

Walden Vocabulary Text

Hi, this is AJ. Welcome to the vocabulary lesson for “Walden.” Let’s get started.

Our first word is advance, to advance. So this is a verb. Now you probably know advanced in another meaning, meaning high level. But this is a different meaning. This is a verb. It’s an action. To advance means to move forward, to move forward. So advance towards your dreams means move towards your dreams. Go forward towards your dreams.

Alright, our next word is to endeavor. This is a noun also but in this paragraph it’s a verb, to endeavor to do something. To endeavor to live the life you have imagined. To endeavor to live your dreams and endeavor means to try, to attempt. So, to attempt to live your dreams, to try to live your dreams, to endeavor to live your dreams. So Thoreau is saying you should endeavor to live your biggest dreams. You should try to live your biggest dreams.

Okay, and then a little later he says if you do this, if you try to live your biggest dreams and you try hard then you will have success unexpected in common hours. Unexpected is kind of like a surprise, right? But in common hours means during normal times, like in your normal life. So maybe right now, during your normal life you imagine your big, big dream and you can’t imagine success. It seems so difficult. It’s like “Oh my god.” So this is sort of your normal time, your common hour. But if you take a big chance, if you really try, your success will be huge. It will be bigger than you can imagine normally. So in common hours means normally, during normal times, usually. It has that idea.

Little bit later he uses the word liberal. Liberal has a lot of different meanings and uses. It can be used in a political way, but here it’s used in a much more general way. He says if you try to reach your dreams, then liberal laws will begin to happen around you. So liberal here means flexible, free, open, tolerant. Okay, so it’s this idea of more flexible, more free, more tolerant and open. So what he’s saying is that liberal laws, laws as in like religious laws, spiritual laws, scientific laws, physical laws. He’s just saying that the universe or God or whatever will make things easier for you.

That the more you try for your big, big dream that things will become more liberal. Your life situation will become more flexible. Your life situation will become more easy and free. Your life situation will become more open. So he’s saying that your experiences, your situation, your environment will become more liberal because you have this strong belief for your big, big dream. Because of that your environment will become liberal, liberal meaning flexible, liberal meaning free and open.

Alright, next we have the verb, the word to establish. To establish. So he says this liberal environment will establish itself around you. The liberal laws, the liberal environment, the liberal situation, the free open situation will establish itself around you. To establish means to create, basically. So this situation will be created around you. It will be established around you, so to establish means to create, to start and create, to make. Okay, so again establish means to create, to make.

Alright, our next phrase “in proportion as,” we also say “in proportion to,” so in proportion as or in proportion to means equal to or in the same amount, in the same amount or equal to. So it’s in proportion, in proportion to, in proportion as. So when he says in proportion as you simplify your life, life will be easier. It means those two things are equal. If you make your life a little simple, your life becomes a little easier. If you make your life a lot simpler, your life becomes a lot easier, equal amounts. These amounts equal each other. So if one is less, the other is less. If one is more the other is more. Right, they’re in proportion. They’re equal amounts, or similar amounts.

I already talked about this next one in the main article but let me talk about it again, to build castles in the air. He says if you have built castles in the air your work is not lost. It’s not bad is what he’s saying. Building castles in the air is not bad. So to build castles in the air, it’s an idiom and it means to dream something big, to have a big, big, big, big dream. Some people think this is negative, right?

Oh you’re a dreamer. You’re not realistic. You’re a dreamer. You are always building castles in the air. You’re always dreaming. Dreaming something big, dreaming something big. Building castles in the air, to build castles in the air, to dream something big and wonderful. Of course, he’s saying that’s great, that’s what you must do. If your dreams are small you won’t have any energy. You won’t have any passion. Nothing happens. So he’s saying you should build castles in the air. You should dream big.

Then he says but the next step is you must put the foundations under them. So this is a metaphor, it’s kind of like poetry a little bit. He’s saying put the foundations under the castle in the air. What does that mean? It’s a little complicated. Well, a foundation is the bottom of a building. It has different meanings, this word foundation. But here we’re talking about the bottom of a building, kind of the floor and under the floor. The whole building is on top of the foundations, it’s the bottom. So the foundation must be strong, right? You have to have a strong foundation, a strong bottom so you can build a big building on top. So that’s the direct meaning, it’s the bottom of a building.

But what he’s really saying here is that you have to have actions to support your dreams. So if your dreams are in the air, they will fall unless you put actions under them, right? He’s comparing dreams and a building. He’s comparing dreams and a castle. He’s saying if you have a castle, if you have a big building in the air, you must put something under it. You must support it, right, a foundation. So if a castle is a dream, the building is a dream, what’s the foundation? The foundation is action. You have to put action or actions under your dreams. That’s how your dreams become real. You must support your dreams with actions. That’s what he’s saying. That’s what he

means by foundation. Put the foundation under your dreams. Put the actions under your dreams.

Alright, that is all for our vocabulary lesson for Walden. See you next time for the mini-story.