

12.2.1 Lesson 5

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze part 1, paragraph 2 of Henry David Thoreau’s essay “Civil Disobedience” (from “This American government – what is it but a tradition” to “with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads”), in which Thoreau analyzes the relationship between the American government and its citizens. Students explore Thoreau’s use of rhetoric to support his claims about the government and the people. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Thoreau use rhetoric to make his point about the relationship between the American government and its citizens?

For homework, students reread part 1, paragraph 2 of “Civil Disobedience” and add to their Central Ideas Tracking Tools. Students also preview paragraphs 3-4 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “But, to speak practically and as a citizen” to “O’er the grave where our hero we buried”), boxing unfamiliar words, looking up their definitions, and writing brief definitions above or near the words in the text.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty 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.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>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>

Assessment

File: 12.2.1 Lesson 5 Date: 2/13/15 Classroom Use: Starting 2/2015

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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 Thoreau use rhetoric to make his point about the relationship between the American government and its citizens?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify examples of Thoreau's effective use of rhetoric (e.g., rhetorical question, figurative language, parallel structure, etc.).
- Analyze one or more examples of how Thoreau uses rhetoric make his point about government or citizens (e.g., Thoreau begins the paragraph with the rhetorical question, "This American government – what is it but a tradition ... each instant losing some of its integrity?" (part 1, par. 2) This question prompts readers to consider that as the American government is passed from one generation to another, it becomes less and less ethical. Thoreau uses the metaphor of the government as a "wooden gun" to illustrate that government is useless. He supports this point when he explains that American citizens, not the American government, are responsible for America's accomplishments. Thoreau emphasizes this idea by beginning three sentences with "It does not," which is an example of parallel structure. In each sentence, Thoreau stresses that idea that the people, and not the government, are responsible for three significant accomplishments: "keep[ing] the country free," "settl[ing] the west," and "educat[ing]" (part 1, par.2).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- endeavoring (v.) - attempting; trying
- unimpaired (adj.) - not weakened, diminished, or damaged
- posterity (n.) - succeeding or future generations
- vitality (n.) - capacity for survival or for the continuation of a meaningful or purposeful existence
- din (n.) - a continued loud or tumultuous sound
- enterprise (n.) - a project or activity that involves many people and that is often difficult
- alacrity (n.) - cheerful readiness, promptness, or willingness
- fain (adv.) - gladly; willingly
- obstructions (n.) - things that block or close up

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

- expedient (adj.) - suitable for achieving a particular end

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

- integrity (n.) - the quality of being honest and fair
- impose (v.) - establish or create (something unwanted) in a forceful or harmful way
- allow (v.) - admit
- furthered (v.) - helped the progress of (something)
- inherent (adj.) - belonging to the basic nature of someone or something
- mischievous (adj.) - causing annoyance or minor harm or damage

Lesson Agenda/Overview

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Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RI.11-12.6, W.11-12.9.b, L.11-12.4.b, c Text: “Civil Disobedience” by Henry David Thoreau, Part 1, paragraph 2 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Reading and Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 15% 10% 55% 10% 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.11-12.6. In this lesson, students read part 1, paragraph 2 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “This American government – what is it but a tradition” to “with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads”) and analyze how Thoreau uses rhetoric to support his claims about the American government and citizens.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the first part of the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Complete the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to trace the development of Thoreau’s ideas in part 1, paragraph 1 of “Civil Disobedience.”) Instruct students to form small groups and share their additions to the Central Ideas Tracking Tool.

- See the Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool for sample student responses.
- Consider posting or projecting a copy of the model tool to support comprehension.

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. (Conduct a brief search into Thoreau's position on either the Mexican-American War or abolitionism. Write one paragraph summarizing the results of your search.)

- Student responses may include:
 - Thoreau was strongly opposed to the Mexican-American War because the war could allow slavery in new United States territories. Opposition to the war was one of Thoreau's motivations for writing "Civil Disobedience." Eventually, Thoreau refused to pay his taxes because he did not want his money to support the war. As a result, Thoreau was sent to jail.
 - Thoreau was strongly opposed to slavery. He was an active abolitionist until the end of his life. To support the cause, Thoreau published works such as his 1854 essay "Slavery in Massachusetts." This essay describes how states like Massachusetts supported slavery even though it had officially abolished slavery within its own borders. Thoreau also publicly supported radical abolitionists like John Brown, who led the Harpers Ferry raid in 1859.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of part 1, paragraph 2 of Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience." Instruct students to focus on the relationship Thoreau establishes between government and the people.

- Students follow along, reading silently.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout the lesson:

How does Thoreau express his beliefs about the American government?

- Consider leading a whole-class discussion to ensure comprehension of the masterful reading.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct student 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).

- **Differentiation Consideration:** To further support students' understanding of the focus excerpt in this and subsequent lessons, consider instructing small groups to read and paraphrase each sentence, according to the model established in 12.2.1 Lesson 4.

Instruct student groups to read the first two sentences of paragraph 2 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “This American government – what is it but a tradition” to “for a single man can bend it to his will”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *endeavoring*, *unimpaired*, *posterity*, and *vitality*.

- Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
 - Students write the definitions of *endeavoring*, *unimpaired*, *posterity*, and *vitality* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definition of *integrity*.
 - Students write the definition of *integrity* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How does Thoreau’s question at the beginning of paragraph 2 develop an idea about the American government?

- Thoreau uses a rhetorical question at the beginning of paragraph 2 to convince readers that the American government is more concerned with power and stability, or the ability to “transmit itself unimpaired to posterity,” than with fairness or honesty, “each instant losing some of its integrity.”
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding questions:

Who is the “posterity” mentioned in the first sentence of the second paragraph?

- The “posterity” is a new generation of American citizens.

What is the meaning of the phrase “endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity” (part 1, par. 2)?

- The phrase “[e]ndeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity” (part 1, par. 2) describes the government’s focus on maintaining its power and stability as time passes.

What happens to the “tradition” of American government over time (part 1, par. 2)?

- The American government is “each instant losing some of its integrity” (part 1, par. 2), so that over time, the government loses more and more of its concern for what is just and fair for the people and thus, becomes less and less ethical.

How does the comparison to “a single living man” (part 1, par. 2) develop an idea about government?

- Through the comparison between the government and a “single living man,” Thoreau develops the individual as being full of “vitality and force,” in contrast to the government, which is merely a “tradition” that is “each instant losing some of its integrity” (part 1, par. 2). This contrast demonstrates that strong beliefs give an individual “vitality and force,” while the government’s weakening ethics make it less effective.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read sentences 3-6 of paragraph 2 of “Civil Disobedience” (“It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves” to “It is excellent, we must all allow”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definition of *din*.

- 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 *din* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *impose* and *allow*.
 - Students write the definitions of *impose* and *allow* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How does the wooden gun metaphor in paragraph 2 develop an idea about government and the people?

- The metaphor of government as a “wooden gun” develops the idea that government looks powerful but is actually useless.

How does Thoreau’s reference to “complicated machinery” develop an idea about government (part 1, par. 2)?

- Thoreau’s claim that people need the complicated machinery “to satisfy that idea of government which they have” (part 1, par. 2) develops the idea that people believe they need the government, but it is actually unnecessary.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read sentences 7-11 of paragraph 2 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise” to “if the government had not sometimes got in its way”) and answer the following questions in small groups before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *enterprise* and *alacrity*.

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

What does Thoreau mean when he says that “government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way” (part 1, par. 2)? To which enterprises is he referring?

- Thoreau describes how government cannot and should not be involved in enterprise when he writes, “this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way.” Specific enterprises to which Thoreau refers are education, protecting the country, and settling new territory.

What is the impact of Thoreau’s use of parallel structure on the meaning of paragraph 2?

- Thoreau begins three sentences in a row with the phrase, “*It* does not” (part 1, par. 2), which emphasizes the idea that the people, and not the government, are responsible for three significant accomplishments: “keep[ing] the country free,” “sett[ing] the west,” and “educat[ing]” people (part 1, par. 2).
- Consider reminding students that *parallel structure* describes when authors or speakers use the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas are equally important. Students were introduced to *parallel structure* in 12.1.1 Lesson 10.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to analyze the sentences beginning with “*It* does not,” consider posing the following scaffolding question:

What is the italicized “it” in paragraph 2, and how does placing *it* in italics affect the meaning of the text?

- The italicized *it* refers to the American government. Placing the word in italics at the beginning of three sentences in a row creates emphasis on the word *it* and on the three sentences it begins. Repeatedly describing the government using the impersonal pronoun *it* develops the idea that government is a machine that is not vital to the people.

How does Thoreau support his claim that government “never of itself furthered any enterprise” (part 1, par. 2)?

- Thoreau supports his claim by explaining that America’s accomplishments are not a result of government. Rather, he believes that the American people are responsible for “keep[ing] the country free,” “sett[ing] the West,” and “educat[ing]” the people (part 1, par. 2).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read the remainder of paragraph 2 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed” to “punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *fain* and *obstructions*.

- Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
- Students write the definitions of *fain* and *obstructions* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definition of *mischievous*.
 - Students write the definition of *mischievous* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How does the meaning of *expedient* change within part 1, paragraph 2? (L.11-12.4.b)

- In paragraph 2, Thoreau first uses *expedient* as a noun when he says, “government is an expedient.” In this case, *expedient* describes “an easy or quick way to solve a problem.” Then, Thoreau uses *expedient* as an adjective when he says, “when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it” (part 1, par. 2). In this case, *expedient* means “suitable for achieving a particular end.”
- In 12.2.1 Lesson 4, students worked with *expedient* as a noun and *inexpedient* as an adjective.

What is the meaning of “letting one another alone” and “let alone” in part 1, paragraph 2?

- “Letting one another alone” describes how people should treat each other; it describes how people should not interfere with or harm each other). Later in the sentence, “let alone” describes how the government should leave people alone.

How do the examples of trade and commerce develop Thoreau’s view of legislators?

- The examples of trade and commerce show that Thoreau views government as an obstruction to the function and progress of society. It is only because trade and commerce are “made of India rubber” (part 1, par. 2) that they are flexible enough to overcome “the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way” (part 1, par. 2).

How does Thoreau’s comparison of legislators to “mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads” develop his view of the relationship between the government and the people (part 1, par. 2)?

- Thoreau’s comparison of legislators to “mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads” establishes his belief that the government does not simply fail to help society and trade, but actually hinders them (part 1, par. 2). By comparing legislators to people who do damage to trade by blocking the transport of goods, Thoreau makes it clear that he believes that the effect of legislators’ actions is damaging to the people, even if legislators do not intend it to be so.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding questions:

Paraphrase the following statement: “For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone” (part 1, par. 2).

- Government exists so that people will avoid harming each other.

Paraphrase the following statement: “[W]hen it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it” (part 1, par. 2).

- Government is most useful when it leaves people alone.

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 5: Quick Write

10%

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

How does Thoreau use rhetoric to make his point about the relationship between the American government and its citizens?

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 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread part 1, paragraph 2 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “This American government – what is it but a tradition” to “with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads”) and complete their Central Ideas Tracking Tools.

Also for homework, instruct students to read part 1, paragraphs 3-4 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “But, to speak practically and as a citizen” to “O’er the grave where our hero we buried”). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct students to choose the definition that makes the most sense in the context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text (L.1112.4.c).

- Students follow along.

Homework

Reread part 1, paragraph 2 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “This American government – what is it but a tradition” to “with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads”) and complete your Central Ideas Tracking Tool.

Read part 1, paragraphs 3-4 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “But, to speak practically and as a citizen” to “O’er the grave where our hero we buried”) to preview the reading for 12.2.1 Lesson 6. 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.

Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

Name :		Class :		Date :	
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Directions: Identify the 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.

Text :	"Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau
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Part and Paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
Part 1, par. 1	Government should be limited.	Thoreau believes the motto "That government is best which governs least" (part 1, par. 1). This suggests that Thoreau wants a government that interferes less.
Part 1, par. 1	People should criticize government.	"The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government." (part 1, par. 1) With this claim, Thoreau explicitly states that the standing government deserves to be criticized.
Part 1, par. 1	Government can be manipulated for the benefit of a few individuals.	The government is "liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it" (part 1, par. 1). The Mexican-American War is an example of when a "few individuals" used the government as a "tool" to do something the people would not agree with (part 1, par. 1).