

# Teenage

## "Rebellion Never Gets Old"

### Historical Influences Sources

#### Guiding Question:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of conforming to society's expectations? Adolescents strive to answer this question. By studying writers, philosophers, artists, musicians, inventors, and other creative minds, you will see how others have answered this question.

#### Self-reliance By Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string.** Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort, and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

....

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. **Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members.** Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

....

**Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.** He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser, who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within? my friend suggested, — "But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to me to be such;

but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition, as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he.

....

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day. — 'Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.' — Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. **To be great is to be misunderstood.**

Emerson, Ralph Waldo, and Richard Wulf. *Self-reliance*. Drexel Biddle, Publisher, 1900.

### Conclusion of Walden by Thoreau

[10] Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises? **If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.** Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

Thoreau, Henry David. "Walden. 1854." *Ed. J. Lyndon Shanley. Princeton: Princeton UP (1971).*

**Moment of Thought:** What are the advantages and disadvantages to conforming to society's expectations?

## "Different Drum"

Linda Ronstadt

You and I travel to the beat of a different  
drum

Oh can't you tell by the way I run  
Every time you make eyes at me  
Wo-oh

You cry and moan and say it will work out  
But honey child I've got my doubts  
You can't see the forest for the trees

Oh don't get me wrong  
It's not that I knock it  
It's just that I am not in the market  
For a boy who wants to love only me

Yes, and I ain't saying you ain't pretty  
All I'm saying is I'm not ready  
For any person place or thing

To try and pull the reins in on me

So good-bye I'll be leaving  
I see no sense in this crying and grieving  
We'll both live a lot longer  
If you live without me

Oh don't get me wrong  
It's not that I knock it  
It's just that I am not in the market  
For a boy who wants to love only me

Yes, and I ain't saying you ain't pretty  
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**Moment of Thought: How is the "Different Drum" quote used and interpreted? Is this interpretation in agreement with Thoreau?**

**Moment of Thought: Read "Teenage Wasteland by Anne Tyler then look at the following questions.**

1. Who does the author sympathize with? What is the author's tone, or attitude toward her subjects?
  - the parents
  - the son
  - both the parents and the son
  - an unbiased, neutral portrait of this family
2. Why do you think the author titled this story "Teenage Wasteland"?
3. How did you respond to this story? Are you irritated with Donny or do you understand him? Why do you think you responded the way you did? Has anything in your life made you respond this way?
4. Do you think teenagers really feel this way?
5. What life circumstances from this reading have you seen in your life (or someone close to you)?
6. How was the quote "Different Drummer adopted?

## My Generation

By The Who

People try to put us d-down (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

Just because we get around (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

Things they do look awful c-c-cold (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

I hope I die before I get old (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation

This is my generation, baby

Why don't you all f-fade away (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

Don't try to dig what we all s-s-s-say (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

I'm not trying to 'cause a big s-s-sensation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

I'm just talkin' 'bout my g-g-g-generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

My generation

This is my generation, baby

Why don't you all f-fade away (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

And don't try to d-dig what we all s-s-say (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

I'm not trying to 'cause a b-big s-s-sensation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

I'm just talkin' 'bout my g-g-generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation

This is my generation, baby

My my my generation

People try to put us d-down (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

Just because we g-g-get around (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

Things they do look awful c-c-cold (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

Yeah, I hope I die before I get old (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

My generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation, baby (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

This is my generation (Talkin' 'bout my generation)

**Moment of Thought: Read: How do the lyrics represent each succeeding generation? Do the lyrics apply to the present generation? How does each generation view conformity and nonconformity? What are some of the current fads that represent conformity and nonconformity?**

**The Road Not Taken**  
Robert Frost, 1874 - 1963

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

**Moment of Thought: What metaphor is being made?**

**Moment of Reflection: Think about the option that was not chosen and then make a list tabulating the imaginary chain of consequences that might have followed if the other alternative would have been chosen. Draft a description of the person who might have evolved had the other path been chosen.**

**Moment of Thought: Read "Journey" By Joyce Carol Oates then look at the following direction.**

Draw a literal and figurative representation of the story.

**"Who You Are"**

Pearl Jam

Come to send, not condescend  
Transcendental consequence  
Is to transcend, where we are  
Who are we? Who we are

Trampled moss on your souls  
Changes all, you're a part  
Seen it all, not at all  
Can't defend, f\*\*\* the man

Take me for a ride, before we leave

Avalanche, falling fast  
Guidin' winds, happenstance  
Off the track, in the mud  
That's the moss, in the fore-mentioned verse

Just a little time, before we leave

Stop light plays its part  
So I would say you've got a heart  
What's your part? Who you are  
You are who? Who you are

**Moment of Thought: "Transcendental Consequence." How do you "transcend Where we are?" What does Pearl Jam have to offer on the concept of conformity and nonconformity? What is their advice?**

**What are the advantages and disadvantages of conforming to society's expectations?**