

September 13, 2013

This is a very effective response paper. It is thorough—it supports its points with specific references to the text—and it is clearly written.

Response to Thoreau's "Walking"

1. Henry David Thoreau lived from July 12, 1817 to May 6, 1862 dying at the age of 44. "Walking" was published June 1, 1862 after Thoreau's death. The essay was written and revised multiple times by Thoreau in the years leading up to his death.
2. Thoreau lived the majority of his life in Concord, Massachusetts and is famously known for his stay on Ralph Waldo Emerson's estate where he lived next to Walden Pond which was the setting to which Thoreau wrote his famous work *Walden*.
3. During Thoreau's life many events were taking place throughout the world including the annexation of Texas by the United States leading to the Mexican-American War which Thoreau was opposed to. The expansion of the United States via the idea of Manifest Destiny brought the issue of slavery to the whole country and divided the United States. Thoreau opposed slavery saw, like many others, the annexation of Texas as a way to expand slavery. President Polk, a southern born president, annexed Texas into the Union but also gained the Oregon Territory to add balance to the division between slave states and non-slave states. The balance was not a true solution and by 1860 all signs of compromise on the issue of slavery were unresolved. The civil war began in 1861, the year before Thoreau's death. As I read through *Walking* it becomes apparent that Thoreau fears for society because of its tameness of the wild lands of the west which makes since when viewing the outside world in the east and the north during his lifetime. Canada had joined lower and Upper Canada in 1840 while France had overthrown its monarchy and England had gained a woman as its ruler. The world was closing up all the empty spaces on the map of earth and what was once open land was now being bordered and petitioned off for ownership. Thoreau even mentions in the essay the freedom that comes with the Oregon territory and mentions by name Napoleon Bonaparte and the three o'clock courage. Thoreau's reference to Bonaparte was to make a satire of the courage that idle indoors people must have. In Thoreau's view the expansion to Texas and the Oregon SV (ETS) marks the consolidation of the last wild lands leaving only the pacific before in his words, "the banks of the Styx." This reference to worldly happenings marks direct links between Thoreau's essay "Walking" and the current condition of culture and society in America.
4. From the essay "Walking" Thoreau points out that working takes up the best parts of the day and that the daily life of the average man and woman is boring and filled with sitting about waiting for business to occur. Thoreau says, "I think they deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago," in reference to the shopkeepers who sit about throughout much of the day with complacency of their lives. Thoreau is uninterested in a domestic lifestyle because he feels it would be wasteful to stay indoors for much of one's life because the outdoors is a gift and an inspiration for "enterprise and adventure". Thoreau says that, "Living much out of doors, in the sun and wind, will no doubt produce

a certain roughness of character." I would have to agree that true men of the outdoors are harder and harder to find. When Thoreau says "roughness of character" what I think he really means is individuality amongst men. Those who are not held back indoors from the wildness of the world usually have greater character, integrity, individuality, and a lack of "the languid fingers of idleness" as Thoreau so brilliantly put it. In my opinion I would have to agree with Thoreau's whole perspective of work and daily life, but find fault in my own conviction to live as he did free from man's constraints. As I write these words it becomes a sad thought that we spend so much time analyzing the words of such great men only to say we have looked at their amazing minds and agreed to live in opposition to their thoughts and practices because of simple convenience. I crave to walk just as he did but the problem is there is very little freedom to do such a thing. Our government has made parks to protect lands simply from our own people who would ruin the wild nature for a few dollars profit. Thoreau said in his essay, "the day will come when it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only." This prediction has come true today because of the greed of a few. In our area, where I live, for example the woods thirty years ago were a free open space not owned by the government but by mostly farmers who allowed all the men to hunt and enjoy the land without signs saying, "No Trespassing." Now however most of the timber land is government controlled and the farming industry has dried up causing private land to change into hands that would keep the freedom of the land in a domestic state. The best quote from the essay "Walking" in my opinion says, "To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it." I think this statement is important because it recognizes how private ownership has a downside. Since Thoreau's time we have seen so many changes in the landscape of America's daily life and work habits. More people today work for the government than ever before and private individualize firms struggle under the weight of high taxes and a poor economic structure that does not do much for the "out of doors" man but more for the idle man who collects but does no real work. Things will never change however they will only get worst. No government style or legal system can fix what we as a society and culture have broken. In the words of Henry David Thoreau, "Let us improve our opportunities, then, before the evil days come."

5. In the essay the West is significant to Thoreau's idea of where wildness is, where freedom is abundant, and where the future for all mankind lies. Thoreau says in his essay, "the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side" in reference to the west. Mankind has a "westward tendency" as Thoreau says about Columbus, because of "a general and mysterious movement" that occurs throughout our history. The exact quote in the essay even says, "The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild." And the wildness Thoreau examines and longs for is where "no civilization can endure." The West represents the future because of the idea that "Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest." By saying this in his essay Thoreau is saying that life flourishes in wildness where it decays and becomes a historic way of living when it domesticates.
6. The significance of the east is that it has little to no significance to flourishing freedom but instead signifies control through teaching common knowledge. Thoreau says, "We go eastward to realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race; we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure." The east is a representation of the past and the "petitioning" of the free land God has

bestowed upon mankind. Thoreau is making a point to say that while examining the history of mankind we can see that the true direction to look is toward the West, or in more common terms the future through immersing ourselves into the wild parts left in the world.

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE
/ 21

GENERAL COMMENTS

PAGE 1

[Untitled] This is very nice, Timothy! I am going to share this with the rest of the class if that is okay with you.



S/V This subject and verb may not agree. Proofread the sentence to make sure the subject agrees with the verb.

PAGE 2

 1. This paragraph is too long! Use shorter ones so that I can keep up with you more easily!

PAGE 3

RUBRIC: RESPONSE PAPER RUBRIC

0 / 7

DEVELOPMENT (60%)

0 / 7

Any piece of writing should fully support all the claims it makes.

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (7)	To exceed expectations, the author must refer to and quote specific passages to illustrate the points that the author is making.
MEETS EXPECTATIONS (5)	To meet expectations, the author must refer to specific passages in the text to support the points that the author is making.
FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATION (3)	An essay that fails to meet expectations may not provide specific details to support the claims that the author is making or provide inadequate or inaccurate support for those claims.
FAILS TO MEET MINIMUM (1)	Papers that completely fail to meet the minimum requirements of college level work provide no support or almost no support for the claims the author is making, or provides support that is garbled or nonsensical.

CLARITY (30%)

0 / 7

Any piece of writing should have a clear thesis statement and its body paragraphs should have clear topic statements that bear some relation to each other.

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (7)	To exceed expectations, papers should have clear thesis statements that are followed by logically ordered paragraphs with clear topic statements, transitional elements that link the paragraphs, and sentences within the paragraphs that flow in a logical order.
MEETS EXPECTATIONS (5)	Papers that meet expectations will have a basic level of clarity in the thesis statement, a basic level of unity among logically ordered paragraphs, and a basic level of clarity in the sentences within the paragraphs. Papers that meet but do not exceed expectations in this area may not use transitional devices to link paragraphs and/or the thoughts within the paragraphs.
FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATION (3)	Papers that do not meet expectations will be those that lack a thesis statement and/or clearly organized paragraphs.
FAILS TO MEET MINIMUM (1)	Papers that completely fail to meet the minimum standard of clarity for college level writing will receive no credit for this portion of the rubric.

GRAMMAR (10%)

0 / 7

All college-level writing should be free of errors in grammar and mechanics.

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (7)	To exceed expectations, the paper must be free of grammar errors.
MEETS EXPECTATIONS (5)	To meet expectations the paper must be generally free of errors in grammar and mechanics, but there may be some errors.
FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATION (3)	Papers that contain many grammar errors and/or errors that seriously impede readability will fail to meet expectations.
FAILS TO MEET MINIMUM (1)	Papers that fail to meet the most basic expectations of college-level writing will receive no points for grammar.