

# 12.2.1 Lesson 9

## Introduction

In this lesson, students continue their reading and analysis of Henry David Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience.” Students read part 1, paragraphs 10-11 (from “In their practice, nations agree with Paley” to “who asserts his own freedom by his vote”), in which Thoreau claims the majority will not abolish slavery until it is convenient. Students analyze how Thoreau’s claims develop a central idea established earlier in the text. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does one of Thoreau’s claims in part 1, paragraphs 10-11 develop a central idea established earlier in the text?

For homework, students read part 1, paragraph 12 (from “I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore” to “the Mutual Insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently”) and write a 2-3 sentence summary of part 1, paragraph 12.

## Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
CCRA.R.8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
Addressed 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.
W. 11-12.9.b	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. 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]”).
L. 11.12.4.c	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases <i>based on grades 11-12 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. 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
L. 11-12.5.a	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.

## 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:

- How does one of Thoreau's claims in part 1, paragraphs 10-11 develop a central idea established earlier in the text?

**High Performance Response(s)**

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify a claim in paragraphs 10-11 (e.g., "I quarrel not with far-off foes, but with those who, near at home, co-operate with, and do the bidding of those far away, and without whom the latter would be harmless" or "There are thousands who are *in opinion* opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them.").
- Identify a central idea previously established in the text (e.g., the relationship between the individual and the state; ethics).
- Analyze how the claim develops the central idea (e.g., Thoreau's claim that "[t]here are thousands who are *in opinion* opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them" (part 1, par. 10) develops the central idea of ethics. In part 1, paragraph 8, Thoreau provides criteria for when people should resist the state, which is when "oppression and robbery are organized" by those who abuse the state's power. In part 1, paragraph 10, Thoreau states that it is not virtuous or right to simply be "*in opinion* opposed to slavery" or the Mexican-American War, two examples of organized oppression and robbery. One must follow one's conscience and fight injustice, "cost what it may," otherwise one does not "possess[]" virtue, one only professes it (part 1, par. 10).).

## Vocabulary

**Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)**

- leaven (v.) - modify or lighten
- countenance (n.) - approval or favor
- prices-current (n.) - a price list; the price for which goods usually sell in the market

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

- None.

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

- virtue (n.) - morally good behavior or character
- esteeming (v.) - thinking very highly or favorably of
- backgammon (n.) - a board game for two players in which the players throw dice and try to move all of their pieces around and off the board

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards: CCRA.R.8, RI.11-12.2, W.11-12.9.b, L.11-12.4.c, L.11-12.5.a</li> <li>• Text: “Civil Disobedience” by Henry David Thoreau, Part 1, paragraphs 10-11</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. Reading and Discussion</li> <li>4. Quick Write</li> <li>5. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 10%</li> <li>2. 15%</li> <li>3. 55%</li> <li>4. 15%</li> <li>5. 5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Student copies of the 12.2 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 12.2.1 Lesson 4) (optional)

File: 12.2.1 Lesson 9 Date: 2/13/15 Classroom Use: Starting 2/2015

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

## 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.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<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

10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: CCRA.R.8. In this lesson, students read part 1, paragraphs 10–11 of Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” (from “In their practice, nations agree with Paley” to “who asserts his own freedom by his vote”). Students analyze how Thoreau’s claims develop an idea established earlier in the text.

- Students look at the agenda.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students are using the 12.2 Common Core Learning Standards Tool, instruct them to refer to it for this portion of the homework accountability.

Post or project standard CCRA.R.8. Instruct students to talk in pairs about what they think the standard means. Lead a brief discussion about the standard.

- Student responses may include:

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- The standard means that students should describe and evaluate the argument a text makes and the specific claims it employs to do so.
- The standard requires students to assess whether or not the text's evidence is sufficient in amount and relevant to the argument it makes.

## Activity 2: Homework Accountability

**15%**

Instruct students to take out their responses to the first part of the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read part 1, paragraph 9 of "Civil Disobedience" and write a paragraph in response to the following prompt: How does this paragraph develop Thoreau's point of view about conscience?) Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk in pairs about their responses to the homework prompt.

- In part 1, paragraph 9, Thoreau develops his point of view on conscience by rejecting Paley's claim that all issues of injustice can be reduced to "expediency" or convenience. If "the interest of the whole of society" does not desire to change, the government should not be changed (part 1, par. 9). Without complete agreement among everyone in society, attempts to change the government are not worth "the expense of redressing [the injustice]" (part 1, par. 9). Thoreau believes that there are instances in which people must rectify injustice, "cost what it may," which opposes Paley's concern for the "expense" of changing an injustice in government (part 1, par. 9). Thoreau compares slavery and the Mexican-American War to "unjustly wrest[ing] a plank from a drowning man" (part 1, par. 9). Thoreau believes the plank should be given back to the man to restore justice, even if this is "inconvenient" (part 1, par. 9) and may cost a person his or her life. Thoreau sees slavery and the Mexican-American War as affronts to conscience that must be abolished no matter the cost.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct students to take out their responses to the second part of the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read part 1, paragraphs 10-11 and respond briefly to the following questions.) Instruct students to form pairs and share their responses.

**What reasons does Thoreau give for why the "merchants and farmers" are "opponents to a reform" (part 1, par. 10)?**

- The merchants and farmers are "opponents to a reform" because they are more interested in "commerce and agriculture" than justice (part 1, par. 10). They care more about money than about "humanity" and so do not actively oppose slavery and

the Mexican-American War because although they disagree with these policies, they are not prepared to fight them, “*cost what it may*” (part 1, par. 10). In other words, they do not take risks for what they know to be right.

**What does Thoreau mean when he says those “near at home ... do the bidding of those far away” (part 1, par. 10)?**

- Those “near at home” are the farmers and merchants of Massachusetts who do the bidding of people like the “politicians at the South” (part 1, par. 10), and continue to obey an unjust state even if they do not agree with the government’s policies on slavery and the Mexican-American War.

**What does Thoreau mean by his description of “patrons of virtue” (part 1, par. 10)?**

- Thoreau describes “patrons of virtue” as those who “hesitate, and ... regret, and sometimes ... petition,” but who never really do anything meaningful or effective to support what they believe (part 1, par. 10). They do not “possess[]” virtue by acting on what they believe is right (part 1, par. 10). Therefore, the phrase “patrons of virtue” refers to those who support virtue with words not action.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct students to form groups to share and discuss two of the vocabulary words they identified for homework (L.11-12.4.c).

- Students may identify the following words: *leaven*, *countenance*, and *prices-current*.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may also identify the following words: *virtue*, *esteeming*, and *backgammon*.
- Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

### Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to remain in their small groups. Post or project the following questions 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:

**What claims does Thoreau make in part 1, paragraphs 10-11?**

Instruct student groups to read part 1, paragraph 10 of Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience (from "In practice, nations agree with Paley" and "real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**How does Thoreau's description of those who "are *in opinion* opposed to slavery" support his claim about the "opponents to a reform" (part 1, par. 10)?**

- Thoreau describes those who "are *in opinion* opposed to slavery" as those who say they are opposed to slavery but do nothing about it. They debate and complain about slavery and the Mexican-American War, but also value "free-trade" over the freedom of others. This kind of person falls asleep reading the "prices-current" (part 1, par. 10), or stock prices, of an economy based on slavery. The actions of those who are "*in opinion* opposed to slavery" show that these people are unwilling to take action to abolish slavery" (part 1, par. 10). In this way, those who are "*in opinion* opposed to slavery" are also implicit "opponents of reform" (part 1, par. 10).

**What does Thoreau claim is the difference between a patron of virtue and a virtuous man?**

- Thoreau claims a "patron[] of virtue" is one who has beliefs, but does nothing meaningful to make them a reality (part 1, par. 10). A virtuous person, however, is a person who acts on his or her beliefs and tries to actualize them. A virtuous person is not a "temporary guardian" of virtue (part 1, par. 10)—the person possesses and demonstrates it by his or her action and conviction.

**How does part 1, paragraph 10 develop central ideas in the text?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Part 1, paragraph 10 further develops the central idea of ethics by clarifying that it is not enough just to disagree with injustice or to only recognize it is wrong. To be a virtuous person means to act on one's conscience rather than "postpone the question of freedom to the question of free-trade" (part 1, par. 10) or put money and the economy and money before freedom. Virtuous people do not "hesitate" or "regret" (part 1, par. 10); they act on their consciences and "necessarily



resist” (part 1, par. 8) the state to fight injustice, “*cost what it may*” (part 1, par. 10).

- In part 1, paragraph 10, Thoreau develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state. Thoreau states that it is not virtuous or right to simply be “*in opinion* opposed to slavery” (part 1, par. 10) or the Mexican-American War, which are two examples of “oppression and robbery” by the government (part 1, par. 8). The individual must “revolutionize” the state, because these injustices exist (part 1, par. 8).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct student groups to read part 1, paragraph 11 in Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” (from “All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon” to “who asserts his own freedom by his vote”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**How does Thoreau use metaphor to develop his point of view on voting? (L.11-12.5.a)**

- Thoreau uses the metaphor of games like “checkers or backgammon” to describe voting (part 1, par. 11). Voting “play[s] with right and wrong, with moral questions” rather than engaging with them, much like “betting” does not guarantee nor force a specific outcome (part 1, par. 11). Voting does not actually work to address right and wrong; it only “plays” or toys with the idea of addressing right and wrong. Therefore, securing justice is not the primary concern of voters.

**How do Thoreau’s ideas about voting develop a central idea in the text?**

- Thoreau suggests that voting is not strongly tied to the individual’s conscience because “[t]he character of the voters is not staked” when they are voting (part 1, par. 11). A voter risks no consequence in being right or wrong because voting lets the majority decide. Thoreau sees voting as a way to avoid the responsibility to follow one’s conscience, which develops the central idea of ethics.

**What does Thoreau claim is the difference between a “wise man” and one who votes (part 1, par. 11)?**

- Thoreau claims that a “wise man,” unlike a man who votes, does not leave what is morally right “to the mercy of chance” by voting, nor does he care about whether or not the majority is on his side (part 1, par. 11).
- Remind students that they should keep track of central ideas in the text using the Central Ideas Tracking Tool.

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:

**How does one of Thoreau’s claims in part 1, paragraphs 10-11 develop a central idea established earlier in the text?**

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 read part 1, paragraph 12 (from “I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore” to “the Mutual Insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently”). To support comprehension, instruct students to write a 2-3 sentence summary of the paragraph.

- Consider reminding students of the alternate End-of-Unit Assessment prompt. Provide the following scaffolding question as an optional Accountable Independent Writing (AIW) assignment:

**How does the phrase “[t]here is but little virtue in the action of masses of men” (part 1, par. 11) develop your understanding of Thoreau’s ideas about citizenship?**

- Students follow along.

## Homework

Read part 1, paragraph 12 (from “I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore” to “the Mutual Insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently”). Write a 2-3 sentence summary of the paragraph.

## Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

<b>Name</b> :		<b>Class</b> :		<b>Date</b> :	
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**Directions:** Identify the central ideas that you encounter throughout the text. Trace the development of those ideas by noting how the author introduces, develops, or refines these ideas in the text. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

<b>Text</b> :	“Civil Disobedience” by Henry David Thoreau
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Part and paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
Part 1, par. 10	The relationship between the individual and the state	Thoreau states that it is not virtuous or right to simply be “ <i>in opinion</i> ” opposed to slavery,” or the Mexican-American War, because they are such great injustices that one must “revolutionize” the state, “cost what it may.” This develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state by affirming that people should follow their consciences even when it means resisting the state.
Part 1, par. 10	Ethics	Thoreau clarifies that to be a virtuous person, one must act on one’s conscience rather than “postpone the question of freedom to the question of free-trade,” or place the success of the economy over freedom. Virtuous people do not “hesitate” or “regret”; they act on their consciences.
Part 1, par. 11	Ethics	Thoreau’s thoughts on voting show that voting is not strongly tied to the individual’s conscience because “the character of the voters is not staked” when they are voting. This means that a person risks no consequence in being right or wrong because voting lets the majority decide. This develops the ideas of ethics because Thoreau sees voting as a way to dodge a person’s responsibility to follow his or her conscience.

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