

# Simplicity "where i lived and what i lived for" essay sample

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## **Simplicity “ Where I Lived and What I Lived for” Essay Sample**

You are homeless and have almost no possessions. Would you consider yourself rich or poor? You would call yourself poor, of course. Henry David Thoreau would disagree. In the mid1800s he decided to abandon civilization and live alone on Walden Pond. For two years he lived in a cabin away from other people. He was free of the complications of normal life and lived very simply, without worries. In his essay, Thoreau claims that those without many possessions are actually richer than those that have many. By living alone, on the pond, Thoreau realized the value of living simply and how technology is unnecessary and actually hurts our lives.

Thoreau writes down his experience and what he learned in an essay called “ Where I Lived and What I Lived For”. In the essay he talks about deciding to live on a pond, only a couple miles from the city, but to him an unexplored corner of the universe. He wants to live deliberately and to simplify his life. “ Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry.” (63) The world was moving too fast so to enjoy life he needed to slow down. According to Thoreau, newspapers are useless. He talks about how they never tell us anything new. Most of mankind spends their mornings working at a job that they do not like; they are slaves to a career and aren’t able to enjoy the natural world around them. Thoreau realizes this and gets critical of civilized society. In the end he says that all people can improve their lives if only they live more simply. If man removes himself from social existence, he can begin to grasp reality.

In today's society, it is almost impossible to live simply. There are many things that we need today that makes it so hard. We also keep on wanting more and more things, feeling like we need them. Because of our complicated society, life isn't how it should be and as a result, people are not happy. We were not meant to live this way, as Thoreau found out while living on the pond. While we think, today, that someone with a lot of money and possessions is rich, Thoreau claims that " A man is rich in proportion to the number of things that he can afford to let alone"(53). Material things are by no means important in determining whether someone is either rich or poor. The more things you have, the more you have to deal with and worry about. The poor man is obsessed with possession while the rich has let go of materialism. He knows to be happy, you need to get rid of the unnecessary and be content with what you have. If you don't want anything, then you have everything you could possibly need and will be happy. Being rich means having a life worth living. If you want to live a rich and happy life, one worth living, you need to simplify. The more possessions you have the worse you'll be. A rich man realizes that the gains from some actions are not worth the effort or risk, and spends his time doing the things he actually likes doing than worrying about what he gets from it. He focuses on happiness, not unnecessary wants.

Today, we live in an advanced, technological, modern world. Back in the mid1800s, when Thoreau criticized technology and how he sees it as really hurting people, things were far less advanced. Because of this, his words are really way more relevant today. Yet no one listens or cares and technology keeps on forcing more and more complications on our our lives. " Still we live

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meanly, like ants...Our life is frittered away in detail...Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, not a hundred or a thousand...We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us"(59-60). We depend way too much on technology. This isn't good; we can't really survive without it now. We should be able to but technology creates dependent people and doesn't make life easier. It makes it harder. Yes, technology of course has created great things like advanced medicine helping people live longer but most are unnecessary.

We don't benefit from it but are hurt by it, is what Thoreau meant by the railroad riding on us. People work hard and spend their hard earned money on things they don't need. If we live simpler lives we would have fewer worries and be happy. Technology also blinds us as a society. We can't see the beauty all around us and are too focused on the superficial. We have the potential to make our lives better but don't realize it. Our lives aren't getting better when we are lost in materialism and the obsession with technology. I personally agree with all that Thoreau says, that we shouldn't be so obsessed with technology and need to simplify. But it is really hard to in our world today. Back then you could go and live on a lake, or something, and be simple, have fewer worries. I am to use to being around technology. My life might be a happier one without technology but I find it hard going a day without Facebook, TV, video games etc.

Henry David Thoreau was ahead of his time with his ideas. If he had wrote this essay in the present instead of back in the 1850s there would've been a bigger impact. Because it wasn't really that relevant back then he words

weren't listened to a lot. Today his essay is almost forgotten except by college students who don't care about what it says. We don't realize that we're living our lives different than we should be. Thoreau urges us to get rid of all that complicates our lives. To see the beauty all around us we need to change. Technology is evolving faster and faster and it is nearly impossible today to leave it though. "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!"(59). Are we able to live simply today?