

12.2.1 Lesson 10

Introduction

In this lesson, students read part 1, paragraph 13 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “It is not a man’s duty, as a matter of course” to “unnecessary to that life which we have made”), in which Thoreau argues that while it is not a moral obligation to actively combat injustice, it is a moral obligation to withdraw passive support from an “unjust government” (part 1, par. 13). Students analyze how Thoreau develops central ideas in this paragraph. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Determine a central idea in part 1, paragraph 13 and analyze its development over the course of this paragraph.

For homework, students add to their Central Ideas Tracking Tools. Additionally, students read part 2, paragraphs 1-9 of “Civil Disobedience,” box unfamiliar words and look up their definitions, and respond briefly in writing to a series of questions.

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Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W. 11-12.9.b	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grades 11-12 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., <i>The Federalist</i>, presidential addresses]”).</p>
L. 11-12.4.a, b, c	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 11-12 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <p>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p> <p>b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>conceive</i>, <i>conception</i>, <i>conceivable</i>).</p> <p>c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.</p>
L. 11-12.5.a	<p>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <p>a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.</p>

Assessment

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Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- Determine a central idea in part 1, paragraph 13 and analyze its development over the course of this paragraph.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following alternative prompt as an optional extension for some students:
 - How do two central ideas interact and develop in part 1, paragraph 13?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Determine a central idea in paragraph 13 (e.g., ethics; the relationship between the individual and the state).
- Analyze how this idea develops over the course of this excerpt (e.g., Thoreau develops the central idea of ethics over the course of this paragraph by explaining that an individual does not have to actively fight against the evils or “wrong[s]” for which the government is responsible in order to be ethical or moral (part 1, par. 13). Rather, morality requires only that an individual refuse to “practically ... support” these “sin[s]” (part 1, par. 13). Thoreau illustrates his point by criticizing those who believe that slavery and the Mexican-American War are unjust but continue to support these endeavors “directly” through their “allegiance” to the authority of the state, and “indirectly” through paying taxes that fund these efforts. Through these examples, Thoreau develops the idea that ethical behavior does not require that one actively do good, but does require that one refuse to cooperate with injustice.).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** A High Performance Response to the optional extension prompt should:
 - Determine two central ideas in paragraph 13 (e.g., ethics and the relationship between the individual and the state).
 - Analyze how these ideas interact and develop over the course of this excerpt (e.g., Over the course of the paragraph, Thoreau develops the central ideas of ethics and the relationship between the individual and the state by explaining that an individual does not have to actively fight against the evils or “wrong[s]” for which the state is responsible in order to be ethical or moral (part 1, par. 13). Rather, morality requires only that an individual refuse to “practically ... support” the “sin[s]” of the government (part 1, par. 13). Thoreau illustrates his point by criticizing those who believe that slavery and the Mexican-American War are unjust, but continue to support these endeavors “directly” through their “allegiance” to the authority of the state, and “indirectly” through paying taxes that fund these efforts. Thoreau establishes that these individuals are implicated in the very crimes they condemn through their failure to withdraw support from the state. Through these examples, Thoreau develops the idea that ethical behavior may not require that a person actively promote justice, but it does require that a person refuse to cooperate with injustice. Failing to withdraw support from evil is the same as an active commission of evil.).

Vocabulary

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Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- eradication (n.) - removal or destruction
- contemplations (n.) - acts of thinking deeply about something
- gross (adj.) - glaringly noticeable
- insurrection (n.) - a usually violent attempt to take control of a government
- sets at naught (idiom) - regards or treats as of no importance; disdains
- penitent (adj.) - feeling or showing sorrow and regret because one has done something wrong
- scourge (v.) - to punish, chastise, or criticize severely
- homage (n.) - respect or honor

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- meanness (n.) - the state or quality of lacking dignity or honor
- immoral (adj.) - conflicting with generally or traditionally held principles concerning what is right and wrong in human behavior
- unmoral (adj.) - not influenced or guided by considerations about what is right or wrong in human behavior

Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)

- engage (v.) - to get and keep (someone's attention, interest, etc.)
- pursuits (n.) - attempts to find, achieve, or get something
- inconsistency (n.) - the quality or fact of having parts that disagree with each other
- allegiance (n.) - loyalty to a person, country, group, etc.
- furnished (v.) - supplied or given (something) to someone or something
- unjust (adj.) - not fair or deserved; not just
- indifference (n.) - lack of interest in or concern about something

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RI.11-12.2, W.11-12.9.b, L.11-12.4.a, b, c, L.11-12.5.a Text: “Civil Disobedience” by Henry David Thoreau, Part 1, paragraph 13 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Reading and Discussion 4. Quick Write 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 65% 4. 15% 5. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.2.1 Lesson 1) (optional)
- Student copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 12.2.1 Lesson 4)—students may need additional blank copies

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Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.2. In this lesson, students read part 1, paragraph 13 of Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” and analyze how Thoreau develops central ideas and the duties of individual citizens in this paragraph.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Read part 1, paragraph 12 and write a 2-3 sentence summary of the paragraph.) Instruct students to form pairs or groups and share their responses.

- Thoreau states that the convention in Baltimore is unjust because it selects presidential candidates from a small, exclusive group of Americans. He also states the “respectable man” in America has fallen from his social responsibilities (part 1, par. 12). Americans now care mostly about socializing.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

65%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss (W.11-12.9.b).

- If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout the lesson:

According to Thoreau, what moral responsibility does an individual have for “wrong[s]” (part 1, par. 13)?

Instruct students to read the first three sentences of part 1, paragraph 13 (from “It is not a man’s duty, as a matter of course” to “that he may pursue his contemplations too”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *eradication* and *contemplations*.

- Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
 - Students write the definitions of *eradication* and *contemplations* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *engage* and *pursuits*.
 - Students write the definitions of *engage* and *pursuits* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What does Thoreau believe “is not a man’s duty” (part 1, par. 13)?

- Thoreau believes “it is not a man’s duty ... to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous wrong,” meaning that men are not morally responsible for actively fighting injustice in the world (part 1, par. 13).

What does Thoreau believe is a man’s “duty” (part 1, par. 13)? How does Thoreau use figurative language to develop this idea?

- Student response should include:
 - It is a man’s duty to withdraw his “support” from “wrong[s]” or injustice (part 1, par. 13).

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- Thoreau uses the metaphor “to wash his hands of it” to develop the idea that it is a man’s duty not to let himself be dirtied or contaminated by wrong actions (part 1, par. 13). In other words, it is a man’s responsibility not to be associated with, or indirectly support, injustice.
- Thoreau uses the metaphor of a man “sitting upon another man’s shoulders” to develop the idea that people have an ethical obligation to independently pursue their personal goals (part 1, par. 13).

How does Thoreau’s distinction between what is and is not a man’s duty develop a central idea in the text?

- Student responses may include:
 - Thoreau’s distinction between actively fighting injustice and the refusal to participate in injustice develops the central idea of ethics of honor by suggesting that an individual has ethical responsibilities not to participate in or “support” injustice. People must also uphold their own individual integrity by following their conscience and devoting time and energy to their own “pursuits and contemplations” (part 1, par. 13).
 - Thoreau’s distinction between what is and is not a man’s duty develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state by suggesting that an individual’s right to pursue his or her own interests and values or “concerns” is as important as improving government and society through righting wrongs or fighting for a cause that will benefit others (part 1, par. 13).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

As a whole class, read the next three sentences in part 1, paragraph 13 (from “See what gross inconsistency is tolerated” to “that it left off sinning for a moment”). Then pose the following questions to the whole class.

Provide students with the definitions of *gross*, *insurrection*, *sets at naught*, *penitent*, and *scourge*.

- Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
- Students write the definitions of *gross*, *insurrection*, *naught*, *penitent*, and *scourge* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *inconsistency*, *allegiance*, *furnished*, and *unjust*.
- Students write the definitions of *inconsistency*, *allegiance*, *furnished*, and *unjust* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What does Thoreau’s use of the phrase “gross inconsistency” suggest about his townsmen’s response to slavery and war (part 1, par. 13)?

- Thoreau’s description of his townsmen’s response as “gross inconsistency” shows that their actions and words do not agree with each other. Although his townsmen express their belief that slavery and the Mexican-American War are unjust, and refuse to “help put down an insurrection of the slaves, or ... march to Mexico,” they still contribute to these “wrong[s]” through their support of the “unjust government” that is responsible for the wrongs (part 1, par. 13). By continuing to obey the authority of the government and provide monetary support through taxes, they make it possible for someone else, or another “soldier,” to be sent to do the bidding of the “unjust government” (part 1, par. 13).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

What do Thoreau’s townsmen say about slavery and the Mexican-American War? What do their statements suggest about how they feel about these issues?

- Student responses should include:
 - The townsmen say that they would not obey any order to “put down an insurrection of the slaves, or to march to Mexico” (part 1, par. 13).
 - The townsmen’s refusal to fight in the Mexican-American War and to stop slaves from revolting suggests that they do not support slavery or the Mexican-American War, and they believe that these acts are unjust or wrong.

How do Thoreau’s townsmen “directly” provide a “substitute” for themselves? How do they “indirectly” provide a “substitute” (part 1, par. 13)?

- Student responses should include:
 - The townsmen are directly responsible for providing a substitute for themselves through their “allegiance,” or continued obedience, to the authority of the government that supports war and slavery (part 1, par. 13).

- The townsmen are indirectly responsible for providing a substitute for themselves through the money (in the form of taxes) that they give to the “unjust government,” which uses the money to fund wars (part 1, par. 13).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

How do the phrase “and yet” and the familiar word *substitute* clarify the meaning of “furnished a substitute” (part 1, par. 13)? (L.11-12.4.a)

- Student responses should include:
 - The phrase “and yet” indicates that “furnished a substitute” means that the townsmen have done something to support the Mexican-American War and the institution of slavery.
 - The familiar word *substitute*, meaning “a person or thing that takes the place of someone else,” indicates that although the townsmen have refused to participate in slavery and the war, they have “furnished,” or supplied, people to take their place.

How does Thoreau’s criticism of his townsmen clarify what “practically” giving “support” means to Thoreau (part 1, par. 13)?

- “Practically” giving “support” does not mean actively advocating for the government’s policies or serving it as a soldier. Rather, “practically” giving “support” means living in and accepting the framework of the government, however passively (such as by paying taxes that support government policies), and enjoying its benefits (part 1, par. 13).

How does Thoreau’s discussion of “practically” giving “support” develop a central idea in the text (part 1, par. 13)?

- Thoreau’s discussion of “practically” giving “support” develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state by suggesting that the individual is implicitly involved in the bad things that the state does simply by living in and accepting the framework of the government, however passively, and enjoying its benefits.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing the following optional extension question to deepen students’ understanding:

To what “degree” is the state “penitent” (part 1, par. 13)? How does this statement develop Thoreau’s opinion of the morality of the state?

- Student responses should include:

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- The state is sorry enough to let someone “scourge” or punish it when it sins, but it is not sorry enough to stop “sinning” or doing things that are wrong (part 1, par. 13).
- This statement suggests that Thoreau believes that the state is unjust or sinful.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read the remainder of part 1, paragraph 13 (from “Thus, under the name of Order and Civil Government” to “unnecessary to that life which we have made”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definition of *homage*.

- Students may be familiar with this word. Consider asking students to volunteer a definition before providing it to the group.
 - Students write the definition of *homage* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definition of *indifference*.
 - Students write the definition of *indifference* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What effect does supporting an unjust government have on the individual?

- When an individual supports an unjust government, the individual in turn contributes, or pays respect and honor, to their own personal “meanness,” or dishonor and cruelty (part 1, par. 13). Supporting a sinful government, no matter how indirectly, makes a person sinful.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

How does a familiar word in the word *meanness* help you to make meaning of the phrase “our own meanness” (part 1, par. 13)? (L.11-12.4.b)

- The familiar word *mean* in *meanness* suggests that “our own meanness” refers to people’s cruelty or lack of honor (part 1, par. 13).

According to Thoreau, how does this sin make people feel at first? How do feelings change over time?

- Student responses should include:
 - Initially, sin makes people “blush,” or feel ashamed or embarrassed (part 1, par. 13).
 - Eventually, people feel “indifference” for their sins, or they stop caring about it and are no longer ashamed (part 1, par. 13).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

To what “sin” does Thoreau refer in the phrase “[a]fter the first blush of sin” (part 1, par. 13)?

- Thoreau refers to the “sin” of passively supporting injustice, or “sustain[ing] the unjust government” (part 1, par. 13).

How does Thoreau’s explanation of sin clarify the distinction he establishes between *immoral* and *unmoral*?

- Thoreau suggests that *immoral* sin becomes *unmoral* sin as people become indifferent to the sin (part 1, par. 13). He suggests that *immoral* refers to an act or idea that does not align with an accepted understanding of morality, and so causes feelings of shame. For an act or idea to be *unmoral*, therefore, means that it no longer causes feelings of shame because there is no longer concern for what is right or wrong (part 1, par. 13). Something that is *unmoral* operates completely outside of morality and does not exist in relation to any moral code.

What happens to “life” when people “sustain” an “unjust government” (part 1, par. 13)?

- When people refuse to actively disengage from the bad acts that the government commits, the *immoral* act or “sin” of supporting an unjust government becomes *unmoral* because it has become necessary, or “not quite unnecessary,” to their way of “life” (part 1, par. 13).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

- Consider asking students which passages they found difficult or problematic. Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Determine a central idea in part 1, paragraph 13 and analyze its development over the course of this paragraph.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following alternative prompt as an optional extension for some students:

How do two central ideas interact and develop in part 1, paragraph 13?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

- Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.
- Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

- Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
- See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.
- Consider using the Short Response Rubric to assess students' writing. Students may use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to add ideas to their Central Ideas Tracking Tools.

Additionally, instruct students to read part 2, paragraphs 1-9 of "Civil Disobedience" (from "The broadest and most prevalent error requires" to "I see this blood flowing now"). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in context and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text (L.11-12.4.c).

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following questions:

What does Thoreau argue citizens should do instead of "petitioning the state to dissolve the Union" (part 2, par. 1)? How does his description of the "tax-gatherer" in part 2, paragraph 8 support this point?

How does Thoreau develop the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state in paragraph 3?

How does Thoreau refine a metaphor from part 1, paragraph 8 in part 2, paragraph 5? (L. 11-12.5.a)

What examples does Thoreau provide of how to be a “counter friction” (part 2, par. 5) in paragraphs 2-9?

How does Thoreau’s opinion of “the ways which the state has provided for remedying ... evil” further develop the relationship between the individual and the state (part 2, par. 6)?

Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Add ideas to your Central Ideas Tracking Tool.

Additionally, read part 2, paragraphs 1-9 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “The broadest and most prevalent error requires” to “I see this blood flowing now”). Box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Then respond briefly in writing to the following questions:

What does Thoreau argue citizens should do instead of “petitioning the state to dissolve the Union” (part 2, par. 1)? How does his description of the “tax-gatherer” in part 2, paragraph 8 support this point?

How does Thoreau develop the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state in part 2, paragraph 3?

How does Thoreau refine a metaphor from part 1, paragraph 8 in part 2, paragraph 5?

What examples does Thoreau provide of how to be a “counter friction” (part 2, par. 5) in paragraphs 2-9?

How does Thoreau’s opinion of “the ways in which the State has provided for remedying ... evil” further develop the relationship between the individual and the state (part 2, par. 6)?

Use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in your written responses.

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