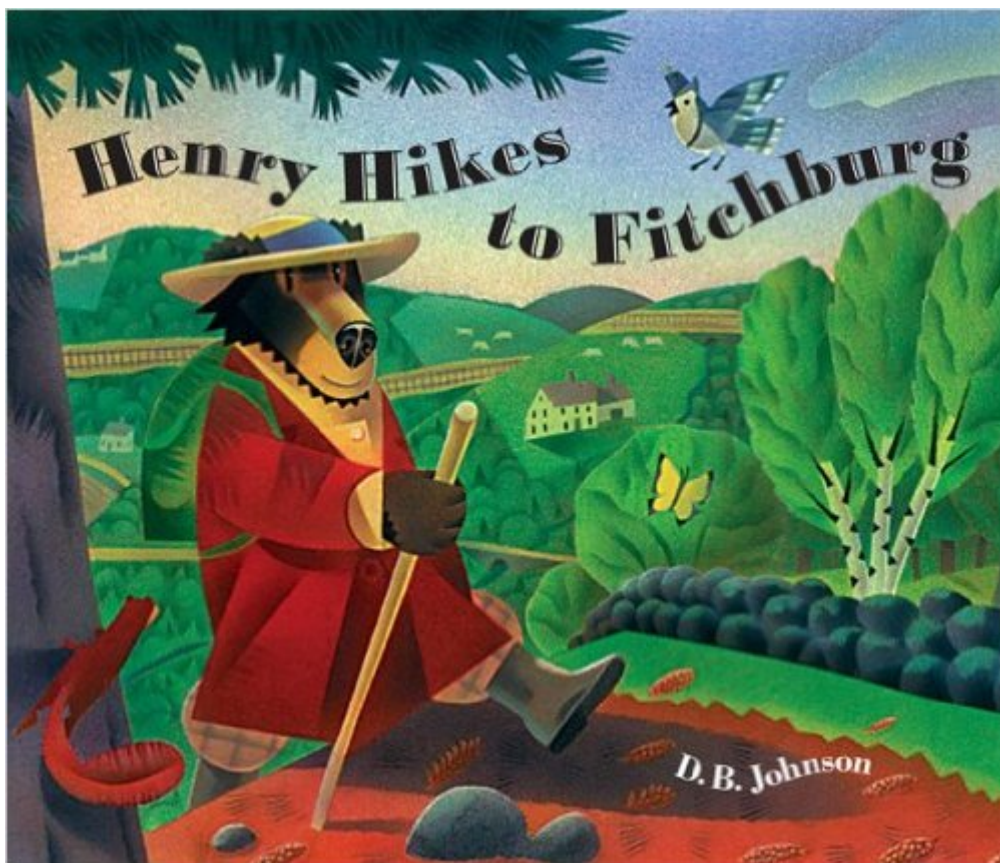


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# Henry Hikes To Fitchburg



## Synopsis

Inspired by a passage from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, the wonderfully appealing *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg* follows two friends who have very different approaches to life. When the two agree to meet one evening in Fitchburg, which is thirty miles away, each decides to get there in his own way, and the two have surprisingly different days.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 170 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (October 30, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0618737499

ISBN-13: 978-0618737499

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 10.2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (64 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #122,248 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > United States #431 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Bears #1008 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Nature

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Combining 19th Century transcendental philosophy with post-impressionist art movements is no easy feat--and it's even more astonishing in a children's book--but D. B. Johnson's synthesis is a triumph of imagination and talent. The story illustrates a section of Henry David Thoreau's famous "Waldon Pond," in which the philosopher mused about a hypothetical 30-mile race to Fitchburg. He would walk there, "because I have learned that the swiftest traveler is he that goes afoot." His competitor could travel by train--but would have to earn the 90-cent fare before he could board. Thoreau concludes that he would not only win, but would have the richer experience: "Instead of going to Fitchburg, you will be working here the greater part of the day." Johnson takes these exact terms and turns it into a race between two bears, Henry (the Thoreau namesake), and his unnamed friend. Already we have an exciting premise for a story, but the first page's relatively traditional illustration gives way to several more unconventional, modern art styles in the succeeding pages. If

you're at all a modern art fan, or are just intrigued by it, you'll find these pictures of colored pencil and paint astounding and beautiful. But why did the author/illustrator take this route, when, like Henry's friend, he might have chosen a more predictable style? Part of the answer, I think, lies in that question itself, the predictable route is the safe one, the utilitarian one, whether for a traveler or for an author wishing to sell books. Like Thoreau, like Frost afterwards, Johnson takes the more unpredictable route, the one offering higher risk and reward.

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