

# Argumentative thoreau essay

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Jessica Taylor 13, February 2012 AP English Mrs. Mercer Self-Sufficiency and Individualism Can Harm a Community Henry David Thoreau goes to the woods to live away from duties and to live a life of leisure. He moves far away from any method of communication, such as the post office. He wishes to live independently and self-sufficiently. The quote “ I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life... and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. ” He summarizes his reasons for living in the woods in this quote.

Thoreau wants to live deliberately; to choose his own course and have no one else influence his life. He doesn't want to get old and look back and realize that there are things in life that he wanted to do, that he has never done. If everyone in a community lived by the virtues of individualism and self-sufficiency, then there would be no community. In a community, everyone contributes something. Individuals in a community work together, in order to solve problems and issues facing the community. Such as, if there has been a terrible natural disaster, communities work together to repair the damage.

If the damage is more extensive in some areas than others, then the individuals of that community can work harder to restore it. If everyone in a community lived by the virtues of individualism and self-sufficiency, then in times of crisis or suffering, there would be no sense of community where people helped one another. Also if a community lived by these virtues, then there would be no trust. In order to gain or build trust, there has to be some sort of connection between individuals. In Thoreau's self-sufficient world, there was no communication.

If a person held the virtue of self-sufficiency, this may make other individuals feel offended. People would feel offended because today's world is all about communication. If an individual blocked out other people and did not allow them to help him/her, then this might make the other individual feel as if they were not beneficial. Instead of being a community, it would be more of a rivalry between individuals. There would be no trust or companionship. In times when individuals would need each other's help; there would be no sense of alliance.

Everyone would be against one another, because everyone would feel as if each other were untrustworthy. In the United States, we are one giant community; there are many communities within the major one. In times of war or battle, we stand together. Above all, the citizens in the U. S are able to come together to fight the battles when needed. If every citizen in the U. S lived by the virtues of self-sufficiency and individualism then there would be no U. S. in times of war; there would be no army. In an army you must work together to find the best solution to the problem, there has to be teamwork and trust.

In a self-sufficient world, everyone would want to do things in their own way, and in return this would cause chaos. A community is a beneficial factor, without it we have nothing. Yes, being self-sufficient can be a helpful virtue, but in the condition of the community it is one virtue that can destroy the community. If there was no sense of an alliance, there would be no way to survive a natural disaster or fatal event. A community can strive and recover from a setback, whereas, if an individual was self-sufficient, then this would be much more difficult.