

# 12.2.1 Lesson 7

## Introduction

In this lesson, students continue to read and analyze Henry David Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience.” Students read part 1, paragraphs 5-6 (from “The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly” to “he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist”), in which Thoreau discusses the ways in which people serve the state. Students consider how Thoreau uses figurative language to develop a central idea in the text. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Thoreau develop a central idea in part 1, paragraphs 5-6?

For homework, students read part 1, paragraph 7 and write a paragraph in response to the following prompt: How does this paragraph develop Thoreau’s point of view of the relationship between the individual and the state? Additionally, students read part 1, paragraph 8 and box unfamiliar words, look up their definitions, and respond briefly to the following questions: What does Thoreau’s metaphor of the “machine” describe (part 1, par. 8)? and What is the “right of revolution” (part 1, par. 8), and when should people exercise that right, according to Thoreau?

## 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.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>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.

- How does Thoreau develop a central idea in part 1, paragraphs 5-6?
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following alternative prompt as an optional extension for some students.
  - How does Thoreau develop two central ideas in part 1, paragraphs 5-6?

### High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify a central idea in the text (e.g., ethics; the relationship between the individual and the state).
- Analyze how Thoreau develops a central idea in part 1, paragraphs 5-6 (e.g., Thoreau develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state through figurative language. Thoreau uses the simile of “machines” when he describes the service of those who serve the state “with their bodies” (part 1, par. 5). He describes them as machines because they engage in “no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense,” meaning they do not think for themselves about what is right or what is wrong (part 1, par. 5). Their attitude toward the state is unquestioning, which makes them more like unthinking machines than humans—they could be replaced with “wooden men” or people made from “straw or a lump of dirt” (part 1, par. 5). Thoreau suggests that blindly serving the state dehumanizes people by turning them into thoughtless “machines” (part 1, par. 5).).
- A High Performance Response to the optional extension prompt should:
  - Identify two central ideas in the text (e.g., ethics; the relationship between the individual and the state).
  - Analyze how Thoreau develops two central ideas in part 1, paragraphs 5-6 (e.g., Thoreau develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state through figurative language. Thoreau uses the simile of “machines” when he describes the service of those who serve the state “with their bodies” (part 1, par. 5). He describes them as machines because they engage in “no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense” (part 1, par. 5). This simile describes an unquestioning attitude toward the state in which people do not think for themselves about what is right or what is wrong. In this way, Thoreau also develops the central idea of ethics by criticizing those who do not make decisions based on their own consciences, suggesting that such people could be replaced by “wooden men” or people made from “straw or a lump of dirt” (part 1, par. 5).

## Vocabulary

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

- benefactor (n.) - a kindly helper
- philanthropist (n.) - a wealthy person who gives money and time to help make life better for other people

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

- None.

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

- exercise (n.) - the use of an ability or power
- distinctions (n.) - notable differences between things or people
- pronounced (v.) - stated in an official or definite way

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards: RI.11-12.2, W11-12.9.b, L.11-12.4.c, L.11-12.5.a</li> <li>• Text: “Civil Disobedience” by Henry David Thoreau, Part 1, paragraphs 5-6</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. Masterful Reading</li> <li>4. Reading and Discussion</li> <li>5. Quick Write</li> <li>6. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 10%</li> <li>3. 15%</li> <li>4. 50%</li> <li>5. 15%</li> <li>6. 5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

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- 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

## 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

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.2. In this lesson, students read part 1, paragraphs 5-6 of Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” (from “The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly” to “he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist”), in which Thoreau discusses different groups of people and the ways in which they serve the state. Students consider how Thoreau uses figurative language to develop a central idea in this passage.

- Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied a focus standard to their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) texts. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson’s AIR

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homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied a focus standard to their AIR texts.

- Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied a focus standard to their AIR texts from the previous lesson's homework.

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Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Reread paragraphs 3-4 and write a brief response to the following prompt: Which sentence of part 1, paragraphs 3-4 is most critical to your understanding of this excerpt of "Civil Disobedience" and why?) Instruct student pairs to discuss their responses.

- Student responses may include:
  - The sentence, "I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government" is the most critical for understanding this excerpt of "Civil Disobedience" (part 1, par. 3). This sentence explains that, even though Thoreau finds significant problems with government, he does not want to eliminate government. This sentence also introduces the idea that Thoreau wants a better government immediately.
  - The rhetorical question, "Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience?" (part 1, par. 4) is the most critical for understanding this excerpt of "Civil Disobedience." This question introduces the idea that the current system of government is flawed and there is a better alternative. In this sentence, Thoreau shares his point of view that government, if it is based on conscience, can do what is right for all people, not just members of the majority.
  - The sentence, "The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right" (part 1, par. 4) is the most critical sentence to understanding this excerpt of "Civil Disobedience." This sentence clearly and explicitly outlines Thoreau's ethics. The idea that Thoreau only feels obligated to do what is right, combined with his earlier statements about the problems with government, suggests that Thoreau is willing to disobey the laws established by government whenever he believes the laws are not right.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

### Activity 3: Masterful Reading

15%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of part 1, paragraphs 5-6 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly” to “he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist”). Ask students to focus on Thoreau’s ideas about how to serve the state.

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

**According to Thoreau, what does it mean to “serve the state” (part 1, par. 5)?**

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

### Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

50%

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).

Instruct student groups to read part 1, paragraph 5 of “Civil Disobedience” (from “The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly” to “who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *exercise*, *distinctions*, and *pronounced*.
  - Students write the definitions of *exercise*, *distinctions*, and *pronounced* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**What distinction does Thoreau make between the ways in which men serve the state?**

- Student responses should include:
  - First, Thoreau writes that people who serve the state with their bodies are like “machines” (part 1, par. 5). These kinds of servants are “the mass of men” (part 1, par. 5), or most people who serve the state.
  - Next, Thoreau suggests that men who serve the state with their minds “rarely make any moral distinctions” (part 1, par. 5), or decisions about right and wrong

action. The people who serve the state with their minds are a smaller portion of men who inspire or create the laws the majority of men defend.

- Last, Thoreau describes how “heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers ... and *men*” serve the state with their consciences (part 1, par. 5). “[H]eroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers ... and *men*” (part 1, par. 5) make up the smallest group of people, and they are “commonly treated as enemies” (part 1, par. 5) by the state, because rather than following the state unquestioningly, they make their own “moral distinctions” (part 1, par. 5) and follow their own sense of ethics.

**How does Thoreau’s description of those who serve the state with their bodies develop the ideas that Thoreau introduces in part 1, paragraph 4?**

- Student responses should include:
  - In part 1, paragraph 4, Thoreau refers to men in the standing army as “small movable forts,” and questions whether they are living human beings or “mere shadow[s] and reminiscence[s] of humanity.”
  - Thoreau develops this idea further in paragraph 5, by comparing these people to nonhuman objects like “lump[s] of dirt,” wood, and straw, to illustrate further how they serve the state without thinking or reflecting. He also uses the figurative language of the “machine” (part 1, par. 5) to characterize these servants’ lack of “humanity” and will (part 1, par. 4).

**How does Thoreau’s use of figurative language develop a central idea in the text? (L. 11-12.5.a)**

- Student responses may include:
  - Thoreau uses figurative language to develop the idea of the relationship between the individual and the state, suggesting that if one engages in “no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense,” then one becomes like a cooperative, unquestioning, unthinking “machine” (part 1, par. 5).
  - Thoreau uses figurative language to develop the central idea of ethics. He explains that people who serve the state with their bodies or minds but not their consciences, serve the state “as machines” who “rarely make any moral distinctions” (part 1, par. 5). Thoreau states that to serve the state ethically is to “resist it,” meaning to point out its flaws or criticize it (part 1, par. 5).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.



Instruct student groups to reread the following sentence from part 1, paragraph 5: “A very few, as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men*, serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part, and they are commonly treated as enemies by it,” and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**What does Thoreau mean when he says that those who serve the state with their consciences resist it?**

- To serve the state with one’s conscience means to be willing to criticize or resist the state when it does wrong. This willingness to criticize or resist the state means that one may become an enemy to the state one means to serve, because according to Thoreau, serving the state with one’s conscience leads one to “necessarily resist [the state] for the most part” (part 1, par. 5).

**How does this sentence develop a central idea?**

- This sentence develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state because it describes the relationship one has with the state if one serves the state with one’s conscience. The state treats those who serve with their conscience as “enemies” because they “necessarily resist” the state.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct students to answer the following question before sharing out with the class.

**How does Thoreau’s reference to “clay” further develop his ideas in part 1, paragraph 5?**

- Thoreau’s reference to “clay” in part 1, paragraph 5 develops his ideas about ethics and service to the state. Thoreau describes the behavior of a “wise man” by building on the imagery of a “lump of dirt.” Unlike thoughtless servants of the state who “command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt,” the “wise man” will not “submit to be ‘clay,’” or something easily molded by the state.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct students to form pairs. Instruct student pairs to read part 1, paragraph 6 (from “He who gives himself entirely to his fellow-men” to “he who gives himself partially to them is

pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *benefactor* and *philanthropist*.

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

**Paraphrase Thoreau’s description of how men who give themselves “entirely” and those who give themselves “partially” are treated by their “fellow-men” (part 1, par. 6).**

- Those who give themselves entirely to their “fellow-men” are treated as if they are selfish, but those who only give some of themselves to their “fellow-men” are treated as if they are generous.

**How does part 1, paragraph 6 further develop a central idea that Thoreau discusses in part 1, paragraph 5?**

- In part 1, paragraph 6, Thoreau further develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state. Thoreau believes that men who give themselves “partially” to their “fellow-men” (part 1, par. 6), are considered good people because they are still partially committed to the state. If a person gives himself or herself “entirely” to his or her “fellow-men,” the person cannot give anything to the state, and so resists the state. Thus, such a person is not considered a “good citizen[]” (part 1, par. 6), just as those who serve the state with their consciences “are commonly treated as enemies by [the state]” because they “necessarily resist [the state] for the most part” (part 1, par. 5).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

- Consider asking students which passages they found difficult or problematic and lead a brief whole-class discussion of their responses.

## Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

**How does Thoreau develop a central idea in part 1, paragraphs 5-6?**

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

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### How does Thoreau develop two central ideas in part 1, paragraphs 5-6?

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 read part 1, paragraph 7 (from “How does it become a man to behave” to “*my* government which is the *slave's* government also.”) and write a paragraph in response to the following prompt:

**How does this paragraph develop Thoreau's point of view on the relationship between the individual and the state?**

Ask students to use this lesson's vocabulary where possible in their written responses.

Additionally, instruct students to read part 1, paragraph 8 (from “All men recognize the right to revolution” to “but ours is the invading army”) in preparation for the following lesson. 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). To support comprehension, instruct students to respond briefly to the following questions:

**What does Thoreau's metaphor of the “machine” describe (part 1, par. 8)? (L.11-12.5.a)**

**What is the “right of revolution” (part 1, par. 8), and when should people exercise that right, according to Thoreau?**

- Students follow along.

## Homework

Read paragraph 7 (from “How does it become a man to behave” to “*my* government which is the *slave’s* government also”) and write a paragraph in response to the following prompt:

**How does this paragraph develop Thoreau’s point of view of the relationship between the individual and the state?**

Use this lesson’s vocabulary where possible in your written response.

Also, read part 1, paragraph 8 (from “All men recognize the right to revolution” to “but ours is the invading army”). 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. Respond briefly to the following questions:

**What does Thoreau’s metaphor of the “machine” describe (part 1, par. 8)?**

**What is the “right of revolution” (part 1, par. 8), and when should people exercise that right, according to Thoreau?**

## 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 texts. 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. 5	Ethics	Thoreau explains that men who serve the state with their bodies or minds, but not their consciences, serve the state “as machines” who “rarely make any moral distinctions.” Those who do not serve the state with their conscience do not make their own ethical decisions, but rather, allow the state to dictate such decisions for them.
Part 1, par. 5	The relationship between the individual and the state	Thoreau develops the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state with his statement that those who serve the state with their conscience “necessarily resist it,” which implies that the individual’s conscience naturally rebels against the state, and shows that Thoreau believes the state is evil and does not make “moral distinctions.”
Part 1, par. 6	Ethics; the relationship between the individual and the state	Thoreau explains that when an individual follows his conscience by giving himself “entirely” to his “fellow-men,” he makes himself an enemy to the state and is considered selfish because he follows his conscience. However, the man who only “partially” gives himself over to his “fellow-men” is celebrated because he is a faithful servant to the state.

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