

Essay 2: Responding to Thoreau

WRITING SITUATION:

This assignment involves persuasion, so try to appeal to both your readers' sense of reason and their emotion. Remember that appeals to only your readers' emotion will not make a compellingly persuasive essay. Critical readers are only going to support your cause if you first appeal to them on a rational, logical level then target their emotions.

WRITING PROMPT OPTIONS:

1. In Henry David Thoreau's essay "Civil Disobedience," he advocates breaking the civil law of paying taxes in protest of the Mexican-American War and in protest of slavery. The sacrifice he pays is a night in jail. In a well-developed essay, identify some current issue you consider worth protesting, and describe **what** you would do to protest that issue. Give several convincing reasons addressing **why** you think your issue is worth protesting.
2. In the prescriptive essay "Life Without Principle," Henry David Thoreau discusses several ways by which one ought to conduct one's life. One ethic he talks about is the ethic of work:

The aim of the laborer should be, not to get his living, to get "a good job," but to perform well a certain work; and even in a pecuniary sense, it would be economy for a town to pay its laborers so well that they would not feel that they were working for low ends, as for a livelihood merely, but for scientific, or even moral ends. Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it (77).

In a well-written essay take a position on Thoreau's opinion of the ideal work ethic. You may either support his notion or refute it, but offer several reasons to support your position.

REQUIREMENTS

- **Page length:** Your essay should be 3-4 typed double-spaced pages.
- **Writing mode:** expository/persuasive
- **Audience:** You are writing to peers, college-educated folks. Assume your audience knows *nothing* about the subject.
- **Purpose:** First, you want to practice asserting your opinion on one of the topics. Next, your goal is to convince a reasonable reader to believe in your opinion. Know what it is you wish to accomplish.
- **SAE:** Remember, your paper must follow the basic conventions of Standard American written English (correct mechanics, usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and so forth).
- **REMINDER:** This essay must be written in the third person, so you **may not** use "you," and you should **minimize** the use of the first person, "I,"--if you use it at all in this assignment. Be sure to use the present tense whenever you discuss what authors of outside sources say. Also make sure you introduce the author and title of any outside sources in the correct manner.
- **USING AN OUTSIDE SOURCE:** This paper requires that you cite the target essay which the prompt above is linked to. You may also want to refer to ideas in Thoreau's other essay. **No other outside sources should be used other than the assigned target texts.** Consequently you must use the MLA in-text parenthetical notation method and add a Works Cited page at the end of your essay. You can use this outside reference either as a springboard to launch your own ideas, as a point of disagreement, or as a means of supporting your own ideas.

PEER CRITIQUE ROUGH DRAFT DUE _____

FINAL DRAFT DUE _____