



English I: Reading: Module 2: Practice 2: Section 2

Annotate and Analyze a Paired Passage

Reading and Annotating Texts

Instructions: Use the two texts that follow to help you complete the lesson.

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer by Walt Whitman



Source: Whitman with butterfly, Google Books, Wikimedia

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
5 How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.



Source: Starry Night Over the Rhone, Vincent Van Gogh, Wikimedia



A Shared Vision to Dazzle Urbanites With the Night Sky

by Jeremy Smerd



Source: 0.City Energy, Tesmec S.p.A, Wikimedia

- 1 While Times Square is not known for star gazing — the celestial kind, that is — and few people would normally venture onto a pitch-black ball field in Inwood to see the constellations, two unrelated, if not unlikely, projects hope to turn the city’s night eyes skyward.
- 2 Jason Kendall, an amateur astronomer, and Katja Aglert, a Swedish **installation artist**, want to turn out the lights in different parts of Manhattan and, weather permitting, **illuminate** the night sky.
- 3 “How can you appreciate something you’ve never seen?” said Mr. Kendall, 41. “You’ll never get anyone to make the sky dark until you show them how beautiful it can be.”
- 4 Mr. Kendall and Ms. Aglert, 38 — who do not know each other — face daunting challenges to realize their visions.
- 5 He must persuade the city’s parks department to darken Inwood’s Dyckman Fields, which run north for about 15 blocks from Dyckman Street, on April 3 and April 4.
- 6 She has to persuade landlords and billboard owners in Times Square to cut their lights for one minute sometime this spring.
- 7 “Turning off the lights for one minute is like a moment of silence, only this is a turned-off minute,” Ms. Aglert said. “Hopefully, people will reflect on the fact that we don’t see stars any more.”



- 8 Indeed, a study published in 2001 in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society in London calculated that more than two-thirds of people in the continental United States never encounter a sky dark enough to see the Milky Way. With the majority of the world's population now living in or near cities, there is growing concern among astronomers and environmentalists that the permanent twilight of urban areas is making star gazing, once as simple as looking up, a bygone pastime.
- 9 On most nights, about a couple dozen stars can be seen over Manhattan; and in Times Square, the city's **epicenter** of artificial light, an observer would be hard pressed to pick out the brightest object in the sky after the moon — that would be Venus.
- 10 The Milky Way has not been regularly seen in Manhattan since the 1940s, said Stephen Lieber, a member of the Amateur Astronomers Association of New York. But legislation passed by the State Assembly and introduced in the City Council would seek to lessen the intrusion of light into the night sky. One goal would be to install more lamp posts that direct light downward.
- 11 “People in the city have a right to see the nighttime sky,” said Assemblywoman Linda B. Rosenthal of Manhattan, who introduced the legislation in the Assembly.



Source: NYC from NJ, e_Monk, Flickr

- 12 On the nights in April that Mr. Kendall wants Dyckman Fields darkened, the moon will rise early, and astronomy enthusiasts around the world are signifying the occurrence to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first recorded use of a telescope.
- 13 Dyckman Fields, tucked between the forested ridge of Inwood Hill Park and the Hudson River, is an especially promising place for star watching, Mr. Kendall says.
- 14 Two nights a week, Mr. Kendall sets up his telescope just outside the park at Isham Street and Seaman Avenue. With the passion of a street evangelist, he coaxes passers-by to join him in praise of celestial bodies.



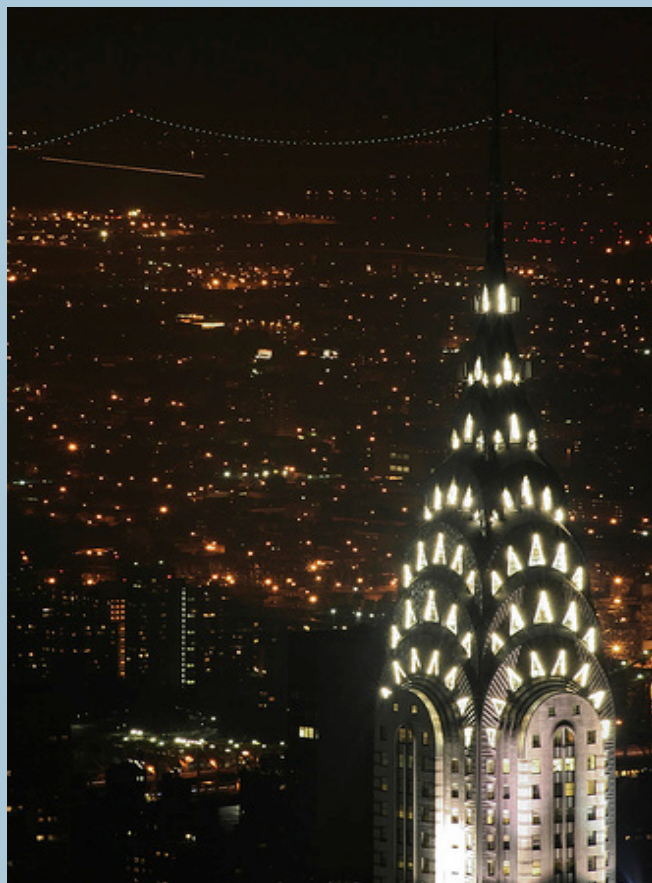
15 “Hey, how ya doing?” Mr. Kendall said theatrically on a recent night as couples, dog walkers and teenagers strolled past. “You wanna see Saturn? It’s just starting to peek through the trees.”

16 As a small crowd gathered, Mr. Kendall, a systems administrator for Cantor Fitzgerald who holds master’s degrees in astronomy and, perhaps not surprisingly, theater, continued with his pitch.

17 “Now, Titan is an amazing place,” he said, referring to one of Saturn’s moons. “The surface of Titan looks like New Mexico, except it rains liquid **methane**.”

18 He swiveled the telescope, peered into it, then sighed loudly as a car’s headlights obliterated his field of vision.

19 “Ugh, glare bomb!” Mr. Kendall said. “I was trying to see an ancient **supernova** remnant, but the street lights are too bright.”



Source: Chrysler Building at night #1, dream4akeem, Flickr

20 If the parks department, which said it was considering his request, agrees to turn off the lights, the sky could be dark enough to see hundreds of stars, Mr. Kendall says.

21 Ms. Aglert, who was awarded \$21,000 from the Swedish government and given office space by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council to pursue her project, faces fewer government hurdles than Mr. Kendall. Since she is not proposing to turn off traffic signals, street lamps and other city lights, she does not need official approval, though the Buildings Department said she had to submit a proposal.

22 But her project would involve 20 buildings from 41st to 51st Street, and between Broadway and Seventh Avenue. She also needs the cooperation of each landlord, and the owners of the billboards and the signs. Finally, she must find a way to synchronize the moment when all the lights are turned off, a feat she intends to turn over to a project manager.



Source: NYC at night, @tommybytes, Flickr

- 23 Jordan Barowitz, a spokesman for the Durst Organization, which owns 4 Times Square, said his company would like to participate. “If the artist can line everybody up and convince everybody in the neighborhood that it’s worthwhile, we’re happy to play a part in the success of the project,” he said.
- 24 For the past two years, San Francisco has held a citywide conservation campaign called Lights Out, which encouraged people to turn out nonessential lights for one hour. In 2007, Sydney, Australia, began a 60-minute blackout called Earth Hour. Last year, the effort, organized by the World Wildlife Fund, went global, with people and businesses in cities like Chicago participating. New York did not officially take part, though the Empire State Building and some signs in Times Square darkened briefly.
- 25 “I’m not saying everything must be dark in society,” Ms. Aglert said. “The functional lights should still be on. But perhaps we can think about making less light.”
- 26 Mr. Kendall was articulating this very point in Inwood before interrupting himself at the approach of Wasim Ottman, 17 and his brother, Wsam, 16.
- 27 “Hey!” Mr. Kendall said. “You wanna see Saturn?”
- 28 Wsam tentatively peered through Mr. Kendall’s telescope.
- 29 “I don’t believe it!” he exclaimed. “Saturn really does have a ring.”