

Mr. Francis
American Literature II

Dear Mr. Emerson (New York, 2015) Response

Although your instructor has been known to refer to Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) as the most important American intellect of the nineteenth century, he recognizes at least two significant shortcomings of this preeminent Transcendentalist's philosophy: i. his writing is intensely abstract and ii. his intended audience appears to be young men of New England who enjoyed a certain level of privilege with regards to education, wealth, and other social advantages.

Your challenge: Respond to the ideas presented in Emerson's "Self-Reliance" from your particular perspective--that of a twenty-first century adolescent part of a technologically advanced, multicultural society.† Address the extent to which the essay resonates with you, but also offer any meaningful personal criticisms of Emerson's theses. Your goal is to be far more concrete in your discussion than Emerson.

You must quote from three distinct parts of the text (avoid overlap), and your analysis should demonstrate a firm mastery of the material.

Length guidelines: 200-350 words. Do not exceed two pages.

Format guidelines: All submissions must be double-spaced with a Courier New font and one-inch margins all around.

Assessment: Your response will be assessed pass/fail, based on how adequately and appropriately it addresses the prompt.

Submission guidelines: Late submissions will not be accepted. Please upload to turnitin.com by 7:59 a.m. on the assigned due date.

Any assistance in completing this assignment should be noted in your declaration (including your classmates, the instructor, on-line resources, any printed material, etc.). Please carefully keep track of your sources, as students who choose to expand this assignment for the first marking period's major assignment will be required to include a works cited list. I will not tolerate academic dishonesty.

† You need not address every element of your outlook.