

# **Ralph Waldo Emerson The American Scholar Summary**

## **Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar": A Comprehensive Summary**

Introduction:

Are you intrigued by the foundational texts of American Transcendentalism? Do you want a deep dive into Ralph Waldo Emerson's influential address, "The American Scholar"? This comprehensive summary will equip you with a thorough understanding of Emerson's powerful message, exploring its core arguments, historical context, and lasting legacy. We'll unpack the essay's key themes, examining how Emerson envisioned the role of the American intellectual and the importance of self-reliance and intuition in shaping a unique national identity. Prepare to delve into the heart of this seminal work and discover its enduring relevance for today's readers.

### **I. The Man Thinking: Cultivating Self-Reliance**

Emerson's "The American Scholar" opens with a powerful call for intellectual independence. He critiques the reliance on European traditions and established authorities, urging American scholars to break free from the shackles of imitation. This central theme of self-reliance underscores the essay's entire argument. Emerson argues that true scholarship isn't about passively absorbing knowledge from the past but actively creating it through personal experience and intuition. He champions the "man thinking," the individual who engages in independent thought and critical analysis, refusing to be bound by dogma or tradition. This emphasis on individual experience prefigures a key tenet of Transcendentalism: the inherent goodness and potential of the individual. The scholar, therefore, isn't just a repository of knowledge, but a creative force, shaping their understanding of the world through personal reflection and observation.

### **II. The Threefold Influence on the Mind: Nature, Books, and Action**

Emerson identifies three primary influences shaping the scholar's mind: nature, books, and action. Nature, for Emerson, isn't simply a backdrop but a dynamic force that nourishes the soul and inspires creativity. He describes the restorative power of nature, its ability to awaken the senses and foster a deeper connection with the spiritual realm. This connection with nature is crucial for the scholar, providing a source of inspiration and grounding them in the fundamental truths of existence.

Books, the second influence, represent the accumulated wisdom of humanity. However, Emerson cautions against a slavish adherence to the past. He advocates for a critical engagement with

literature, urging scholars to select and interpret texts thoughtfully rather than passively absorbing them. The true scholar, Emerson argues, doesn't merely consume knowledge; they actively engage with it, using it as a springboard for their own original insights.

Finally, action completes the triad. Emerson emphasizes the importance of translating intellectual insights into concrete action. The scholar's role isn't limited to contemplation; they must also engage actively with the world, applying their knowledge and insights to make a difference. This call to action underscores the essay's pragmatic dimension, highlighting the social responsibility of intellectuals to contribute to the betterment of society.

### **III. The Scholar's Duty: Shaping American Identity**

Emerson's address was delivered at Harvard College, a significant institution at the time. His words were intended not just as an intellectual exercise but as a call to arms for American scholars to shape the burgeoning nation's identity. He believed that America had the unique opportunity to create a culture distinct from Europe, free from the constraints of tradition and dogma. This meant cultivating a new intellectual landscape rooted in self-reliance, intuition, and a deep connection to the American experience. The scholar, in Emerson's vision, would play a pivotal role in this process, fostering a national identity based on originality, independence, and moral integrity. This isn't merely a call for academic excellence; it's a call for a national intellectual revolution.

### **IV. The Legacy of "The American Scholar"**

"The American Scholar" remains a powerfully relevant text today. Its core themes – self-reliance, individualism, the importance of intuition, and the responsibility of intellectuals – continue to resonate with readers. The essay has had a profound impact on American thought and culture, influencing generations of writers, thinkers, and activists. Its enduring influence lies in its timeless message: the individual's capacity for self-discovery and the vital role of independent thought in shaping a just and flourishing society. Emerson's call for intellectual independence and social responsibility remains a powerful challenge, urging us to engage critically with the world and strive for a more authentic and meaningful existence.

### **V. Outline of "The American Scholar"**

Name: Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar"

Outline:

Introduction: A powerful call for intellectual independence and a critique of imitation.

Chapter 1: The Man Thinking: Emphasis on self-reliance, intuition, and individual experience.  
Chapter 2: The Threefold Influence: Exploration of nature, books, and action as shaping forces.  
Chapter 3: The Scholar's Duty: The role of the scholar in shaping American identity.  
Conclusion: A summary of the core arguments and a call for action.

## **VI. Detailed Explanation of the Outline Points:**

**Introduction:** This section sets the stage, establishing the central theme of intellectual independence and introducing the critique of blind adherence to European traditions. Emerson immediately establishes his intention to address a new type of American scholar, unbound by the past.

**Chapter 1: The Man Thinking:** This section delves into the concept of self-reliance as the cornerstone of true scholarship. It examines the importance of individual experience and intuition in shaping one's intellectual development. The focus here is on the internal process of thought and the rejection of external authorities.

**Chapter 2: The Threefold Influence:** This is the heart of the essay, dissecting the three primary influences shaping the scholar's mind: nature, books, and action. Each influence is discussed in detail, highlighting their unique contribution to the scholar's development and the need for a balanced approach.

**Chapter 3: The Scholar's Duty:** Here, Emerson moves from the individual level to the societal. This section focuses on the scholar's responsibility in shaping American culture and identity. It's a powerful call for action, urging scholars to use their insights to contribute to the betterment of society.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion summarizes the central arguments, reinforces the call for intellectual independence and self-reliance, and leaves the reader with a lasting impression of the essay's powerful message.

## **VII. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

1. What is Transcendentalism? Transcendentalism was a philosophical and literary movement emphasizing intuition, individual experience, and the inherent goodness of humanity.
2. What is the main idea of "The American Scholar"? The main idea is the need for American scholars to cultivate intellectual independence, break free from European traditions, and shape a unique national identity.
3. How does Emerson view the role of nature? Emerson views nature as a powerful source of inspiration, rejuvenation, and spiritual insight for the scholar.
4. What is the significance of the threefold influence? The threefold influence (nature, books, action) emphasizes the holistic nature of scholarship, combining contemplation and action.

5. Why is self-reliance so important to Emerson? Self-reliance is crucial because it fosters originality, critical thinking, and intellectual independence.
6. How does Emerson's essay relate to American identity? Emerson believed American scholars had a duty to create a unique national identity based on self-reliance and independence.
7. What is the lasting legacy of "The American Scholar"? The essay's lasting legacy lies in its enduring themes of self-reliance, individualism, and the social responsibility of intellectuals.
8. Who was the intended audience of "The American Scholar"? The intended audience was primarily American scholars and students at Harvard College.
9. How can I apply Emerson's ideas to my own life? Emerson's ideas encourage critical thinking, self-reflection, and engagement with the world, promoting a more meaningful life.

## VIII. Related Articles

1. Emerson's Self-Reliance: A Deep Dive: Explores the core tenets of Emerson's concept of self-reliance and its influence.
2. Transcendentalism and American Literature: Discusses the impact of Transcendentalism on American literary movements.
3. Nature in Emerson's Writings: Analyzes the significance of nature in Emerson's philosophical and literary works.
4. The American Scholar: A Critical Analysis: Provides a more in-depth critical analysis of Emerson's essay.
5. Emerson and Thoreau: A Comparison of Ideals: Compares and contrasts the philosophical views of Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.
6. The Influence of Emerson on Civil Disobedience: Examines the influence of Emerson's ideas on Thoreau's concept of civil disobedience.
7. Understanding Transcendentalist Philosophy: Provides a broad overview of Transcendentalist philosophy and its key figures.
8. Ralph Waldo Emerson's Life and Works: A biographical look at Emerson's life and its impact on his writings.
9. The American Renaissance and its Key Figures: Places Emerson within the context of the broader American Renaissance.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** The American Scholar Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2020-09-28 I greet you on the re-commencement of our literary year. Our anniversary is one of hope, and, perhaps, not enough of labor. We do not meet for games of strength or skill, for the recitation of histories, tragedies, and odes, like the ancient Greeks; for parliaments of love and poesy, like the Troubadours; nor for the advancement of science, like our cotemporaries in the British and European capitals. Thus far, our holiday has been simply a friendly sign of the survival of the love of letters amongst a people too busy to give to letters any more. As such, it is precious as the sign of an indestructible instinct. Perhaps the time is already come, when it ought to be, and will be, something else; when the sluggish intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids, and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of

mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions, that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt, that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years?

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** The American Scholar (1838) by Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2016-11-12 Ralph Waldo Emerson (May 25, 1803 - April 27, 1882), known professionally as Waldo Emerson, was an American essayist, lecturer, and poet who led the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was seen as a champion of individualism and a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society, and he disseminated his thoughts through dozens of published essays and more than 1,500 public lectures across the United States. Emerson gradually moved away from the religious and social beliefs of his contemporaries, formulating and expressing the philosophy of transcendentalism in his 1836 essay *Nature*. Following this groundbreaking work, he gave a speech entitled *The American Scholar* in 1837, which Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. considered to be America's intellectual Declaration of Independence.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** Nature Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1849  
**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** **Understanding Emerson** Kenneth Sacks, 2003-03-30 Publisher Description

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** *Society and Solitude* Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1870

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** Self-Reliance, the Over-Soul, and Other Essays Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2010 The six essays and one address in this volume flesh out Emerson's transcendentalist ideas. In addition to the celebrated title essay, the others included here are *History*, *Friendship*, *The Over-Soul*, *The Poet and Experience*, plus the famous Harvard Divinity School Address.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** **The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson** Joel Porte (ed), Sandra Morris, 1999-04-28 A collection of newly commissioned essays provides a critical introduction to pastor and poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** **Self-reliance** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2014-03-27 Every great man is a unique. R.W Emerson told us that Self-confidence is always about independence : What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** **Intellect** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2018-10-30 This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. To ensure a quality reading experience, this work has been proofread and republished using a format that seamlessly blends the original graphical elements with text in an easy-to-read typeface. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** *Essays* Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1873

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** **Changing Lives Through Literature** Robert P. Waxler, Jean R. Trounstein, 1999 When the members of the group, who had been pushed to the margins and refused a voice, began to rediscover their identity, the idea for this

anthology was born. This book will arouse interest in anyone involved in, or moved by, the Changing Lives through Literature program. It is truly a valuable gift for alternative learners: criminal offenders in or out of prison, displaced workers, and any reader failed by the traditional educational system.--BOOK JACKET.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** *The Tyranny of Virtue* Robert Boyers, 2019-09-24 From public intellectual and professor Robert Boyers, "a powerfully persuasive, insightful, and provocative prose that mixes erudition and first-hand reportage" (Joyce Carol Oates) addressing recent developments in American culture and arguing for the tolerance of difference that is at the heart of the liberal tradition. Written from the perspective of a liberal intellectual who has spent a lifetime as a writer, editor, and college professor, *The Tyranny of Virtue* is a "courageous, unsparing, and nuanced to a rare degree" (Mary Gaitskill) insider's look at shifts in American culture—most especially in the American academy—that so many people find alarming. Part memoir and part polemic, Boyers's collection of essays laments the erosion of standard liberal values, and covers such subjects as tolerance, identity, privilege, appropriation, diversity, and ableism that have turned academic life into a minefield. Why, Robert Boyers asks, are a great many liberals, people who should know better, invested in the drawing up of enemies lists and driven by the conviction that on critical issues no dispute may be tolerated? In stories, anecdotes, and character profiles, a public intellectual and longtime professor takes on those in his own progressive cohort who labor in the grip of a poisonous and illiberal fundamentalism. The end result is a finely tuned work of cultural intervention from the front lines.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** *Emerson's Essays* Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1920

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** *First We Read, Then We Write* Robert D. Richardson, 2009-03-01 Writing was the central passion of Emerson's life. While his thoughts on the craft are well developed in "The Poet," "The American Scholar," *Nature*, "Goethe," and "Persian Poetry," less well known are the many pages in his private journals devoted to the relationship between writing and reading. Here, for the first time, is the Concord Sage's energetic, exuberant, and unconventional advice on the idea of writing, focused and distilled by the preeminent Emerson biographer at work today. Emerson advised that "the way to write is to throw your body at the mark when your arrows are spent." *First We Read, Then We Write* contains numerous such surprises—from "every word we speak is million-faced" to "talent alone cannot make a writer"—but it is no mere collection of aphorisms and exhortations. Instead, in Robert Richardson's hands, the biographical and historical context in which Emerson worked becomes clear. Emerson's advice grew from his personal experience; in practically every moment of his adult life he was either preparing to write, trying to write, or writing. Richardson shows us an Emerson who is no granite bust but instead is a fully fleshed, creative person disarmingly willing to confront his own failures. Emerson urges his readers to try anything—strategies, tricks, makeshifts—speaking not only of the nuts and bolts of writing but also of the grain and sinew of his determination. Whether a writer by trade or a novice, every reader will find something to treasure in this volume. Fearlessly wrestling with "the birthing stage of art," Emerson's counsel on being a reader and writer will be read and reread for years to come.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** *Emerson and the Dream of America* Richard G. Geldard, 2010 This book connects the awakening of hope that led to the election of Barack Obama with a rebirth of Emerson's great Dream of this new yet unapproachable America. This is the first book to combine Emerson's energising teachings for individuals with the theme of achieving America's unique promise as a nation. It is a timely message about the ground of our being and the future of our country and offers strength and confidence to readers who dream (as Emerson did) of an America devoted to equality, social justice, and economic opportunity for all its citizens.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary:** *Society and Solitude and Other Essays* Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2020-05-11 This is a reproduction of the original artefact. Generally

these books are created from careful scans of the original. This allows us to preserve the book accurately and present it in the way the author intended. Since the original versions are generally quite old, there may occasionally be certain imperfections within these reproductions. We're happy to make these classics available again for future generations to enjoy!

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: The Conduct of Life** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1860

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: Emerson on Transcendentalism** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1986-09 The full texts of four seminal works by Emerson are presented in this volume: 'Nature,' 'The American Scholar,' 'The Divinity School Address,' and 'The Transcendentalist.' Edward Ericson assesses that impact in his helpful introduction and evaluates anew Emerson's continuing influence on American culture in our century.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: Nature, Addresses, and Lectures** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1883

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: Walden** Henry David Thoreau, 1980 On the Duty of Civil Disobedience: This is Thoreau's classic protest against government's interference with individual liberty. One of the most famous essays ever written, it came to the attention of Gandhi and formed the basis for his passive resistance movement.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: The American Scholar** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1992-03-01 Bonded Leather binding

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2009-09-30 Introduction by Mary Oliver Commentary by Henry James, Robert Frost, Matthew Arnold, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Henry David Thoreau The definitive collection of Emerson's major speeches, essays, and poetry, *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* chronicles the life's work of a true "American Scholar." As one of the architects of the transcendentalist movement, Emerson embraced a philosophy that championed the individual, emphasized independent thought, and prized "the splendid labyrinth of one's own perceptions." More than any writer of his time, he forged a style distinct from his European predecessors and embodied and defined what it meant to be an American. Matthew Arnold called Emerson's essays "the most important work done in prose." INCLUDES A MODERN LIBRARY READING GROUP GUIDE

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: Little Annie's Ramble** Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1853

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: The American Scholar; an Address** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2023-07-18 Delivered to the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard in 1837, this speech is considered a seminal work of American literature. Emerson argues that American scholars should break free from European intellectual traditions and forge a distinctly American culture and identity. He calls for a new kind of intellectual independence, one that values creativity, self-reliance, and a deep connection with nature. *The American Scholar* remains a powerful statement of the American ideal of individualism. This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: Montaigne; Or, the Skeptic** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2017-04-15 Ralph Waldo Emerson (May 25, 1803 - April 27, 1882) was an American essayist, lecturer, and poet who led the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was seen as a champion of individualism and a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society, and he disseminated his thoughts through dozens of published essays and more than 1,500 public

lectures across the United States. Emerson gradually moved away from the religious and social beliefs of his contemporaries, formulating and expressing the philosophy of transcendentalism in his 1836 essay *Nature*. Following this work, he gave a speech entitled *The American Scholar* in 1837, which Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. considered to be America's intellectual Declaration of Independence. Emerson wrote most of his important essays as lectures first and then revised them for print. His first two collections of essays, *Essays: First Series* (1841) and *Essays: Second Series* (1844), represent the core of his thinking. They include the well-known essays *Self-Reliance*, *The Over-Soul*, *Circles*, *The Poet* and *Experience*. Together with *Nature*, these essays made the decade from the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s Emerson's most fertile period. Emerson wrote on a number of subjects, never espousing fixed philosophical tenets, but developing certain ideas such as individuality, freedom, the ability for humankind to realize almost anything, and the relationship between the soul and the surrounding world. Emerson's nature was more philosophical than naturalistic: Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Emerson is one of several figures who took a more pantheist or pandeist approach by rejecting views of God as separate from the world. He remains among the linchpins of the American romantic movement, and his work has greatly influenced the thinkers, writers and poets that followed him. When asked to sum up his work, he said his central doctrine was the infinitude of the private man. Emerson is also well known as a mentor and friend of Henry David Thoreau, a fellow transcendentalist. Emerson was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on May 25, 1803, a son of Ruth Haskins and the Rev. William Emerson, a Unitarian minister. He was named after his mother's brother Ralph and his father's great-grandmother Rebecca Waldo. Ralph Waldo was the second of five sons who survived into adulthood; the others were William, Edward, Robert Bulkeley, and Charles. Three other children—Phebe, John Clarke, and Mary Caroline—died in childhood. Emerson was entirely of English ancestry, and his family had been in New England since the early colonial period.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: Compensation** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2018-11-28 Excerpt from *Compensation: An Essay* The line of thought in the essay can easily be traced. A few paragraphs are devoted to dispose of the unlucky preacher who assumed that justice is not rendered in this present world. Life gives this preacher and popular religion the lie. And how? There is polarity everywhere; attraction and repulsion; a compensating principle, alike in nature, in mechanics, and in man. The farmer must pay for his farm; the President pays dear for his White House. The universe appears in each one of its particles. God is in every moss and cobweb. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at [www.forgottenbooks.com](http://www.forgottenbooks.com) This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: The Tao of Emerson** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2007 *The Tao of Emerson* strikingly brings together two of the most influential voices in the history of letters: Lao Tse, the sixth-century B.C. Chinese mystic, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American transcendentalist known to many as "the sage of Concord." By adroitly juxtaposing on facing pages the texts of Lao Tse's masterpiece, the *Tao Te Ching*, with Emerson's writings, Richard Grossman illuminates how these two remarkable men, from opposite sides of the world and separated by 2,500 years, are united in an inspired wisdom and common spirit: to live simply and tranquilly; trust one's own intuition; seek out and appreciate the spiritual grace in the natural world; act without self-assertion; abjure violence; harmonize with the ebb and flow of nature and circumstances; and, above all, assure that there is a place in the world for humility, yielding, gentleness, and serenity. There is no direct path linking Lao Tse to Emerson, since the *Tao Te Ching* was not translated into English until 1891, nine years after Emerson's death. But America's Founding Thinker was nonetheless in many ways the heir to the great Chinese mystic's insight and



philosophy. As Grossman observes, "Emerson's brand of fresh home-grown English adds a radiant color to the ancient thoughts of the Chinese Master." Although Lao Tse was a citizen of the world's oldest empire and Emerson of its youngest republic, *The Tao of Emerson* makes the brilliantly presented case that a common literary thread binds these two men. Grossman's Introduction, in which he compares the men's lives, and the passages he has selected from their work give both writers a special resonance for today's reader and help to reveal Emerson in a whole new light. This volume includes original brush calligraphy by the celebrated Taoist master Chungliang Al Huang. Praise for *The Tao of Emerson* "This inspired book from one of Emerson's strongest readers is a great gift. Through the reflected light of the Tao Te Ching, Richard Grossman has made the core of Emerson's wisdom transparent, allowing us to see into the heart of what makes the sage of Concord our very own Lao Tse." —Richard G. Geldard, editor of *The Essential Transcendentalists* "One measure of a spiritually serious book is whether it repeatedly stops us dead in our tracks as we read it and allows us to foresee the ultimate triumph of truth and principle in our lives and in the life of the world. This is such a book." —Jacob Needleman, author of *Why Can't We Be Good?* "Deeply immersing himself in both the wisdom of Lao Tse and the philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Richard Grossman has produced a remarkable Guide to life, a handbook filled with venerable worlds combined to yield a new poetry of the mind. Reading it, 'we stand,' with Emerson, 'before the secrets of the world.'" —Megan Marshall, author of *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism* "This marvelous volume will bring joy and light to those who know or even suspect that Emersonianism is not a system, a product, or a position but a way or a path. For those who haven't yet gotten it but want to try, this book is the perfect place to start." —Robert D. Richardson, Jr., author of *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: Emerson & Thoreau** Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elizabeth Hall Witherell, 2003 Excerpted essays from Emerson & Thoreau with additional essay comparing the two.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: New England Reformers** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2018-06-23 New England Reformers Ralph Waldo Emerson Ralph Waldo Emerson (May 25, 1803 - April 27, 1882) was an American essayist, lecturer, and poet who led the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was seen as a champion of individualism and a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society, and he disseminated his thoughts through dozens of published essays and more than 1,500 public lectures across the United States. Emerson gradually moved away from the religious and social beliefs of his contemporaries, formulating and expressing the philosophy of transcendentalism in his 1836 essay *Nature*. Following this work, he gave a speech entitled *The American Scholar* in 1837, which Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. considered to be America's intellectual Declaration of Independence. Emerson wrote most of his important essays as lectures first and then revised them for print. His first two collections of essays, *Essays: First Series* (1841) and *Essays: Second Series* (1844), represent the core of his thinking. They include the well-known essays *Self-Reliance*, *The Over-Soul*, *Circles*, *The Poet* and *Experience*. Together with *Nature*, these essays made the decade from the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s Emerson's most fertile period. Emerson wrote on a number of subjects, never espousing fixed philosophical tenets, but developing certain ideas such as individuality, freedom, the ability for humankind to realize almost anything, and the relationship between the soul and the surrounding world. Emerson's nature was more philosophical than naturalistic: Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Emerson is one of several figures who took a more pantheist or pandeist approach by rejecting views of God as separate from the world. He remains among the linchpins of the American romantic movement, and his work has greatly influenced the thinkers, writers and poets that followed him. When asked to sum up his work, he said his central doctrine was the infinitude of the private man. Emerson is also well known as a mentor and friend of Henry David Thoreau, a fellow transcendentalist. Emerson was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on May 25, 1803, a son of Ruth Haskins and the Rev. William Emerson, a Unitarian minister. He was named after his mother's brother Ralph and his father's great-grandmother Rebecca Waldo. Ralph

Waldo was the second of five sons who survived into adulthood; the others were William, Edward, Robert Bulkeley, and Charles. Three other children-Phebe, John Clarke, and Mary Caroline-died in childhood. Emerson was entirely of English ancestry, and his family had been in New England since the early colonial period. We are delighted to publish this classic book as part of our extensive Classic Library collection. Many of the books in our collection have been out of print for decades, and therefore have not been accessible to the general public. The aim of our publishing program is to facilitate rapid access to this vast reservoir of literature, and our view is that this is a significant literary work, which deserves to be brought back into print after many decades. The contents of the vast majority of titles in the Classic Library have been scanned from the original works. To ensure a high quality product, each title has been meticulously hand curated by our staff. Our philosophy has been guided by a desire to provide the reader with a book that is as close as possible to ownership of the original work. We hope that you will enjoy this wonderful classic work, and that for you it becomes an enriching experience.

**ralph waldo emerson the american scholar summary: *Essays and Poems*** Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2009-03-01 For well over a century, people's lives have been deeply affected by the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson was one of the most influential and controversial writers of the 19th century. He advocated total independence of thought, rejecting conformity for its own sake. For Emerson the individual was key, with each person holding part of an eternal truth which collectively transcended the bounds of mortality. This profoundly optimistic view of humanity is laid out in and underlies his poetry and prose, written in a unique style which is highly readable as well as thought-provoking. Containing many of his most important writings, *Essays and Poems* is the perfect introduction to the work of this singular American thinker.

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