

Life on the Edge

“The question is not what you look at, but what you see. It is only necessary to behold the least fact or phenomenon, however familiar, from a point a hair's breadth aside from our habitual path or routine, to be overcome, enchanted by its beauty and significance.” — [Henry David Thoreau](#)

“Honor the space between no longer and not yet.” — Nancy Levin

Liminality has been described as “the in-between”- characterized by transition, change, and ambiguity. There are places (such as the British Isles) that are imbued with liminality and there are many organisms that fill liminal “niches”. For this project, you will work with two other people to closely examine a liminal place or organism and then create a piece of art inspired by your observations.

Step 1: Grouping

Find 2-3 other Red Team members with whom you might have some common aesthetic ideas and with whom you would be able to create a quality project. There must be at least one 9th grader and one 10th grader in each group. There must not be more than two 10th graders in a group—this is our limiting reagent.

Step 2: Brainstorm

Individually research real-life locations or organisms that reflect characteristics of “liminality”. Be prepared to discuss what you found with your group, and how these locations or organisms meet the definition of liminality. Consider the following as you research:

- Containing elements of paradox (i.e., Having contradictory traits)
- Being on a borderline (between environments or phases of life)
- Experiencing drastic change during life cycle
- Adapting to different environments

DEFINITIONS

[Liminality](#)

ANIMALS

[Liminal Animals: Creation of Animal Denizship](#)

[Liminal Animals: Exotic, Endangered and Transgenic Creatures](#)

SPACES

[The Metaphors and Rituals of Place and Time](#)

[Communitas and Liminality](#)

[Liminality and Communitas](#)

[Liminality and the Power of Thresholds](#)

Step 3: Share-Out

Share the results of your research with your group and discuss which has the strongest “pull” for you. Decide on one liminal place or organism which can be examined or observed (even if only indirectly through the internet).

Step 4: Observe

Observe your liminal place or organism. Utilize as many different resources as you can – including first-hand, if possible. Record your observations in a notebook using the techniques discussed in Core. Each group member should contribute observations to this “notebook”. This will be the evidence portion of your Initial FQ’s.

Initial FQs

1. Evidence-- notebook of observations (see Ms. Jessen’s ppt). If feasible, it is better to observe your animal or location in person. If this is not feasible, then the internet will suffice (CITE your sources ALWAYS!!!).
2. Connections-- How do these observations made by your group reflect liminality?
3. Perspective-- Identify a location or an organism that is NOT liminal. Discuss why it is not liminal - keeping in mind that to understand what something is, you also have to know what it is not.
4. Relevance-- Why did you choose this location or organism? What was compelling or inspirational for you? How will this location or organism inspire quality art?
5. Transition--Project Proposal! Create a proposal for a piece of artwork in response to your research. In your plans, move beyond imitation (e.g, NO portraits of seals or sandbag tidepools). In your proposal, describe your artwork, process, and intent in detail. Please note that this question is worth 4 of your total 12 points.
 - What artform(s) will your artwork encompass?
 - What school location(s) will you need to create your art pieces (e.g., VA room, band room, MIA computer bay, band room, 320s).
 - What will your artwork look/sound like?
 - What materials will you need?
 - What steps will you need to follow to create your artwork?
 - What role will each group member fill?
 - How will you maximize class time (Note: All group members MUST be able to use class time consistently)?
 - How will your artwork connect back to your research?
 - How will this collaborative project expand your skills and/or perspectives as artists?

Important Dates (all due dates are at the END of Core)

Liminal organism or location choice DUE: Wed, Jan 4

Initial FQs with Works Cited page DUE: Friday, Jan 13

Progress check DUE: Fri, Feb 3

Peer & adult feedback DUE: Fri, Feb 17

Portfolio DUE: Fri, March 3

Presentations: Wed, March 8-Fri, March 17

Final FQs DUE: Fri, March 24