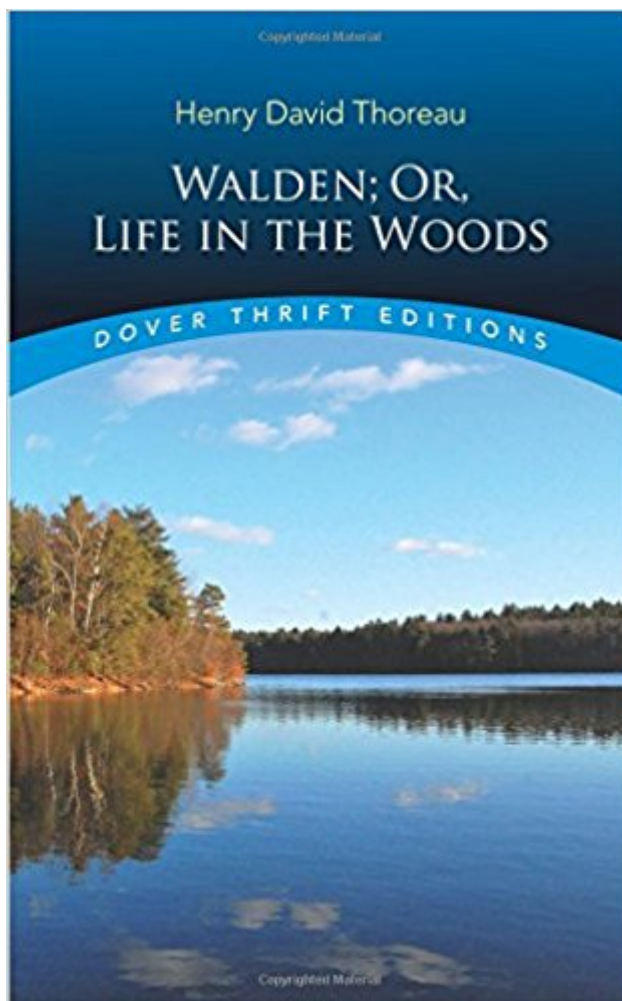


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# Walden; Or, Life In The Woods (Dover Thrift Editions)



## Synopsis

Nature was a form of religion for naturalist, essayist, and early environmentalist Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862). In communing with the natural world, he wished to "live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and learn what it had to teach." Toward that end Thoreau built a cabin in the spring of 1845 on the shores of Walden Pond • on land owned by Ralph Waldo Emerson • outside Concord, Massachusetts. There he observed nature, farmed, built fences, surveyed, and wrote in his journal. One product of his two-year sojourn was this book • a great classic of American letters. Interwoven with accounts of Thoreau's daily life (he received visitors and almost daily walked into Concord) are meditations on human existence, society, government, and other topics, expressed with wisdom and beauty of style. Walden offers abundant evidence of Thoreau's ability to begin with observations on a mundane incident or the minutiae of nature and then develop these observations into profound ruminations on the most fundamental human concerns. Credited with influencing Tolstoy, Gandhi, and other thinkers, the volume remains a masterpiece of philosophical reflection. A selection of the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

YA An unintended effect of the cultural diversity curriculum is that we lose touch with seminal works such as Walden. Written for an audience thoroughly versed in Western tradition, many of Thoreau's metaphors and references are unrecognizable to today's students. Though some references were

intended to prove his erudition, one is chagrined at the number of necessary explications of standard classical concepts. Though some annotations are noisy comments upon Thoreau's life, most are informative and enhance the work. Many YAs will view Thoreau's natural essays as he intended, thanks to Harding's efforts. A must for libraries. ?Hugh McAloon, Prince William County Public Library, VA Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Walden's original publisher releases an annotated edition to celebrate the book's 150th anniversary. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

How could I not love Henry David Thoreau? I found him remarkable. As I got deeper and further into the book Walden, I found his musings and enlightning and uplifting. He was a father of environmentalism, a naturalist, A minimalist, an abolitionist, and a Transcendentalist experiencing nature as God and God in nature. What a surprising treat!

Civil Disobedience written during saber rattling with Mexico and the country's concern over the abolition of slavery in 1848 it is as relevant today as it has ever been, as it transcends space and time. Thoreau's main point is that the best - and many times, the only - method for fighting injustice is through passive disobedience. By refusing to cooperate with the machinery of injustice, the individual can become the friction that stops the machine. Active resistance is bound for failure, as the machine (the State, society, etc.) is too formidable for the individual to fight. But, by refusing to cooperate, justice can be achieved and injustice toppled. "Any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one ". Other gems: I heartily accept the motto "That government is best which governs least or not at all". Man has a conscience (not government) we should be Men first and subjects second. Current political thought could use the purity, consistency and clarity that were second nature to thinkers near the American Revolution. The government never started any enterprise; it does not keep the country free. It did not settle the West. It does not educate. The chapter of the American people accomplished it all. I would have done more if the government got out of the way. Today we are faced with some of the same issues about control. The Government takes our labor (money) and decides who and what wars to fight and how to spend the rest with or with our consent. It is a book about convections of a man's right and wrong (not

government) and the fight for injustice.

The language alone is breathtaking. This is a great read. It is comfortable, ponderous, and frank, intelligent, yet humble philosophy. The imagery is intimately articulated and you find yourself completely entertained by the simple wonders of pond, forest, and cabin.

I'm only writing something in this case because it's required in order to rate the work. My friend is a Walden expert. To my shame, I put off reading it for years. I finally did so, from cover to cover. It's a great reading experience. Thoreau was very wise, extremely original, and highly educated too. He was also a very resourceful surveyor. Thoreau was no primitive. Many of the paragraphs in "Walden" are famous out of context. If you haven't read it, give yourself a treat.

while at times I found the book a little difficult to read because of the writing style, I found the insight to be well worth the challenge. It touches upon the true role of the individual within a society and the manner in which a government should view the individual which, Hayek references in his *Road to Serfdom* another book worth the time of anyone who has read *Civil Disobedience*. The one shock for me though was upon reaching the final page of the book with the recommendations for further reading to find Marx who in truth stands on the opposite footing of Thoreau with his collectivism were as Thoreau was a true believer and supporter of the individual's ability to choose how they relate to the state. I believe we as citizens should be given the choice of which taxes to support and which to not have to pay. Case in point I pay property taxes through the money that I give to my landlord for the schools in my area but yet I have no children those in a community should be given the option to say no to a portion of their property taxes if they do not have children in school and also those that choose to send their children to private school should be given the same option. The state needs to realize that the money they use is our money and as the governed if we choose to revoke our mandate they will receive nothing.

I can't believe I got to be this old and had never read this philosophical treatise on the role of the individual and government in society. In this day where the political right has shifted the political center for all parties, Thoreau would be considered a revolutionary. Writing in the time of slavery and the Mexican American war, you would think that the essay, being over 150 years old would be dated, but oppression and wars of aggression are the same issues we face today. *Civil Disobedience* leaves a lot to think about - the role of government, the individual, the difference

between society and government, and what would be the consequence if everyone embraced Thoreau's ideas; a better society or anarchy? The English is sometimes a bit hard to digest (a lot of double negatives) but I found Spark Notes a helpful companion.

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