<td>4. pastoral society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. untempered</td>
<td>5. conquered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. sustainable</td>
<td>6. unsustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. primitivistic</td>
<td>7. technological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. asset</td>
<td>8. liability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. biocentric</td>
<td>9. anthropocentric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. paradise</td>
<td>10. cursed land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. conservation/preservation</td>
<td>11. destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. garden scenario</td>
<td>12. wasteland scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. primitive</td>
<td>13. civilized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. miracles</td>
<td>14. sinking arks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. caring</td>
<td>15. cancerous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading

Reading for Understanding

The first reading of a text is intended to help students understand the text and confirm their predictions. This is sometimes called reading “with the grain” or “playing the believing game” (Bean, Chappell, and Gillam). Using the “Following the Arc of the Argument” activity or a teacher-modeled “Think Aloud” to do the first reading can help students understand the active meaning-making strategies that characterize fluent reading.

Following the “Arc” of the Argument

Nash’s argument in this presentation is long and complex. Activity 7 is designed to help your students identify and connect the different pieces.

Activity 7: Following the “Arc” of the Argument

Nash’s argument in “Island Civilization” has several steps that are developed in different sections. Before you begin to read the text of the presentation, look over the following list of argumentative moves. As you read, write the number of each section of the argument in the margin where the section begins.

1. Humans tend to think short-term, small picture. They need to think long-term, big picture.
2. Humans think about wilderness as uncontrolled space and civilization as controlled space.
3. Over the last 10,000 years human control of the land has increased to the point where very little uncontrolled space is left.
4. The loss of wilderness has increased its value in the minds of humans, but efforts to protect it have been unsuccessful.
5. The human population is increasing rapidly, ecosystems are collapsing, and biodiversity is diminishing.
7. The best scenario will require some “compromise” of human freedom, but it is worth it. The whole planet is at stake.

Activity 8 brings students back to their initial predictions and helps them engage with the text by stopping periodically to discuss sections as a class or with a partner. Use the “think aloud” strategy for selected text to support students’ understanding of the text.
Activity 8: Reading for Understanding

As you read “Island Civilization,” think about the predictions you made. You may notice words you worked with in the previous activities. Listen to your teacher as he or she “thinks aloud” about the meaning-making strategies he or she uses to understand selected portions of the text.

After you finish the piece, discuss the following questions with your classmates:

1. How accurate were your predictions?
2. When you read the whole presentation, did anything surprise you?
3. Are there any parts of the presentation that you found confusing?

Guidelines for a Teacher-Modeled “Think Aloud”

Select portions of the text to model a “Think Aloud” for students. After each section of the selected text (this could be a few lines or a few paragraphs), “think aloud” about what you notice, what words seem most significant, and what might follow in the next section. A sample is provided below. You and your students can also take turns sharing thoughts after each reading section.

For subsequent sections of the text, ask students to share their responses to each section of the reading with a partner. This variation of whole class responses and partner discussion may foster deeper engagement and better enable students to share their initial impressions of the text in a low-stress setting.

Due to the length of the text, this activity will take several class periods to complete. This phase of the lesson should not be rushed. Taking the time to engage deeply with the text now will enable students to better understand the text when they are later asked to engage with the text on their own.

Since you will likely be reading the text over multiple days, you may want to consider using formative assessment strategies to check for understanding:

• **One-Sentence Summary:** This simple exercise asks students to answer the following questions on a particular topic: Who? What? When? Where? Why? They then condense their responses into a single sentence.

• **Exit Slip:** The Exit Slip requires students to demonstrate their learning before leaving class. Students may be asked to write a summary of key content or perform a specific task to be collected by you in class (rather than at the door). You can then review the Exit Slips to make instructional decisions.

• **Fuzzy/Clear:** Using index cards or half sheets of paper, students record something from the day’s lesson that is still “fuzzy” or confusing to them on one side of the paper. On the other side of the paper, the students write down something that is now clear to them. You can then address the “fuzzy” content when the class next meets.
Sample “Think Aloud”

Introduction of the text from the opening quotes to the end of the second section

“What we call wildness is a civilization other than our own.” Henry David Thoreau (1859)

“Darwin’s dice have rolled badly for Earth.” Edward O. Wilson (1998)

“The beauty of Island Civilization is that it permits humans to fulfill their evolutionary potential without compromising or eliminating the opportunity of other species doing the same.” Roderick Nash (2001)

1 The new, third millennium we are just entering affords an excellent opportunity to think big about the history and future of wilderness and civilization on planet Earth. Of course a millennium is an entirely synthetic (as opposed to astronomical) concept. Measuring time in thousand-year units only began in 1582 when Christian officials arbitrarily fixed a date for the birth of Christ. So there was nothing special about December 31, 999; it wasn’t even recognized as the end of the first millennium. But we made a big deal about the end of the second one a thousand years later on December 31, 1999. Here was an opportunity to transcend our species’ characteristic myopia. Rarely do humans make plans more than a couple of years in advance. And we don’t do history very well either. It’s a safe bet that you can’t name two of your eight great-grandparents. Right? Similarly, we don’t often think in the wider angles that encompass our species as a whole.

2 So my mission here is to review the history of human-nature relations and to extend our concern to the big picture. What could the human tenure on Earth be like a thousand years from now—at the start of the Fourth Millennium? My proposal involves some really major changes and will be controversial. At first glance you may think Island Civilization is crazy and impossible. But not so fast, my friends; don’t stop with criticism. The whole purpose of this presentation is to put forward for discussion a strategy for occupation of this planet that will work in the very long run and for all the natural world. This is simply the greatest challenge facing our species, and, in a sense, facing evolution on Earth. If you disagree with some or all of my vision, create your own. Particularly, if you think staying the present course is the way to go, put forward your evidence and reasoning. The essential thing is that we occasionally lift our eyes from everyday details and five-year plans to the far horizons of planetary possibility. Having such a goal is a vital first step to solving problems. Without it we lack direction and the means to evaluate options as they come into focus.

Wow—this is a really negative characterization of humanity. Nash is asking us to move beyond our typical short-sightedness and consider what
things could be like on Earth in 1,000 years. The opening paragraph really helps to drive the point home that this topic really matters—to us and more importantly, for future generations and the other species we share this planet with.

I really like his idea of considering “the far horizons of planetary possibility” in paragraph two. It makes sense to me that you first need to consider the possibilities before you can develop a plan that could actually be put into practice.

He seems to be writing for a general audience of people who are interested in these issues. It kind of reminds me of the kind of tone often taken by writers on Op-Ed articles. He definitely has a point to make, and he is not afraid to let you know how he feels about it.

As a starting point let’s consider wilderness. It’s a state of mind, a perception, rather than a geographical reality, and prior to the advent of herding and agriculture about 10,000 years before the present, it didn’t exist. But after we began to draw mental lines between ourselves and nature, and to place walls and fences on the land, the idea of controlled versus uncontrolled environments acquired meaning. The root of the word “wilderness” in Old English was something that had its own will. The adjective that came to be used was “wild.” For example, wildfire, wild (undammed) rivers, wildcats. You can’t herd them! The other important part of the word, “ness,” indicates a condition or place. So “wilderness” literally means self-willed land, a place where wild (undomesticated) animals roam and where natural processes proceed unencumbered by human interference.

After humans created farms, and literally bet our survival on them instead of on hunting and gathering, uncontrolled nature became the enemy of the new civilization. Pastoral societies, like those that produced the Old and New Testaments, became obsessed with making the crooked straight and the rough places plain. For thousands of years the success of civilization seemed to mandate the destruction of wild places, wild animals and wild peoples. In the Bible “wilderness” was the land God cursed. Its antipode was called “paradise.” Adam and Eve lost it when they angered God and found themselves banished into the wild. The first European colonists of the New World carried in their intellectual baggage a full load of bias against wilderness. The last thing settlers of the eastern seaboard had in mind was protecting wild nature or establishing national parks! Indians were savages who needed to be “civilized” or eliminated. After a rocky start, these pioneers became very good at breaking the “will” of uncontrolled land and peoples. Axes, rifles and barbed wire—and more recently railroads, dams and freeways—were the celebrated tools of an environmental transformation that left the wilderness in scattered remnants.
Lost in the celebration of westward expansion, however, was the possible irony in the process. When does success in too great a dose produce failure? We always thought of growth as synonymous with progress, but maybe bigger is not better if it creates a civilization that is unsustainable. Maybe what really needs to be conquered is not wilderness but rather our technological, capitalist-driven culture in its cancer-like tendency to self-destruct.

It is interesting that he begins his discussion of planetary solutions in 1,000 years by going back in time and starting with a discussion of wilderness. I guess as an historian he would naturally want to explain the history of wilderness as a way of showing us that our views of wilderness have evolved (for the better) over time. Maybe by opening with this discussion he is setting the stage for us to realize that our views on other important issues can also change (for the better) over time.

I had never considered a time when wilderness did not exist, but I see his point. Man was not always removed from nature. For most of human history, we have lived with and within nature rather than being separated from it, as most of us are now.

I also notice some examples of the oppositional language that he uses in his presentation (i.e., prosperity, primitivistic; controlled, uncontrolled; paradise, wilderness; etc.).

His paragraphs so far have been fairly long. In the paragraph that begins “Lost in the celebration” however, he uses a short paragraph. I wonder why… Perhaps he is doing so to draw our attention to the bold revelation that our history as a species has been misguided, that we are “progressing” too rapidly and at the expense of our natural world. How ironic that he suggests that “bigger is not better.”

His strong language at the end of this paragraph definitely lets you know how he feels about things (i.e., our capitalist-driven culture with its cancer-like tendency to self-destruct). An impartial, objective writer he is not!

Americans began to explore these revolutionary ideas as the second millennium drew to a close in the 19th and 20th Centuries. As early as 1851 Henry David Thoreau thought that wildness held the key to the preservation of the world. George Perkins Marsh, a well-traveled diplomat who spoke twenty-one languages, understood in 1864 in his remarkable book Man and Nature that with their improved technology humans had become a new and destructive force of nature. He suspected that what humans assumed to be victory against the forest primeval could end up defeating their dreams of progress and prosperity. Beginning in the 1870s, John Muir reversed thousands of years of Judeo-Christian attitude by publicizing mountain forests as temples and cathedrals. What shocked
Americans of this generation the most was the United States Census’ pronouncement in 1890 that there was no more frontier. With the Indians crushed, the buffalo almost gone and big, industrial cities losing their luster, it was possible to think that the cherished civilizing process could go too far. The appearance in the early 20th century of best-selling books with a primitivistic slant like Jack London’s The Call of the Wild (1903) and Edgar Rice Burroughs’ Tarzan (1913) indicated that the relative valuations of wilderness and civilization were changing.

As the 20th Century began a scarcity theory of value began to reshape the relative importance of wilderness and civilization in the United States. It explains the national angst over the ending of the frontier. Attitude toward wilderness was passing over a tipping point from liability to asset. Of course the pioneers did not go camping for fun! Wilderness appreciation, and later preservation, began in the cities where wild country was perceived as a relative novelty and substantially less threatening.

The rationale of the early movement for wilderness was almost entirely anthropocentric. Scenery, recreation and the economics of a new nature-based tourism underlay the growing popularity of wild places. More sophisticated, but no less utilitarian, were ideas of wilderness as a church, a museum of national history, a stimulant to a unique art and literature and a psychological aid. These were good arguments for their time and they underlay the establishment of the first national parks and wilderness. The Wilderness Act of 1964 was revolutionary but, make no mistake, its point was the benefit of people.

Nash uses numerous historical and literary examples to paint the picture that civilization has developed to the point that it has gone too far. Nash is using the historical event of the end of the frontier in 1890 as a way to draw a line in the sand. When the frontier ended, people in America had to wake up and realize that business as usual was not working. Thoreau, Muir, London, and others were starting to affirm that our “cherished civilizing process could go too far.”

I like his idea of the national angst over this condition and that wilderness was starting to gain value because it was growing so scarce. He suggests that this shift in perceptions and valuations was for purely selfish reasons. People wanted wilderness, but they wanted it only because they saw now that it could benefit people.

A new, biocentric rationale for wilderness emerged in the last fifty years of the Second Millennium. At its core was the idea that wilderness had intrinsic value, that its protection was not about us at all! Rather, it was a place where our civilization took a badly-needed “time out” from our ten thousand year old obsession with the control
and modification of the planet. In honoring wilderness we manifested a capacity for restraint. Preserved wilderness was a gesture of planetary modesty, a way to share the spaceship on which all life travels together.

*Here we see another brief paragraph and another spot for Nash to emphasize a key turning point. In the final fifty years of the 1900s, Americans were at a place where they could finally see that wilderness had intrinsic value. What an enormous leap from our earlier perceptions of wilderness as something to be beaten back, feared, and controlled.*

*It seems like, until this point in history, Americans were unable to display any of the “planetary modesty” that Nash suggests is required if we are to have a future on our “shared spaceship.”*

10 The roots of this valuation of wilderness run back in the United States to Henry David Thoreau's belief that “wildness is a civilization other than our own.” John Muir wrote about “the rights of all the rest of creation” that civilized humans had consistently ignored. The case for the rights of certain animals had been vigorously made in England and the United States in the 19th Century, and in 1915 Albert Schweitzer extended the ideal to “reverence for life.” The implication here and in Cornell University botanist Liberty Hyde Bailey’s book *The Holy Earth,* also 1915, was not just being a good manager or “steward” of nature but respecting it as an ethical equal because it had been created by God. As Bailey put it, humans should “put our dominion into the realm of morals. It is now in the realm of trade.” This theological holism, which has a long history in Western thought and, even longer, in Asian cultures, received major support from the new science of ecology. The phrase “food chains” first appeared in 1927 and “ecosystem” in 1935. Focusing on interdependencies, ecologists gave scientific reason to believe that nature was a community to which mankind belonged, not a commodity it possessed.

11 In essays written in the 1920s and 1930s, and particularly in his book *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) wildlife ecologist Aldo Leopold became the major American articulator of what he called “the land ethic.” It is significant that wilderness preservation was one of Leopold’s highest priorities. It constituted, Leopold argued, “an act of national contrition” on the part of a species notorious for “biotic arrogance.” In the 1960s the emergence of Leopold’s book as a best-seller, along with the popularity of ecologist Rachel Carson, particularly her *Silent Spring* (1962), evidenced a changing American attitude toward nature. “Conservation,” around as a term since 1907, had been strictly utilitarian in its emphasis on national strength and prosperity. “Preservation,” which John Muir favored, implied human benefit from uncontrolled and unutilized environments. A new 1960s
word, “environmentalism,” took a broader view of utility, gave rise to the term “pollution” (which impacts many species), and added momentum to the idea of the rights of nature. Theologians and philosophers joined environmentalists in arguing that the nation’s natural rights tradition, which had extended the moral community in the past to include black people, natives and women, should now turn to the task of liberating another oppressed minority: nature. The phrase “deep ecology” appeared in 1973 to describe a belief in the right of every life form to function normally in a shared ecosystem. Some philosophers extended their application of natural rights to land forms like rivers and mountains and to ecosystems.

12 This line of ethical thinking suggested that just as John Locke’s “social contract” mandated restrictions on individual freedom in the interest of creating a sustainable society, so an “ecological contract” might restrain the human species in its relations to the ecosystem. The passage of the Marine Mammals Protection Act (1972) and the Endangered Species Act (1973) were remarkable in that they endowed non-human species with rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (in appropriate terms of course). Significantly, many of the species protected were not considered cute or useful to humans in any way; their value was intrinsic and their membership in the biotic community indisputable.

In these passages, Nash provides plenty of evidence for his contention that wilderness now had perceived intrinsic value. I am familiar with many of the sources he cites but not all of them. I am not surprised to see Thoreau and Muir mentioned again. Aldo Leopold’s idea of a land ethic seemed to give voice to the idea that everything is interdependent. People were starting to be more humble in their dealings with the natural world. And I have heard many times before that Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring alarmed many readers and helped cement the fact that humans were dependent on the natural world for their very existence. “Conservation” and “preservation” came into existence, as did other terms we now take for granted, such as “ecosystems,” “food chain,” “environmentalism,” “pollution” and “deep ecology.”

The whole idea of “liberating” nature, in much the same way that other “oppressed minorities” had been liberated, was a compelling idea. This idea of “liberating” nature sure does fit with his view that the natural world has rights and needs to be protected/freed.

13 The appearance of biocentrism and environmental ethics were encouraging, but an avalanche of evidence suggested that civilization continued to wreck havoc with natural rhythms and balances as the Third Millennium began. Awareness of the problems has penetrated deeply into contemporary thought and discussion. Accelerated human-caused decline in biodiversity amounts in the opinion of many
biologists to a Sixth Great Extinction. More humans than existed since the start of the species occupied the planet in 1950 and population surged upward at a billion every fifteen years. Sprawling into open space at the rate in the United States alone of 6,000 acres each day, people dominated most of the preferred locales in the temperate latitudes. Climate change now seems to be at least partially human-induced. Fresh water, soil, forest and food issues make headlines daily. Lurking just over the horizon are concerns over massive epidemics and the dark, cold specter of a nuclear war that would take down most life on the planet. Civilization, in a word, appears vulnerable. Making the point explicit, Jared Diamond’s book *Collapse* (2005) underscores the lack of sustainability in many human cultures over the last 10,000 years, and suggests strongly that we are not exempt. There will be a resolution of environmental problems, he argues, if not by intelligent choice then by ecological disaster and social disintegration.

As for wilderness, where most of the thirty-odd million species sharing Earth reside, it’s now an endangered geographical species. Only about two percent of the contiguous forty-eight states are legally wild, and the same amount is paved! Much of the American landscape has been modified to some degree. And the United States is a leader in national parks and wilderness preservation and is only a little more than a century beyond its frontier era. In other, older regions, France and Japan come to mind, environmental control is near total. At least in the temperate latitudes we are dealing with remnants of a once-wild world, and we face irreversible decisions about their future on a planet that suddenly seems small and vulnerable. In a century wilderness could disappear or become so fragmented as to be ecologically meaningless. Some now view this not just as a violation of the rights of humans to enjoy wild nature but of the rights of other species and self-willed environments themselves.

*Now, Nash pours it on again, laying out the “avalanche of evidence” suggesting that “civilization continued to wreak havoc with natural rhythms and balances as the Third Millennium began.” He uses wilderness as an “endangered geographical species” to make this point. He is asking us to make wise decisions now before it is too late for our species and for our planet. I think he is setting us up here with the doom and gloom stuff so that he is ready to present us with his alternative. Maybe he will finally explain his island civilization idea. He obviously believes that we are currently on the wrong course, describing the “remnants” of wilderness and the “irreversible decisions about [our] future on a planet that suddenly seems small and vulnerable.” His loaded language serves him well here. I can see that he is choosing his words very carefully.*

Looking toward the Fourth Millennium, a thousand years ahead, there seem to be several ways that the natural world we evolved in
could end. The wasteland scenario anticipates a trashed, poisoned and used-up planet that can support only a pathetic remnant of its once-miraculous biodiversity and civilization. Humans have proved to be terrible neighbors to most of the rest of life on the planet. We did not share well. Growth was confused with progress. Centuries of deficit environmental financing of too large and sprawling civilization has brought the ecosystem, ourselves included of course, to its knees. Maybe, in the height of ingratitude and irresponsibility, we have abandoned and discarded this planet. A vanguard of humans, no wiser for their history, moves through the stars seeking new frontiers to plunder. Perhaps wilderness conditions eventually return to what Alan Weisman thinks of as a world without humans, but the setback to evolution would be profound and slow in healing.

OK, this option is just scary. When I think of this future scenario, I picture The Road—the book and the film. I see a dead Earth, devoid of life and hope for the future. I sure hope future generations do not end up with a discarded planet. If we continue with our current course of action though, this could end up being reality.

The second possible future is the garden scenario. Imagine by the Fourth Millennium human control of nature is total, but this time it's beneficent. Our species has occupied and modified every square mile and every planetary process from the oceans to weather to the creation and evolution of life. It is finally, as some feared, all about us! We're no longer part of nature; we've stepped off, or more exactly, over the biotic team. Scores or even hundreds of billions of people occupy this planetary garden. Dammed rivers flow clean and cold (but without much diversity of life) and waving fields of grain stretch to the horizon. The only big animals around are those we eat. Maybe such a world could be made sustainable for a few species, but the wilderness, and the diversity of life that depends on it, is long gone. So, it may prove to be, is environmental health long thought to be linked to the normal and natural functioning of ecosystems. The gardeners of Eden may not be quite as sapient apes as they imagined and become victims of homogenization, biotic impoverishment and their own excessive appetites.

This one is a better option than the wasteland scenario, but it is still kind of creepy. There seems something inherently wrong and unethical about our species completely controlling every aspect of the natural world. Even if the water is pure and the weather is controllable, what about natural ecosystems? What about biodiversity? What about the rights of other life forms to live on the planet too? Should it be up to one species to decide what nature will look like and what creatures will inhabit the planet?

When he uses the term “sapient apes,” I get the feeling he is being ironic here. He is suggesting that our species is really not nearly as wise as we
may have thought. This tells me that Nash also does not favor this future scenario.

I hope he presents other options because so far options one and two are not sounding so good to me.

17 There is a third scenario that has captured the imagination of some thoughtful environmental philosophers. It might be called the future primitive. It involves writing off technological civilization as a 10,000 year bad experiment. Either by choice or necessity small numbers of humans resume the kind of hunter and gatherer existence that indeed worked quite well for our species for millions of years. But the downside is that the extraordinary achievements and breath-taking potential of civilization are lost. A better goal, I feel, is Henry David Thoreau’s who wished “to secure all the advantages” of civilization “without suffering any of the disadvantages.” Don’t humans have as much right to fulfill their evolutionary potential as other species? The vital proviso is that in so doing we don’t compromise or eliminate the opportunity of other members of the biotic community to fulfill theirs. This means not discarding technology but using it responsibly.

Nash himself points out the obvious disadvantages of the future primitive scenario. I don’t see this one happening because people will not choose to give up the comforts and benefits of living in civilization. And here Nash uses Thoreau to make a claim for him: “A better goal, I feel, is that of Henry David Thoreau who wished ‘to secure all the advantages’ of civilization ‘without suffering any of the disadvantages.’” Interesting… Nash uses the words of a renowned environmentalist and forward thinker to make his point for him.

But how would this be done? Why propose something like this if there is no support for actually making it happen? How can you have all of the benefits of civilization without suffering any of the disadvantages?

18 The fourth scenario for the Fourth Millennium I call Island Civilization. It’s a vision, a dream, if you prefer, like Martin Luther King’s, and it means clustering on a planetary scale. Boundaries are drawn around the human presence not around wilderness. Advanced technology permits humans to reduce their environmental impact. For the first time in human history, better tools mean peace rather than war with nature. Of course Island Civilization means the end of the idea of integrating our civilization into nature. The divorce that began with herding and agriculture is final! Since we proved clever enough to create our environment, rather than adapt to what nature provided, we’ve taken that option to the logical extreme. We impact only a tiny part of the planet. The rest is self-willed. The matrix is wild not civilized.

OK, so now we finally get the author’s proposed solution. Island Civilization is an interesting idea. Clustering on a planetary scale
turns everything we currently do upside down. It is way out there as an idea that could be entertained today, but as Nash said earlier in his presentation, he knew his ideas would be controversial. He also asks detractors of his plan to propose their solutions. I must say, based on the other three scenarios that he presents, this one is my favorite. But I see all kinds of objections being raised here. I am betting he will address some of those objections in the coming pages.

Of course a change like this one involves compromises with human freedom. On a finite planet, shared with millions of other species, only limited numbers of humans can enjoy unlimited opportunities. The first step toward Island Civilization is to check population growth and turn it back to a total of about 1.5 billion or a quarter of the present level. Of course this can be done! Here’s one problem for which we know the cause and the solution. It’s the motivation that is thus far lacking. A new, expanded earth ethic and plain fear about the crash of a bloated species might change things around. The essential first step is to put nature above people: Earth First! As it is humans increase and multiply at the rate of 10,000 per hour, a rate that wipes out any gains friends of wildlife and wilderness try to make today. Limiting (either politically and ethically or biologically with a chip implanted at birth) every woman to the use of one egg for reproduction would in a century bring things back into the balance Island Civilization demands. Do the math! Two people have one descendant. We could reach that 1.5 billion level in a century. Want a bigger family? Then buy a reproductive right from a woman with no birth expectations.

Yes, I was right. Here are the potential limits of his plan, which he is addressing. The first one might be the most controversial and hardest to actually achieve: turning back the human population. 1.5 billion is a lot of people, but still, we are at 7 billion now. Is this achievable? Nash suggests that it is, but his detractors would suggest that his privileged, first world perspective is not one shared by the rest of humanity. Can every human family in every part of the world only have one child? He paints this option as achievable for humanity, but I am not so sure. He never addresses the sticky parts of the argument. He never provides evidence for the claims he is making.

The other need for restraint is in the realm of living space. We’ve historically demanded too much of a planet we supposedly share with other species. We’ve pushed wild beings into the least desirable corners of the environment. It’s time our species took some of the “marginal” lands which we can modify with our intelligence. The fact is that we’ve been horrible roommates in the earth household. What species would support an endangered species act for us? One version of Island Civilization might mandate that the 1.5 billion people live in five hundred concentrated habitats scattered widely over Earth. Food
production, energy generation, waste treatment and cultural activities take place in 100-mile closed-circle units supporting three million humans. “Cities” cannot begin to describe the new living arrangements that the architects and engineers of the Fourth Millennium might create. They might be on the poles, around mountains, in the air, underground and undersea. Rivers might run through some of them. Some of the islands might be mobile on water or in the air. There would be cultural exchange, of course, but no need for global trade in food, energy or materials among the islands. The concept of “hundred mile meals” would be a reality. We would get back to an arrangement that worked well on a small scale for Greek city-states, medieval monasteries and pueblos of the Southwest. Sure, wild nature will be severely-altered on the islands we occupy, but isn’t that fairer and better than a planet-wide sacrifice to a single species. Moreover, I am counting on my descendants to make human impact end sharply at the edge of their islands. There would be no pollution a thousand years from now. And we would have moved beyond war. At least the old-style border conflicts would have no meaning.

Nash addresses another prerequisite to his island scenario when he discusses the space limitations that human would need to face in the future. The 500 concentrated habitats where humans would exist in the future would certainly have an impact on the Earth, but he thinks that option is OK because the majority of the Earth would be wild and free. People would stay on their island and allow the natural world to run its course.

Exciting as the possibilities are for this new way for humans to live, it is what’s outside the islands (or more clearly what is not outside them!) that is especially compelling. Sprawl is over; the human presence has imploded. Fences are down. Dams are gone. Roads, railroads, pipelines, telephone lines, ocean-going ships indeed all terrestrial forms of transportation will be unnecessary in a millennium. I’m counting on amazing new technology to make all this possible. Nuclear fusion may be just the tip of the new technological iceberg. Science fiction? Well, consider what was said about television and computers a century ago. And the pace of technological change is accelerating dramatically. Of course I can’t prove marvels such as transportation by teleportation will exist in a thousand years, but by the same token you can’t deny they won’t. Turn our best minds loose on the technological challenges of Island Civilization (rather than repairing the old, dead-end paths) and miracles will happen. It is not necessary to go back to the Pleistocene to live with a low ecological impact. Technology is essentially neutral; it’s what we do with it that is the problem. So why not expand our ethics, end mind pollution and take the high tech road to minimal impact. And start right now protecting what we want to coexist with for the long haul. The result could be the conservation biology
dream. The frontier reappears, and this time it is permanent. Rivers are full of salmon and the deer and antelope play on the plains, but we don’t need to hunt them anymore. The big predators are back too and, without human interference, perhaps evolving into some of the Pleistocene megafauna we never got to know. As we were before herding and agriculture, humans in the year 4000 are once again good neighbors in the ecological community. Homo sapiens is healthy and enjoying its version of liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and so are all the other components of the natural world.

OK, so Nash presents grandiose ideas here, but he fails to substantiate how these things would come to pass. How would humans decide on who lives where? What would prohibit people from having more than one child per family? What would happen to rule breakers?

He says he is “counting on amazing new technology to make all this possible.” He also says that “miracles will happen.” What if technology won’t solve all of these issues? What if miracles don’t happen? What then?

Taking the “high tech road to minimal impact” sounds like a sound bite, not a solution.

But what, the question frequently arises, are your options if you don’t want to live on densely-populated islands in a matrix of wilderness? The short response is that if you wanted to live a technological lifestyle in 4000 you wouldn’t have a choice. According to the terms of a new, ecological contract, we’d surrender some freedoms like herding cows on the open range or living in a sprawling ski resort. (If you wanted to ski you’d choose to live on the island built into, say, part of the Alps.) But you could leave the islands to enjoy minimum-impact vacations in high-quality wilderness. You could even live out there for a while or forever. The condition is that you’d have to do it in wilderness conditions. That means a resumption of the old nomadic, pre-pastoral ways. No settling down, no towns and walls, not even cottages in the woods. We would have finally learned what the 1964 Wilderness Act meant about people being “visitors” who do not remain in someone else’s home. Perhaps humans of the distant future could choose on a seasonal basis between ways of life centered on computers or campfires. And young people of that society might be required to take a two-year mission into the wild. Completely out of contact with the civilized islands, they would learn the old hunting/gathering ways and the old land ethics. Here is where we do go back to the Pleistocene! Is it possible people could support themselves out there for that long, living off the land? The answer is of course they could, considering that the healthy land and sea that nourished their ancestors was back again.

Here again, I am reminded of Nash’s Eurocentric, privileged vantage point. Is this idea of living off the land and choosing computers or campfires one that everyone would embrace?
Island Civilization is a response to the history of humans on Earth. For some five million years the planet was self-willed. Humans were just another hunter and gatherer and population remained small and stable. It was a successful lifestyle that weathered just as severe climate changes as the one that scares us now. About 10,000 years before the present our species began to experiment with controlling nature and reshaping our habitat. It contributed to several major cultural leaps forward. Parts of the experiment resulted in impressive pinnacles of evolutionary achievement. But over time irony kicked in. Human success, especially the idea that bigger was better, carried the seeds of its own destruction as well as that of many other life forms. From the standpoint of the rest of life, the growth of our civilization amounts to a cancer on the ecosystem. We no longer belong to the natural community; we’ve checked off the ark! Isn’t this exactly what biologist Edward O. Wilson meant in saying “Darwin’s dice have rolled badly for Earth”? Island Civilization makes the needed the correction. It permits human beings to realize their cultural and technological potential while safeguarding the same right of self-realization for all the other beings.

I have long been a supporter of the wilderness preservation movement and, more recently, of conservation biology and the rewilding idea. But it seems increasingly evident that the admirable scientists, philosophers and public servants involved in these efforts shy away from the full implications of their own ideas. Worrying about fragmentation of wildlife habitat, they neglect the option of fragmenting us! Trying to create connections between wild islands, they pass up the possibility of making civilization an island on a wild Earth. It is hard for me to see the important goals of conservation biologists for the self-willed components of this planet being realized without a major restructuring of human lifestyles and expectations. Island Civilization may not be the only answer to the big questions hanging over our species, but you can’t deny it is an answer.

Biologists warn us that evolution has discarded thousands of promising starts such as ours, and that we should be worried about the future of our present lifestyle. The upward-trending curves cannot be sustained. There will be major changes. The rub is whether they will be made deliberately or desperately. In his context it is well to remember Winston Churchill’s observation that if you play for more than you can afford to lose, you will learn the game. Well the stakes have gotten pretty high; nothing less than the future of life on Earth—and that includes ours too.

So we stand at a crossroads not merely of human history but of the entire evolutionary process. Life evolved from stardust, water and fire over billions of years until one clever species developed the capacity to bring down the whole biological miracle. But amidst the fear
associated with this reality of a sinking ark, there is one comfort. Earth is not threatened as in the age of the dinosaurs by an errant asteroid, a death star. Now, we are the death star, but we could change its course.

Imagine, in conclusion, this planet, in the desperate frame of mind contemporary conditions warrant, sending a “personals” advertisement out into interstellar space:

TEMPERATE BUT ENDANGERED PLANET
ENJOYS WEATHER, PHOTOSYNTHESIS, EVOLUTION, CONTINENTAL DRIFT
SEEKS CARING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH COMPASSIONATE LIFEFORM

Well, maybe it could still be us! Maybe biocentric ethics and reverence for self-willed nature (along with a healthy dose of fear for our future!) could turn us from cancerous to caring. So let’s be really sapient apes and respond to this plea. Earth might just be ready to receive a proposal for Island Civilization.

Nash has no trouble letting his feelings hang out when he makes statements such as “From the standpoint of the rest of life, the growth of our civilization amounts to a cancer in the ecosystem.” I love his idea that other creatures have the right to “self-realize.” And his possibility of making civilization work as a series of islands on a wild earth is one that seems to make sense to me. I agree with Nash that the stakes are high.

Decisions we make today as a species could determine our species’ fate—as well as the fate of the planet’s other life forms. We are at a cross roads, and here Nash really gets me. He stops with the doom and gloom and presents an option that we can believe in. He presents Island Civilization as something that we can be for.

As Nash suggests, we may be the death star, but we can change course. Now, the question is, will we?

I love his personals ad and his response to it. Perhaps we will turn from being cancerous to caring. I hope so.

After completing the first reading, students are ready to look more closely at the language used by the author.

**Noticing Language**

Bookmarks can be an effective way to allow students to revisit a text and discover additional meaning. As a way to encourage students to revisit text in search of terms that need further discussion/explanation, try a bookmark strategy such as the one below (adapted from McLaughlin, M. Guided Comprehension. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2003).
Have students scan the reading for any terms that they think the whole class needs to talk about. They will likely encounter several words that could be chosen. Tell students that they need to find the one word that is most important for the class to discuss. Have the students complete their bookmark handouts so that they are prepared to discuss in small groups and/or whole class settings.

Allow students to quickly share the word they chose. Your role at this point is to discuss and explain the terms with the class so that the students’ understanding of these key ideas is clarified.

**Activity 9: Noticing Language—Bookmark Activity**

Scan the reading for any terms that you think the whole class needs to talk about. You need to find the one word that is most important for the class to discuss. Once you have chosen your word, complete your bookmark handout so that you are prepared to discuss in small groups or as a whole class.

A sample bookmark appears below.

```
Name________________________

BOOKMARK

A word that I think the whole class needs to talk about is...:

Why is it important?

Paragraph number:
```
“Ticket out the Door” can be a helpful way to conduct a quick, formative assessment of student learning. This progress monitoring strategy requires students to demonstrate some brief content knowledge before they leave class. Students can use their completed bookmark as their “ticket out the door.”

After completing a class discussion of the various words chosen, students will hand in their tickets on the way out of class. Only students who have completed tickets may leave class. If students have an unacceptable bookmark, they must go to the back of the line. It’s usually a good idea to end class a few minutes early so that students can line up at the door to have their tickets checked. Students who “pass” before class is over may wait just outside the door until excused.

Activity 10: “Ticket out the Door”

You must turn in your ticket in order to leave class today. Completed bookmarks will be accepted as your “Ticket out the Door.”

After completing these activities, students are ready to consider different perspectives on Nash’s presentation.

Annotating and Questioning the Text

Perspectives and background knowledge significantly influence a reader’s understanding of a text. This strategy provides a useful way to take students through repeated readings of a text in order to show them that alternate ways of understanding and interpreting are possible. Interpretations of a text can vary—this strategy helps students experience this.

As an example, after doing a first read of Nash’s text, students may reread the text from one of these different perspectives: a subsistence farmer living in India, the leader of a national environmental organization, a single mother with several children, a conservative religious leader.

Goals:
• Help students develop critical reading skills and gain new insights into concepts as they go beyond narrow interpretations and become aware of multiple interpretations of a reading.
• Provide students with meaningful and interesting reasons to reread a selection.

Preparations:
1. List a number of perspectives on the whiteboard or Smart Board. Model how a person from one of these perspectives would react to the text the students have just read.
2. Divide the class into small groups and assign (or allow them to choose) a perspective to assume as they reread the text (or parts of the text). Due to the length of the text you might have students just read the sections describing the four future scenarios.

3. Guide each group as it defines the concerns and needs of a particular perspective. Assist students as they complete their Perspectives Guide by listing the most important concerns and needs for their perspective (see sample Perspectives Guide below).

4. Have students identify statements from the text that are most important to their assigned perspectives as they reread the text. Guide students in listing these statements and noting their relations based on perspectives.

5. Guide students as they determine whether there is any information missing from the selection that would be important to them.

6. Discuss with the entire class the insights that students gained through their rereading from different perspectives.

Activity 11: Annotating and Questioning the Text—Reading from Different Perspectives

Choose one of the perspectives from the list below:
- A subsistence farmer living in India
- The leader of a national environmental organization
- A single mother with several children
- A conservative religious leader
- Rush Limbaugh
- A futurist
- A sociologist whose expertise includes population forecasting
- A family planning expert
- A Catholic priest
- The president of an airline company
- A philosopher
- A climatologist
- A river rafting guide
- A Native American
- A philosopher
- A Kalahari bushman who is still living a hunter-gatherer existence

1. Reread the text (or parts of the text) with this perspective in mind.

2. Complete your Perspectives Guide by listing the most important concerns and needs for your perspective (see sample Perspective Guide below).
3. As you complete your Perspectives Guide, identify statements from the text that are most important to your assigned perspective.

4. Consider whether there is any information missing from the selection that would be important to your perspective.

When your Perspectives Guide is completed, be prepared to discuss the insights that you gained through your rereading from this different perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pollution free world</td>
<td>Is a pollution free world possible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with global awareness</td>
<td>Will all citizens have access to information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration for the needs of the biotic community</td>
<td>Will people be open-minded enough?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding to continue to advocate for the environment</td>
<td>Who will support my organization?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read and React**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Statements</th>
<th>Your Reaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Temperate but endangered planet enjoys weather, photosynthesis, evolution, continental drift. Seeks caring, long-term relationship with compassionate life form.”</td>
<td>This personal ad is awesome. It leaves me smiling and feeling hopeful at the same time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary Statement**

As the leader of a large environmental organization, I am intrigued by Nash’s presentation. I agree with him on several points… However, I am also concerned about several issues that he caused me to reconsider… All in all though, I think that…

After completing this activity, students will be well prepared to look closely at Nash’s use of loaded language.

This activity was adapted from Reading from Different Perspectives described on pages 84 and 85 in Strategic Teaching and Learning (CDE, 2000).
Analyzing Stylistic Choices

Loaded language is language an author uses to draw an emotional response from the reader.

Activity 12: Analyzing Stylistic Choices—Loaded Language

Look through “Island Civilization” again, this time silently. This time, your purpose is to look for “loaded” words. These are words that Nash uses purposively to draw a strong emotional reaction from the reader. List at least five words and explain whether each has a positive or a negative emotional connotation for you. Consider more neutral words that Nash might have used as a substitute for the words he chose to use. Think about why Nash chose the specific “loaded” language that he did. Do you think it worked for him?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nash’s Word</th>
<th>Positive/negative connotation</th>
<th>Neutral word as a substitute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>Immediate feelings of fear and dread</td>
<td>problem, wound, or blemish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A sense of not being in control of your fate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will begin to see how the author of this reading was very deliberate in his use of language. He selected his words carefully, realizing how much rhetorical power they could have within his presentation. Nash also chooses his evidence quite deliberately. The next activity allows students to better understand how authors select evidence that furthers their arguments.
Considering the Structure of the Text

There are various kinds of “evidence” used by the author to support his claims. Early in the text Nash uses historical and literary sources to help him make his points. For example, Nash uses the history of wilderness as a way to frame his discussion. In doing so, he cites many sources and adopts a fairly professorial tone. For instance, he cites the work of Jack London and Edgar Rice Burroughs when he discusses the relative value of wilderness and civilization.

Later in the reading, there are many claims that Nash makes that are just that— claims. These claims lack any real evidence or support.

Activity 13: Considering the Structure of the Text

Working in pairs, highlight with one color the claims made by the author that have major support. You will likely notice that when Nash cites sources and provides credible support for his points, he is discussing historical events that have already occurred. For example, when Nash discusses Aldo Leopold’s work, he references the author and his major work by name: “In essays written in the 1920s and 1930s, and particularly in his book *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), wildlife ecologist Aldo Leopold became the major American articulator of what he called ‘the land ethic.’”

Using a different color, highlight those claims that lack meaningful support. For example, claims such as a greatly reduced human population, human ‘islands’ capable of existing “on the poles, around mountains, in the air, underground, and undersea” are claims without real support. They are ideas that may or may not materialize.

Locate the last spot where Nash cites a source in his text. Where is this? Discuss why he stops citing sources at this point. What do you think causes him to shift his approach as an author? Why are many of his claims about the future lacking solid support? Explore as a class why Nash adopts a different tone and stance when he discusses the future as opposed to the past.
and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Postreading

Summarizing and Responding

For Activity 14, students will be working by themselves, in pairs, and in groups of four to create a five-word summary of “Island Civilization.” Reveal the steps one at a time to the class so that they don’t jump ahead in the process. Use a blank paper to cover the steps on an overhead transparency, or scroll down a computer display slowly. Set a timer for each phase of this activity. Five minutes per phase is a reasonable amount of time, though you will want to adjust things according to the needs of your students.
Activity 14: Summarizing and Responding—Five-Word Summary

Your teacher will now lead you through a four-step process for writing a summary of “Island Civilization” using key words from the text of the presentation.

STEP ONE: Using actual words from “Island Civilization” create a list of the five most important words in the text. These should all be words that you think are essential to the presentation’s main idea.

Possible words include wilderness, civilization, millennium, human, myopia, future, nature, irony, protected, future, humility, restraint, utilitarian, arrogance, biocentrism, species, irreversible, Earth, wasteland scenario, garden scenario, future primitive, island civilization, technology, cancerous, caring.

STEP TWO: Now, compare your five-word list to a partner’s. The two of you will then have five minutes to create a new list of the five most important words from the text by synthesizing your two original lists (you’ll need to make some cuts unless the two of you wrote exactly the same list.). Be sure to choose those terms from your lists that represent the text’s main idea.

STEP THREE: As a pair, now join another set of partners to form a group of four. Each pair will share its five-word list; then, the group of four will once again discuss which words are really most essential to the text’s main idea. The four of you will also have five minutes to create a newly synthesized list of five key words from “Island Civilization.” While you can try to persuade your peers that your word choices are the best, your group must be in agreement about its final list.

STEP FOUR: On your own, use the final list of five key words your group of four agreed on to write a summary paragraph for “Island Civilization.” Use all five words from your final list in your paragraph. Be sure to identify the main idea of the text in your summary.

Roderick Nash’s presentation “Island Civilization” highlights the issue of what the human-nature relationship might be like in 1,000 years. When looking at our history as a species, it appears that we have treated the Earth very poorly. Peering into the future, Nash suggests that we can make decisions now that will lead to a sustainable future for human beings and the Earth. Of the four future scenarios that he describes, his island civilization scenario seems most promising. The presentation suggests that humans need to learn self-restraint in order to flourish as a species without destroying the planet.

Thinking Critically

Roderick Nash adopts an op-ed style for this presentation. He likely does so for the rhetorical flexibility that this style of writing affords him. He is free to reach out to his largely academic audience and grab them with his strong language, pull at their emotions with his foreboding forecasts, and connect with them using his logical suggestions for the future. Students will benefit from analyzing this presentation rhetorically. Reading through a rhetorical
is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Grades 11-12
Reading – Informational Text
1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
3. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
4. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

Speaking & Listening
1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

lens enables readers to see into the “how” of the argument, which will help them to better understand the author’s message and intentions.

Activity 15: Thinking Critically
Discuss the following questions with your partner.

Questions about Logic (Logos)
1. What kind of evidence does Nash include to support his claims? Do you find it credible?
2. What evidence does Nash provide that suggests humans really are hurting other species’ natural rights to self-realize? Do you find the evidence Nash provides convincing?
3. Can you think of other examples of the consequences of human actions on our planet that Nash doesn’t discuss?
4. Does Nash discuss any benefits of civilization? If so, what are they?
5. Can you think of any future scenarios that Nash doesn’t discuss?
6. Who is likely to disagree with Nash’s viewpoint? Why?
7. Are you persuaded that humans will have to reorient themselves in the future in order to achieve a more harmonious relationship with the natural world? Why or why not?

Questions about the Writer (Ethos)
1. After learning more about Nash’s background and credentials, do you find him to be a credible authority on this topic?
2. How would you describe the writer’s tone when he is expressing his own opinions? How is his tone different from when he’s citing authors, historical events, and laws?

Questions about Emotions (Pathos)
1. Which words and phrases from the text express a sense of risk or threat? Do these references to danger help you have more or less sympathy for Nash’s main point?
2. Why does Nash preface his presentation with four quotes? Why do you think Nash chooses these four quotes in particular?
3. Why did Nash use a personal ad at the end of his presentation? How do you think he wants his readers to react to this ad? What about his final paragraph, which is a response to this ad? Do you find his choice of language (e.g., “cancerous to caring”) to be effective?
Challenging the Arguments

The commentary in Activity 16 summarizes the main sections of Nash’s presentation and provides strategies for challenging the arguments. This is designed to help your students play the “doubting” game and to clarify their responses to the arguments of the text in preparation for writing about it.

Activity 16: Challenging the Arguments

The commentary below summarizes the main sections of Nash’s presentation and provides strategies for challenging the arguments. This commentary is designed to help you think critically about the text of the presentation. When you first read the text, you may have found that you mostly agreed with the author. However, Nash asks for big changes in the way humans live on the planet. His claims should be carefully analyzed. If you were asked to write a response to Nash’s text, what points would you raise questions about? If you were asked to argue against him, what would be your main line of attack? Read through the commentary and the strategies for challenging the arguments and decide where Nash is most vulnerable and why. Then complete the following statement:

“If I were going to write an essay against Nash’s conclusions in “Island Civilization,” my main point would be . . .”

After you complete this statement, list your reasons for making this argument and what you might have to find out to back it up. Share your statement with a partner to see if you agree on where Nash is weakest and why.

Paragraph 1: Even though the concept of thousand-year periods called “millennia” is artificial, entering into the third millennium (and the 21st century) is a good opportunity for humans to think about the big picture, especially since we are normally nearsighted, short-term thinkers.

Comment: It is hard to argue with this. We could argue that some people think in a longer term than others. Some cultures are better at this than others.

Paragraph 2: The author says that he is going to review the history of the relationship between humans and nature, and then help us think about the big picture. He acknowledges that his “Island Civilization” proposal will be controversial, but he asks us to go beyond criticism. (We might say that he asks us to play the believing game first and then if we disagree, come up with our own proposal.)

Comment: This is fair enough. He asks us to give his arguments a chance.

Paragraphs 3-4: Nash argues that “wilderness” came into being only after humans started farming, herding, and building walls and fences to keep nature out. Civilization is where humans have control. Wilderness is uncontrolled, or has its own will. He uses the history of the word “wild” as meaning “having its own will” to support his contrast of “controlled” and “uncontrolled” spaces.

Comment: We could certainly attack the controlled/uncontrolled definition of civilization and wilderness. Are humans a part of nature? Is everything...
that humans do by definition “unnatural”? Don't other animals influence the environment? Is agriculture about controlling nature, or guiding and helping it?

**Paragraph 5:** Nash asks if the growth of civilization is really progress if the growth is unsustainable. He compares our “technological, capitalist-driven culture” to cancer. Here he introduces the idea that our political and economic system might be the cause of our environmental problems. Implicit in his argument is the idea that a capitalist economy depends on continuous growth, but such growth is unsustainable in the long term.

*Comment:* Nash doesn’t dwell on the political argument very much, but we could certainly question it. Is he against capitalism? Later, he says that certain “compromises” in human freedom will be necessary to create his vision of an “Island Civilization.” Does that mean he is against democracy?

**Paragraphs 6-7:** Nash marks the pronouncement of the U.S. Census Bureau in 1890 that there was no more frontier as a turning point in American attitudes toward wilderness. He argues that rather than being a liability, a negative factor that needed to be explored, eliminated or controlled, wilderness became an asset that should be appreciated and preserved. He points out that the pioneers went camping out of necessity, not for fun, but today we visit the wilderness to enjoy the scenery.

*Comment:* One could question his analysis of how we feel about wilderness today versus in the past. How do we define wilderness? Is it an unknown scary place? Is it a lovely place to visit and take photographs?

**Paragraphs 8-12:** Nash points to shift in the last 50 years of the 20th century from an “anthropocentric” human-centered view of wilderness based on tourism and enjoyment to a “biocentric” view that was more concerned with ecology. He quotes a number of famous nature writers in support of his argument and also cites environmental laws that were passed.

*Comment:* Many people do seem to be concerned about the environment today. However, there are also a lot of people who mock environmentalists and call them “tree huggers,” so maybe Nash is wrong about this.

**Paragraphs 13-14:** Nash argues that although humans have begun to appreciate wilderness and have passed laws to protect it, environmental damage continues. The human population grows by a billion people every 15 years, while other species become extinct. Human activity may even be changing the climate. He points to past civilizations that have declined and disappeared because of unsustainable practices. He also notes that there is very little wilderness left. He cites Jared Diamond’s book Collapse in support of his arguments about past civilizations and ecological collapse. Diamond’s book is about the mystery of what happened at Easter Island. His conclusions are somewhat controversial. An interesting blog post about Diamond’s book, with a response from Diamond, can be found at this link: <http://www.marklynas.org/2011/09/the-myth-of-easter-islands-ecocide/>.

*Comment:* This is one of the most controversial sections so far in this piece. Is this rate of population growth sustainable? Have we done enough to protect the
environment? Does it matter if thousands of species become extinct? Should we halt development and land use because of endangered species? Is climate change caused by human activity? Even the Easter Island example he alludes to from Jared Diamond’s book is still being debated.

**Paragraphs 15-20:** Nash moves from describing the history of the human-nature relationship to imagining the future. He outlines four scenarios for the Earth: 1) a trashed, poisoned, used up wasteland, 2) a human controlled garden planet with good management policies but little biodiversity and no wilderness, 3) a return to wilderness, perhaps through some catastrophe, with small numbers of humans living a primitive hunter-gatherer existence, and 4) what he calls “Island Civilization,” small city states occupying 100-mile circles, surrounded by wilderness.

Nash acknowledges that the last scenario would involve “compromises with human freedom.” The human population would have to be reduced to 1.5 billion from the current 7 billion. This would be accomplished through what amounts to a cap and trade system for births. Each woman would be allowed one child. If a woman doesn’t want a child, she could sell her right to have a child to someone else who wants more. The other limitation on freedom would be where people could live. If people wanted to live outside of a city state in the wilderness, they would have to live as hunter-gatherers without technology. Most of the planet would be wilderness.

**Comment:** These four scenarios are all debatable. Of course, he is trying to imagine what the world will look like in 1,000 years, which is not an easy task. We could argue that he dismissed scenario 2, the garden planet, too easily. His distinction between controlled and uncontrolled might be getting in the way here because the garden planet is all controlled, and he has been arguing for less control. Because of the conclusion of the essay, we might decide that he thinks scenario 1, the wasteland, is the most likely to happen. We could certainly challenge that assumption. Scenario 4, the Island Civilization, is the most interesting, but also the most problematic because it would require economic and political structures that are very different from what we practice today.

**Paragraphs 21-26:** The rest of the essay is a description of the possibilities of the “Island Civilization” scenario and a justification for the policies that would produce it. Clearly some sort of authoritarian control or strong indoctrination would be necessary to keep people from using technology or practicing agriculture in the wilderness. The benefits of this way of living would have to be great enough to justify the loss of freedom.

**Comment:** We could certainly argue that giving up freedoms to create the Island Civilization is not worth it. However, as he notes in paragraph 2, if we disagree, we should come up with our own plan.

**Paragraphs 27-28:** Nash concludes with a fictional personal advertisement posted by the planet Earth seeking a “long-term relationship with a compassionate lifeform.” But then he says that we might be the right lifeform if we change our ways.
Comment: An interesting response might be to answer this advertisement for humans, promising to change our ways, or for a group of fictional aliens, promising not to do what those nasty humans did.

Reflecting on Your Reading Process
In order to have students reflect on their initial thoughts on the major topics addressed in this text, have students go back to their anticipation/reaction guides that they completed in Activity 1 of this module.

Activity 17: Reflecting on Your Reading Process—Anticipation/Reaction Guide
Now that you’ve read “Island Civilization,” it’s time to respond or react to the views expressed in the presentation. Complete Column II of your Anticipation/Reaction Guide again using a plus sign (+) if you agree with a statement, a minus sign (-) if you disagree, and a question mark (?) if you are unsure of your opinion.

Pairs Conversation: With a partner, discuss whether or not any of your opinions were changed or confirmed as a result of reading the text. Were any of your views challenged by the text? Affirmed?

Connecting Reading to Writing
Discovering What You Think

Considering the Writing Task
The writing assignment frames the readings in a new way and will trigger a re-envisioning of the readings. Students should read and discuss the assignment and then take out their copies of the readings, their notes, their summaries, their predictions, and their answers to critical reading questions.

Students might think of this phase as gathering their tools prior to beginning a substantial project. They are about to enter an academic conversation, and they need to have some tools ready to use. What evidence will they use? What writing tools will they employ? Writers have a variety of tools available to them. They have their own experiences to draw from. They have the ability to paraphrase another author’s points. They can also summarize and quote directly.
One of the ways expert writers differ from novice writers is in their ability to expertly draw upon the appropriate writing tools required to support their thinking and writing. Writers should have a variety of tools at their disposal so that they can pick and choose the ones that are most relevant to their specific rhetorical purpose. This is not to say that a few tools can’t get the job done. But some jobs require specialized tools (for example, being able to quote directly when taking issue with an author’s language).

Without the correct tool, writing may be impeded. Students are often comfortable with first person writing. This is largely because first person writing affords them the opportunity to draw upon personal experiences. The use of personal experience is a valuable tool for a writer—but it is just one instrument among many. In academic writing, students are often expected to use other “tools,” such as summarizing major points, paraphrasing arguments, or selectively quoting another’s words to help them to make their own arguments stronger. If all students can do is draw upon personal experience, their writing will likely not be as forceful as if they had a full toolset to draw upon.

The writing process is made easier when a writer’s tool belt is stock full of possibilities. Expert writers have usually acquired several tools that work (i.e., personal experiences, summary, paraphrase, quoting directly). Developing writers are often grasping for the right tool rather than applying it when needed. Or, as often happens, new writers apply the tool incorrectly or no tool at all because they are not yet experienced enough to realize precisely what is needed for the job. The effective writer pulls out the appropriate tool (approach) when needed. To take this analogy a little farther, most people would be more impressed with a carpenter who had numerous tools at her disposal than one with only a hammer and a screwdriver.

The Selecting Your Tools activity is designed to provide students with some basic tools (writer’s moves) that will get them started.

You may select from among three possible writing assignments to assign to your students. The writing prompts for the op-ed essays use ideas and information from the article, but are a bit more focused on what students already know and thus may require a less comprehensive understanding of the details of Nash’s argument. You may find one of them more appropriate to your classroom and students.

Before students can select their writing tools and gather their evidence, they need to be familiar with the writing task that they face. Allow students to review the writing assignment you have assigned. Students should ask questions so that they are clear on what they are expected to do.
Activity 18: Considering the Writing Task—Selecting Your Writing Tools

Review the writing assignment that your teacher has assigned. Consider the questions and instructions of your assignment so that you are clear on what you are expected to do.

Assignment: Letter to the Author

The purpose of this assignment is for you to interact through writing with the author of this reading, acknowledging that there is a real person behind these ideas.

In your letter, you should summarize and acknowledge Nash’s major points. Then, you should respond to him, taking one of these stands: support his view, challenge his ideas, or present your own thoughts on the topic.

The audience for these letters will be your teacher and your classmates. (If your teacher encourages you, your letter may actually be sent to Dr. Nash.) Your purpose as a writer is to write persuasively enough to convince the author of this text that you have thoughtfully engaged with his ideas and that you have the ability to present your own opinions on this topic.

As you consider the assignment described above, jot down answers to these questions. They will help you as you consider how to craft your letter.

- To whom will you be directing your writing?
- Do you agree with Nash or want to challenge him?
- What is your thesis or main point?
- What is your rhetorical aim? Do you intend to be combative, logical, persuasive, and/or affirming?
- What kind of evidence do you need to gather? For example, will you be quoting directly? If so, you should choose quotes and be able to explain why you are choosing them. If you are summarizing and paraphrasing, you should be clear on what passages you need to work with.
- Have you completed any activities or assignments that will help you with this letter? For example, could the summary paragraph that you completed earlier in the module be useful to you here?

Alternative Assignments: Op-Ed Essays

1. Taking into account what you know of human nature in our current society, which of Nash’s four scenarios is most likely to happen: the wasteland, the garden world, the primitive world, or the Island Civilization? Or do you think there is another alternative that is more likely?

Write an Op-Ed essay ("Op-Ed" means an opinion piece that usually goes on the opposite page from the newspaper’s own editorials) that argues for your view of what will happen, why it will happen, and what we should do about it.
2. One of the ethical issues inherent in Nash’s argument is how much the present generation is responsible for preserving the environment and the planet for future generations. Is it wrong for us to engage in practices that make us rich and happy now, but will cause economic and environmental damage for our descendants?

Using the Nash presentation as an example of what might happen in the future, write an Op-Ed essay that defines how much responsibility we bear for the quality of life of future inhabitants of our world, and what, if anything, we should do to fulfill our responsibilities.

Taking a Stance

In this section, students will determine what their stance is toward the issues. Essentially, they will begin to state their opinions from multiple perspectives in order to clarify their own position.

Activity 19: Taking a Stance—Entering Academic Conversations

Imagine that you are going to debate Nash’s views with others from your class. Do you agree with Nash, or would you want to challenge him? How would you present your views? How would you refute the views of your opponents? How could you agree with part of Nash’s position while disagreeing with him at the same time?

These are difficult tasks that professional speakers/writers often are able to pull off with little effort. That is because they have a great deal of practice framing these kinds of discussions.

This activity is designed to give you practice presenting your own ideas using established academic frames.

Choose from among the academic frames below, and jot down a few points that you would use in a debate with classmates. The topic of this debate could be one of the following: Is humanity doomed? Is the Earth doomed? What will civilization look like in a thousand years? Are humans selfish?

After preparing their arguments, students should have a brief debate in small groups (three to six). Encourage them to listen attentively to others’ points. You might introduce this debate activity by having one small group model for the rest of the class on how to engage in an academic debate. This fishbowl strategy allows you to interject when needed and to model appropriate discourse.

These debates will help students refine their stances and “try on” different academic approaches to making a point.
Here are sentence frames that will help you enter the conversation:

**Introducing “Standard Views”**
- Americans today tend to believe that _________.
- Conventional wisdom has it that _________.
- Common sense seems to dictate that _________.
- The standard way of thinking about topic X is that _________.
- It is often said that _________.
- My whole life I have heard it said that _________.
- You would think that _________.
- Many people assumed that _________.

**Making What “They Say” Something You Say**
- I've always believed that _________.
- When I was a child, I used to think that _________.
- Although I should know better by now, I cannot help thinking that _________.
- At the same time that I believe _________, I also believe _________.

**Introducing Something Implied or Assumed**
- Although they have never said it so directly, my teachers have often given me the impression that _________.
- One implication of X's treatment of ________ is that _________.
- Although X does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that _________.
- While they rarely admit as much, ________ often take for granted that _________.

**Introducing an Ongoing Debate**
- In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been _________. On one hand, ________ argues _________. On the other hand, ________ contends _________. Others even maintain _________. My own view is _________.
- When it comes to the topic of ________, most of us will readily agree that _________. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of _________. Whereas some are convinced that _________, others maintain that _________.
- In conclusion then, as I suggested earlier, defenders of ________ cannot have it both ways. Their assertion that ________ is contradicted by their claim that _________.

**Capturing Authorial Action**
- X acknowledges that _________.
- X agrees that _________.

• X argues that ________.
• X believes that ________.
• X denies/does not deny that ________.
• X complains that ________.
• X concedes that ________.
• X demonstrates that ________.
• X deplores the tendency to ________.
• X celebrates the fact that ________.
• X emphasizes that ________.
• X insists that ________.
• X observes that ________.
• X questions whether ________.
• X refutes the claim that ________.
• X reminds us that ________.
• X reports that ________.
• X suggests that ________.
• X urges us to ________.

**Disagreeing, with Reasons**
• I think X is mistaken because she overlooks ________.
• X’s claim that ________ rests upon the questionable assumption that ________.
• I disagree with X’s view that ________ because, as recent research has shown, ________.
• X contradicts herself; she can’t have it both ways. On the one hand, she argues _________. But on the other hand, she also says ________.
• By focusing on ________, X overlooks the deeper problem of ________.
• X claims _________, but we don’t need him to tell us that. Anyone familiar with _________ has long known that ________.

**Agreeing, with a Difference**
• I agree that ________ because my experience in/with_______ confirms it.
• X is surely right about ________ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that ________.
• X’s theory of _________ is extremely useful because it sheds insight on the difficult problem of ________.
• I agree that _________, a point that needs emphasizing since so many people believe ________.
• Those unfamiliar with this school of thought may be interested to know that it basically boils down to ________.
• If group X is right that ________, as I think they are, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that ________.

**Embedding Voice Markers**
• X overlooks what I consider an important point about ________.
• My own view is that what X insists is a ________ is in fact a ________.
• I wholeheartedly endorse what X calls ________.
• These conclusions, which X discusses in ________, add weight to the argument that ________.

**Agreeing and Disagreeing Simultaneously**
• Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that ________.
• Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully endorse his final conclusion that ________.
• Though I concede ________, I still insist that ________.
• Whereas X provides ample evidence that ________, Y and Z’s research on ________ and ________ convinces me that ________ instead.
• X is right that ________, but she seems on more dubious ground when she claims that ________.
• While X is probably wrong when she claims that ________, she is right that ________.
• I’m of two minds about X’s claim that ________. On the one hand, I agree that ________. On the other hand, I’m not sure if ________.
• My feelings on the issue are mixed. I do support X’s position that ________, but I find Y’s argument about ________ and Z’s research on ________ to be equally persuasive.

**Signal Who Is Saying What**
• X argues ________.
• According to both X and Y, ________.
• Politicians ________, X argues, should ________.
• Most athletes will tell you that ________.
• My own view, however, is that ________.
• I agree, as X may not realize, that ________.
• But ________ are real, and arguably, the most significant factor in ________.
• But X is wrong that ________.
• However, it is simply not true that ________.
• Indeed, it is highly likely that ________.
• But the view that ________ does not fit all the facts.
• X is right that ________.
• X is wrong that ________.
• X is both right and wrong that ________.
• Yet, a sober analysis of the matter reveals ________.
• Nevertheless, new research shows ________.
• Anyone familiar with ________ should see that ________.

Entertaining Objections
• At this point, I would like to raise some objections that have been inspired by the skeptic in me. She feels that I have been ignoring ________.
  “________,” she says to me, “________.”
• Yet, some readers may challenge the view that _________. After all, many believe _________. Indeed, my own argument that ________ seems to ignore ________ and ________.
• Of course, many will probably disagree with this assertion that ________.

Naming Your Naysayers
• Here many feminists would probably object that _________.
• But social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that _________.
  Biologists, of course, may want to dispute my claim that ________.
  Nevertheless, both followers and critics of Malcolm X will probably argue that _________.
• Although not all Christians think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that _________.
• Non-native English speakers are so diverse in their views that it’s hard to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that _________.

Introducing Objections Informally
• But is my proposal realistic? What are the chances of its actually being adopted?
• Yet, is it always true that ________? Is it always the case, as I have been suggesting, that ________?
• However, does the evidence I’ve cited prove conclusively that ________?
• “Impossible,” you say. “Your evidence must be skewed.”

Making Concessions While Still Standing Your Ground
• Although I grant that ________, I still maintain that ________.
• Proponents of X are right to argue that _________. But they exaggerate when they claim that _________.


• While it is true that _______, it does not necessarily follow that _________.
• On the one hand, I agree with X that _________. But on the other hand, I still insist that _________.

**Indicating Who Cares**
• ________ used to think __________. But recently [or within the past few decades] ________ suggests that _________.
• What this new research does, then, is correct the mistaken impression, held by many earlier researchers, that _________.
• These findings challenge the work of earlier researchers, who tended to assume that _________.
• Recent studies like these shed new light on _________. which previous studies had not addressed.
• Researchers have long assumed that _________. For instance, one eminent scholar of cell biology, _________. assumed in _________. her seminal work on cell structures and functions that fat cells, _________. As _________. herself put it, “_________” (200). Another leading scientist, _________, argued that fat cells “_________” (200). Ultimately, when it came to the nature of fat, the basic assumption was that _________.
• If sports enthusiasts stopped to think about it, many of them might simply assume that the most successful athletes _________. However, new research shows _________.
• These findings challenge dieter’s common assumptions that _________.
• At first glance, teenagers appear to _________. But, on closer inspection, _________.

**Establishing Why Your Claim Matters**
• X matters/is important because _________.
• Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today’s concern over _________.
• Ultimately, what is at stake here is _________.
• These findings have important consequences for the broader domain of _________.
• My discussion of X is in fact addressing the larger matter of _________.
• These conclusions/This discovery will have significant applications in _________. as well as in _________.
• Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of _________. it should, in fact, concern anyone who cares about _________.

**Adding Metacommentary**
• In other words, _________.
• Essentially, I am arguing that _________.
Several of the frames used in the debate activity may prove helpful for students as they begin to compose their letters to the author or their op-ed essay. Students should keep their debate notes handy as they reconsider the writing assignment they will be asked to complete.

Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims

Students can select evidence by returning to the readings, their notes, their summaries, their annotations, their descriptive outlining, and other responses in order to highlight information they may use to support their claims and refute the claims of those who disagree. The students determine the relevance, specificity, and appropriateness of their evidence in relation to the rhetorical situation.

Activity 20: Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims

Return to your readings, notes, summaries, annotations, descriptive outlining, and other responses to identify evidence to use in your writing assignment. Consider the following questions to evaluate your evidence:

- How closely does this piece of evidence relate to the claim it is supposed to support?
- Is this piece of evidence a fact or an opinion? Is it an example?
• If this evidence is a fact, what kind of fact is it (statistic, experimental result, quotation)?
• If it is an opinion, what makes the opinion credible?
• What makes this evidence persuasive?
• How well will the evidence suit the audience and the rhetorical purpose of the piece?

Getting Ready to Write

As a way of helping your students get ready to write, have them engage in the Polar Opposites activity. This allows them to see that taking a stand on an issue does not have to mean choosing between two opposite positions.

Activity 21: Getting Ready to Write

As you prepare to write, think carefully about your reactions to the various viewpoints you’ve read on the issue of human beings’ relationship with the natural world. Which ones most closely represent your own opinion? Do you agree with parts of a writer’s argument but disagree with other parts? Use the activity below to think through how you see human beings’ relationship with the natural world.

Polar Opposites Guide (Bean and Bishop, 1992)

This strategy can help you take a stand on an issue; however, it doesn’t have to mean choosing between two opposite positions.

Place a check mark closest to the adjective that best describes your view on the issue of human beings’ relationship with the natural world. Then, in a small group discussion, defend your choices by using examples from the readings, class discussions, and your outside experiences and observations.

Human beings’ relationship with the natural world is…

| helpful  | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | harmful          |
| humble   | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | egotistical     |
| enlightening | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | discouraging    |
| needed   | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | unnecessary     |
| generous | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | self-serving    |
| empowering | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | disabling       |
| beneficial | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | dangerous       |
| important | __ | __ | __ | __ | __ | unimportant     |

5 4 3 2 1
Once students have examined their viewpoints, they are often ready to locate key words that will help them to advance their views. The next activity is designed to assist students with this task.

**Activity 22: Getting Ready to Write—Generating Key Words**

Once you’ve identified a possible argument for your essay, it can help to brainstorm key words that you may want to use throughout your paper. (Remember the five-word summary you wrote for Activity 14.) Creating lists of synonyms and antonyms for your key words can sharpen your focus and enhance the variety of your language. Using some of these key words in your topic sentences can also be a terrific way to make connections back to your thesis statement.

Complete the following lists with your own words:

- **sustainable**
  - Synonyms:
  - Antonyms:

- **primitive**
  - Synonyms:
  - Antonyms:

- **destructive**
  - Synonyms:
  - Antonyms:

- **balanced**
  - Synonyms:
  - Antonyms:

A “No-Points Quiz” is another low-stakes, formative assessment strategy that can be given as a “pulse check” on student comprehension. In the quiz that follows, students practice explaining the differences between key thematic words or concepts from the module. By describing these differences in their own words, students begin moving beyond a receptive or introductory understanding of the word to an expressive or internalized understanding. This activity can be done as a written quiz you collect or as a pairs-conversation.

**Activity 23: No-Points Quiz**

Explain the differences between the following terms:

- wilderness and civilization
- humanity and nature
Students should now have what they need to begin composing a draft.

Writing Rhetorically
Entering the Conversation

Composing a Draft

Letters or op-ed essays making a claim about Nash’s ideas and justifying those claims with specific evidence will be stronger if students have developed a specific thesis to guide their writing. However, remember that writing is a recursive process, so students may need to amend their working thesis as they develop their letters to the author or op-ed essays.

To write a thesis statement, students must take a stand for or against one of Nash’s ideas. In other words, a thesis statement should be debatable—a statement that can be argued or challenged and will not be met with agreement by everyone who reads it. A thesis statement should introduce a student’s stance on the subject of his or her letter or op-ed essay.

Example of a thesis statement:

High school graduates should be required to take a year off to work for an environmental organization before entering college in order to increase their environmental and global awareness.

The letter or op-ed essay that follows should present an argument and give evidence to support the claim that students should gain experience with environmentally focused organizations before entering college. A thesis (even one that may be revised later) can provide students with a sense of direction in their writing.
Activity 24: Composing a Draft—Formulating a Working Thesis

Writing down a tentative thesis at this point is a good habit to develop in your writing process. Your thesis should be a complete sentence and should be revised several times. A focused thesis statement will keep your writing on track.

Record your responses to the following questions in preparation for writing your tentative thesis statement:

• What specific question or issue will your letter or essay address? What is your response to this question/issue? (This is your tentative thesis.)
• What support have you found for your thesis?
• What evidence have you found for this support? For example, you can use facts, statistics, quotes from authorities, personal experiences, anecdotes, stories, scenarios, and examples.
• How much background information do your readers need to understand your topic and thesis?
• If readers were to disagree with your thesis or the validity of your support, what would they say? How would you address their concerns? (What would you say to them?)

Now, draft a possible thesis for your letter or essay.

Once students have developed a working thesis, they are ready to begin composing a draft.

Considering Structure

No rigid formula will cover all of the writing that students may be asked to do, but almost all writing has a beginning, middle, and end—even lab reports and journal articles have well-established standard sections and subheads. Formulaic essay structures such as the five-paragraph essay may be appropriate for some tasks, but most writing in the real world, and even in the university, does not take this form.

Activity 25: Considering Structure

The following guidelines will help you write a convincing letter or op-ed essay:

1. Choose evidence that supports your thesis statement. Evidence is probably the most important factor in writing a persuasive letter or op-ed essay. Without solid evidence, your letter or essay is nothing more than opinion; with it, your letter or essay can be powerful and persuasive. If you supply convincing evidence, your readers will not only understand your position but may agree with it.
2. **Evidence can consist of facts, statistics, statements from authorities, and examples or personal stories.** Examples and personal stories can be based on your own observations, experiences, and readings, but your opinions are not evidence. Other strategies, such as comparison/contrast, definition, and cause/effect, can be particularly useful in building an argument. Use any combination of evidence and writing strategies that supports your thesis statement.

3. **Consider the opinions of people who might disagree with you.** How will you address their concerns? Nash acknowledges that many readers will disagree with him. He almost invites readers to confront him on his ideas. You too should be ready for readers who will disagree with your positions.

Consider these general guidelines as you craft your letters or essays:

**Introduction**
- Background information (explain who you are, why you are writing)
- Introduction of subject (show Nash that you know his text well)
- Statement of your opinion (state your opinion clearly and forcefully)
- Thesis (develop a strong thesis that propels your letter or essay)

**Body Paragraphs**
- Lots of evidence (what evidence will you be using?)
- Opposing point of view (are there opposing points of view?)
- Response to opposing point of view (If there are opposing viewpoints, have you considered them?)

**Conclusion**
- Restatement of your position
- Call for action or agreement (Do you want Nash to do something? Change something? Believe something? Act on your behalf?)

---

**Using the Words of Others (and Avoiding Plagiarism)**

One of the most important features of academic writing is the use of words and ideas from written sources to support the writer’s own points.

Learning to cite accurately and determining how best to incorporate the words and ideas of others are essential for students to establish their own ethos. For a more detailed explanation of how to teach students to avoid plagiarism and cite sources, see Assignment Template, Appendix I, and the Rhetorical Grammar section of Module 6, Into the Wild.
Students need practice choosing passages to quote, leading into quotations, and responding to them so that they are well integrated into their own text.

Activity 26: Using the Words of Others

Nash uses many brief quotations (one word, a short phrase, or a sentence) to help him make his arguments more forceful and persuasive. The purpose of this exercise is to help you identify how writers introduce and explain quotations. Review the examples below from “Island Civilization.” Consider how these quotes were integrated into Nash’s presentation. Discuss what you notice with a partner.

1. “What we call wildness is a civilization other than our own.”

   Nash presents a sentence-long quotation by a like-minded American thinker to shed light on the topic he will be examining in his presentation. Because the quote appears before the presentation and appears alongside other quotes by famous thinkers, Nash does not comment on the quotes directly. However, it is clear that he has chosen these quotes well. They help orient readers to his way of thinking without the author needing to make any comment on them. This quote speaks for itself.

2. In essays written in the 1920s and 1930s, and particularly in his book *The Sand County Almanac* (1949), wildlife ecologist Aldo Leopold became the major articulator of what he called “the land ethic.”

   Nash frames this quote nicely, introducing the era, the name of the text, the author’s name, and the significance of the author prior to hitting us with the three-word quote. The three words are quoted because this is the major idea that Leopold is known for. The land ethic is Leopold’s unique take on things, so Nash quotes the words. It would be tough to summarize or paraphrase such a brief quote. Nash’s use of quotes here makes it quite clear that “the land ethic” is Leopold’s idea, not his.

3. It was significant that wilderness preservation was one of Leopold’s highest priorities. It constituted, Leopold argued, “an act of national contrition” on the part of a species notorious for “biotic arrogance.”

   Here Nash begins with a sentence that frames the previous quote while transitioning readers into the next quoted sentence. Notice how he just quotes a few of Leopold’s words here. The phrases “act of national contrition” and “biotic arrogance” are heavy ideas that are well worded by Leopold. Nash honors the original author’s abilities as a writer by choosing to quote his exact words for maximum effect. He also lets readers know that quotes are coming by his use of the phrase “Leopold argued.”

4. A better goal, I feel, is that of Henry David Thoreau who wished “to secure all of the advantages” of civilization “without suffering any of the disadvantages.”

   Nash again is strategic in which words from Thoreau he uses. He chooses a few words and manages to weave them into his own sentence. He uses Thoreau’s words to make his point. By quoting Thoreau, Nash elevates his own idea, which happens to align nicely with Thoreau’s. There is also a seamless sentence...
here in terms of grammatical structure. Nash nicely blends his own words with those of Thoreau. I do notice that Nash avoids citing the specific page number and title of the source where this quote comes from. Perhaps that is a convention for this kind of scholarly presentation, but it is typical to cite the author, title, and page number when quoting directly.

Now, locate quotes from the text that can help you to make your arguments stronger. As you revisit the text in search of possible quotes to use, consider the questions below:

- What parts of the readings are most relevant to the assignment?
- What parts do you agree with the most?
- What parts do you disagree with?
- What is one statement that sums up your opinion about this issue?
- What specific information could you use to support this opinion?
- Is there a sentence or passage that sums up or is representative of the author’s position or approach?
- Is there something in the text that is particularly well said?
- Is there something that will support (or refute) the position you are going to take in your paper?
- Are there any controversial statements?

In the next activity, students will choose a direct quote (word, phrase, or sentence) that they can use in their responses to the assignment.

**Negotiating Voices**

The goal of negotiating voices is for students to be able to distinguish their ideas from those of their sources and to make clear their stance in relationship to those sources. The following activity can help students put direct quotations, indirect quotations, concepts, facts, ideas, and opinions from other writers into their own texts while keeping all the voices distinct.

**Activity 27: Negotiating Voices—Framing Quotations**

Choose a direct quote (word, phrase, or sentence) that you can use in your response to the assignment. You should note the page number of the quote so that it can easily be located when preparing the assignment.

Once you have chosen a quote, use one of the frames below (or develop your own) to introduce and explain your quoted material. Share your work with a partner. In this activity, the following should be clear:

1. The identity of the author of the quote
2. The source of the quote
3. The reason you chose the quote

4. The significance of the quote

**Introducing Quotations**

- X states, “______.”
- As the prominent philosopher X puts it, “______.”
- According to X, “______.”
- X himself writes, “______.”
- In her book, ________, X maintains that “______.”
- Writing the journal *Commentary*, X complains that, “______.”
- In X’s view, “______.”
- X agrees when she writes, “______.”
- X disagrees when he writes, “______.”
- X complicates matters further when he writes, “______.”

**Explaining Quotations**

- Basically, X is saying ________.
- In other words, X believes ________.
- In making this comment, X argues that ________.
- X is insisting that ________.
- X’s point is that ________.
- The essence of X’s argument is that ________.


Many similar frames for introducing the words and ideas of others and signaling a stance on those ideas can be found in *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein.
Revising and Editing

Revising Rhetorically

A rhetorical approach to revision can help your students understand that revision is a strategic, selective process; what writers choose to revise depends on the ultimate purpose of their writing.

Activity 28: Revising Rhetorically

Write answers to the following questions to help you think about your audience, your purpose, your image as a writer, and your argument and the evidence that supports it. Then revise your letter or essay to clarify and strengthen each of these areas.

1. What is your purpose in writing? What questions are you trying to answer? What are you trying to accomplish?
2. What sort of image, or ethos, as Aristotle would say, do you want to project to your reader? How will you achieve it? What words or type of language might you want to use to help construct your ethos?
3. What are your main arguments? (Aristotle would call this “logos.”) What support do you have? For example, you can use facts, statistics, quotations from authorities, personal experiences, anecdotes, stories, scenarios, and examples. What is your strongest evidence?
4. Do you include quoted material? If not, why not?
5. Are there any emotional appeals (pathos) you want to use?
6. If readers disagree with your thesis or the validity of your support, what would they say? How would you answer them?

After students have responded to the questions outlined in this activity, they should have a better sense of how their arguments are constructed. Any structural or organizational changes should have been made prior to asking students to edit their work in the next activity.

If your writing assignment was to write a letter to the author, this scoring guide may be used to evaluate your final product.

Scoring Guide for Letters to the Author

Categories
- Focus
- Word choice, including the use of text from the text
5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

6. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

**Speaking & Listening**

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Language**

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

---

- Argument and support
- Grammar and mechanics

**Scoring**

**Score of 4—Superior**
- The letter is tightly focused on the issue or issues raised in the presentation to which it responds.
- The writer uses words effectively and efficiently and quotes key words and phrases from the text.
- The writer makes a clear point or points and provides convincing support for those points.
- There are no grammatical or mechanical errors.

**Score of 3—Good**
- The letter focuses on an issue or issues raised in the text to which it responds.
- The writer uses words accurately and effectively.
- The writer makes a clear point or points and provides support for those points.
- Grammatical or mechanical errors, if present, are minor.

**Score of 2—Fair**
- The letter discusses an issue or issues raised in the text to which it responds but may be unclear or vague as to its focus.
- The letter is sometimes repetitive or vague in language.
- The writer does not make a clear point or does not provide support for the letter’s points.
- Grammatical or mechanical errors inhibit communication.

**Score of 1—Poor**
- The letter fails to clearly address an issue raised in the text.
- The letter is vague, repetitive, or confusing.
- The writer fails to make a clear point.
- Grammatical and mechanical errors confuse and distract the reader.

---

**Considering Stylistic Choices**

Writers can make stylistic choices in order to enhance the clarity of their messages, make emotional connections with readers, and establish their ethos. These choices draw readers in or push them away. Students can consider the effectiveness of their stylistic choices by responding to the questions in Activity 29.
Activity 29: Considering Stylistic Choices

Consider the effectiveness of your stylistic choices by responding to the following questions:

- How will the language you have used affect your reader’s response?
- Which words or synonyms have you repeated? Why?
- What figurative language have you used? Why did you use it?
- What effects will your choices of sentence structure and length have on the reader?
- In what ways does your language help convey your identity and character as a writer?
- Is your language appropriate for your intended audience?

Editing the Draft

While the first draft of an essay is generally writer-based, as writers revise they create writing that has the reader in mind, writing that is, in other words, more reader-based. At this point, students will need to address surface-level issues such as grammar and usage errors, sentence clarity, sentence variety, word choice, and various other stylistic features. Students benefit from instruction that targets particular constructions and asks them to make observations about those constructions. Identifying and practicing these constructions and conventions constitutes a major part of an individual’s editing knowledge.

Activity 30: Editing the Draft

You now need to work with the grammar and mechanics of your draft to make sure that your use of language is effective and conforms to the guidelines of standard written English.

Individual Work

Edit your draft based on the information you have received from your instructor or a tutor. Use the editing checklist provided by your teacher. The suggestions below will also help you edit your own work.
Editing Guidelines for Individual Work

- If possible, set your essay aside for 24 hours before rereading to find errors.
- If possible, read your essay aloud so you can hear your errors.
- Focus on individual words and sentences rather than overall meaning. Take a sheet of paper and cover everything except the line you are reading. Then, touch your pencil to each word as you read.
- With the help of your teacher, figure out your own pattern of errors—the most serious and frequent errors you make.
- Only look for one type of error at a time. Then go back and look for a second type, and if necessary, a third.
- Use the dictionary to check spelling and confirm that you’ve chosen the right word for the context.
- If you are writing a letter, it should be brief (one-two pages). Every word counts. Are there words that serve no purpose in your letter? Can they be deleted? If so, delete them. If you are writing an op-ed essay, it may be longer but should still not contain unnecessary words.

Responding to Feedback

Students need feedback on their writing. Some of this can be from peers during the revision stage, but instructor feedback is essential. Although responding to drafts and conferencing with students is undoubtedly time consuming, it is important to intervene in the writing process at the most useful points and to make comments that are well-targeted to both the assignment’s demands as well as to the student’s needs and language development processes.

The most valuable point for students to receive feedback is before they revise and edit, so they can actively apply what they learn from your response to the next draft. One particularly effective time for instructor response is after students have produced their first revised, “reader-based” draft. Students can then use your feedback to revise and improve the final draft they will submit for a final grade. As students see their own writing evolve, an improved grade can serve as additional motivation for them to put sustained effort into revisions.

Most writing instructors make a distinction between “global” issues such as thesis, focus, and arguments, and “local” issues such as grammatical and usage errors. While all students need both global and local responses, English learners will benefit from more frequent and extended opportunities to receive and respond to feedback. English learners may also benefit from instructor response to specific aspects of the English language, for example, particularly difficult or idiosyncratic grammatical forms that English learners are still in the process of acquiring.
Acting on Feedback

When students get their papers back with feedback, ask that they consider all of the feedback they got from various peers, instructors, and others and make decisions about what changes they are going to implement.

**Activity 31: Responding to Feedback**

It is important to consider all the feedback you receive while you are writing your letter or essay and decide what changes you will make. The following questions can be considered at various points in your writing process:

- What are the main concerns my readers had in reading my draft?
- Do all of the readers agree?
- What global changes (thesis, arguments, evidence, organization) should I consider?
- What do I need to add?
- What do I need to delete?
- What sentence-level and stylistic problems do I need to correct?
- What kinds of grammatical and usage errors do I have? How can I correct them?

It is useful for instructors to model this revision process with a sample paper. When students can observe and collaboratively participate in how to move from feedback to revision, they are better able to internalize the moves proficient writers make in revision and subsequently engage in these moves independently.

**Reflecting on Your Writing Process**

Reflection is an essential component in learning. Students benefit from discussing what they have learned about how to write and sharing that information with the rest of the class.

**Activity 32: Reflecting on Your Writing Process**

When you have completed your letter or essay, answer these six questions:

1. What was most difficult about this assignment?
2. What was easiest?
3. What did you learn about arguing by completing this assignment?
4. What do you think are the strengths of your argument? Place a wavy line by the parts of your essay that you feel are very good.
5. What are the weaknesses, if any, of your paper? Place an X by the parts of your essay you would like help with. Write any questions you have in the margin.

6. What did you learn from this assignment about your own writing process—about preparing to write, writing the first draft, revising, and editing?

After the student letters or essays have been assessed, students should be provided an opportunity to revise their work. Then, students wishing to correspond with the author should be encouraged to email Dr. Nash. This process of engagement with an actual author should help students to realize that there are multiple audiences for their work.