**“Self-Reliance”**

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper and in complete sentences.

**Metaphor:** a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things without the use of such specific words of comparison as *like, as, than, resembles*

**Imagery:** the use of language to evoke a picture or concrete sensation of a person, thing, place or experience

**Aphorism:** a brief, cleverly worded statement that makes a wise observation about life

**Theme:** a central idea in a literary work.

1. Interpret the first sentence. What does every person realize at some point in his or her education?
2. “The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray.” Interpret.
3. What does Emerson mean by the “divine idea of each of us represents”?
4. Explain the significance of the “iron string.” Why do you think Emerson used iron and not silken, golden, or silver string?
5. “Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members.” Interpret.
6. “The virtue in most requests is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion.” Explain.
7. Discuss the use of the simile, “words as hard as cannon balls.”
8. Interpret the metaphor, “A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by statesmen and philosophers and divines.”
9. A good essay develops a single idea. Identify at least one theme that runs through *Self Reliance*.
10. An aphorism that gains currency and is passed from generation to generation is called a proverb or adage. Select two quotations from Emerson that could be considered to be aphorisms and that you believe have the potential of becoming proverbs. Explain why you chose them and why you think they will speak to many generations.