

## ENG 110 Group Work, “Civil Disobedience”

*Answer the questions in your own words. For the group presentation, make sure to choose a couple of short quotations to read aloud to help illustrate your answers.*

Group #1 (pages 1-2, up to the words “benefactor and philanthropist”)

1. Explain the distinction between the majority and minority. What are some of the words and ideas Thoreau associates with each?
2. What is the purpose of the “file of soldiers” example? What is it meant to illustrate?
3. According to Thoreau, what happens when a “mass [group] of men ... serve the State”? What comparisons and contrasts does he make?

Group #2 (pages 2-3, from “Paley” up to “the temporary guardian of it”)

1. What does Paley argue in “Duty of Submission to Civil Government”? What does Thoreau think of Paley’s argument?
2. What is the example of the drowning man and the plank meant to illustrate?
3. Who does Thoreau most blame for the lack of reform on the issue of slavery? How does Thoreau portray these people?

Group #3 (pages 3-4, from “All voting” to “bury him decently”)

1. What does Thoreau think of voting?
2. What does Thoreau think of “the action of masses of men” with regard to slavery? (Explain the text at the end of page 3.)
3. What is the political convention in Baltimore meant to illustrate? What does Thoreau think of the people who attend such conventions? Why?

Group # 4 (pages 4-5, from “It is not a man’s duty” to “from the divine”)

1. How does Thoreau define a “man’s duty”?
2. Explain the example of the soldier who is applauded. What is Thoreau saying about the one doing the applauding?
3. Rather than petition for the dissolution of the Union, what does Thoreau think people should do? What is the analogy he draws?
4. What is the example of the dollar meant to illustrate?

Group #5 (pages 5-6, from “If the injustice” to “blood flowing now”)

1. When does Thoreau believe it is necessary to break a law rather than follow it?
2. What is Thoreau’s opinion of prison?
3. What does Thoreau mean when he says “cast your whole vote”? How is this related to a “peaceable revolution”?
4. How does Thoreau justify the potential use of violence?

Group #6 (pages 7-8, from “I have paid no poll-tax” to end)

1. How does Thoreau feel about his time in jail? Why does he say “I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax”?
2. What does Thoreau come to think of the State after his time in jail? What does he now understand?
3. What sort of a State does Thoreau imagine at the essay’s end? Why?