

Discussion Questions for Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance" (p. 362)

1. What rhetorical device (syntactic structure) does Emerson use in the first paragraph?
2. Discuss the meaning of, "There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction *that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide...*"
3. Discuss the metaphor Emerson uses at the end of this first paragraph. To what is he comparing the growing of corn? What is the significance?
4. Identify the aphorism in the second paragraph. What is Emerson saying about life and the individual?
5. What does Emerson consider to be sacred (para. 3)?
6. As you read through the rest of paragraph 3, discuss whether you agree or disagree with his views on the individual and life. Explain your answers.

