

## Transcendentalism Essay Topics

1. Voices of dissent have always played an important role in American History. In a well-developed essay, explain the similarities and differences between the writings of transcendental movement of the 1800's and the Beat poets of the 1950's and '60's. You may choose to compare multiple authors and writings or focus on one poem and one transcendental piece.
2. *The Things They Carried* and the Vietnam War both can be seen as “transcendental dilemmas.” In an analysis of the whole book **or a key chapter** or two, explain the conflict between transcendental values and the Vietnam War. Some issues to consider: How does individualism, nature, morality or egoism play a role in the book/war? In what ways does Obrien have his characters confront transcendental dilemmas? You must use quotes from the book and from the Trans. Readings.
3. In *Dead Poets Society*, Mr. Keating encourages his students to “seize the day” and to make their lives, “extraordinary.” In a well-developed essay, analyze the transcendental ideas Keating uses to inspire his students to make their lives “extraordinary.” Then, discuss how key events in the film change the lives of the characters and discuss whether these changes are positive or negative. Note: you are not simply retelling the events of the film; you must analyze their significance and relate the film to the ideas expressed by Emerson and Thoreau.
4. Develop your own topic- Must be cleared with me.

Your essay must have a thesis/introduction, a body section and a conclusion. It should be approximately 2-4 typed pages. You must use at least 3 quotes from the films. Poems, essays, etc.