

# Independence and freedom of the individual essay

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



## **Introduction**

In the American History of 1706- 1790, Benjamin Franklin is an honored figure due to his influence of development of United States of America and how the country would understand itself. Benjamin Franklin is the only famous person who is known and recognized for signing all the key documents of creating the United States of America. These documents include the constitution of United States, Declaration of Independence, Treaty of Alliance with France and Treaty of Paris. The major influence of Benjamin Franklin in these documents is well understood and recognized due to his concept development on America and how to be an American. He was a leader who well interacted with people including the leaders and also made sure he synthesized people and ensured their influence over the United States. Benjamin Franklin recognized the individual freedom and was one of the world ancient leaders who believed that a person should have freedom and do what he pleased.

In the American Transcendentalist Movement, Henry David Thoreau is known as a very significant figure. The major area where he derived his fame was in the essay “ Civil Disobedience” and the book he wrote which is known as Walden since all these literature had a huge influence on the American culture. He was a man who really valued the individual independence and helped to preach its importance to Americans. He is a leader who contributed in the development of America politically, culturally and economically through writing articles which people could read and get a foresight of a better future.

## **Contrast between Individual Freedom by Benjamin Franklin and Henry David Thoreau**

Benjamin Franklin is a leader who stood tall among groups of men who the world recognizes as our Founding Fathers. The leader has excellent skills in democracy which he used to serve his countrymen and he is known to play a very major role in the Revolution of America. However, it is evident that he did not play this role by fighting in the fields but practiced them in the government's staterooms and halls. He had and helped create a clear vision on how things should be and happen and how people should live especially where freedom is mentioned.

In order to ensure that this was well understood most especially the individual freedom of Americans, the leader use his skills in writing and literature since it helped him more in shaping the United States of America future. For him to stand among men and sign the document of Declaration of Independence in 1776 was a great move to show how much he was in favor of individual freedom. This was also followed by the signing of the peace treaty between France and England. The leader also helped writing some parts of the constitution and Declaration of Independence which clearly indicates how involved he was in the birth of United States of America.

People love to live comfortably and this Benjamin Franklin tried to make sure that the Americans acquired it. He helped to mold the nation by making the city life better for everyone and also served as a postmaster in Philadelphia. The Union Fire Company was started in 1736 in order to ensure the safety of the people. The first company on fire insurance was started in 1752 by Benjamin Franklin and this also indicates how his interest was on the people

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of his nation and how independent he wanted them to be. Individual freedom is very essential and reduces the strains in the ways of life and also helps reduce emotional problems. This was one major thing that Benjamin Franklin understood and that is why he did various activities like the one discussed above in order to make the lives of the United States citizens more comfortable and exciting. In his part to play this role, he used both the physical and verbal means. Though the leadership of America is found in Washington, DC currently, during the days of Ben Franklin it was found in Philadelphia since that is where the leader was.

Comparing Benjamin Franklin's role in personal freedom and that of Henry shows two different pictures and two types of leaders. Though Benjamin signed treaties on Independence and others he is well known for the controversy of keeping slaves. However he became an abolitionist during his time in France and even started dedicating himself towards his country by trying to finish the act of slavery. This is where the leader becomes well compared to Henry David Thoreau who wrote articles and helped to abolish slave trade. Thoreau was against slavery and the only way he could express his disapproval of the act was in his literature where he wrote essays and journals on the things the slaves went through and how wrong it was. His work in writing clearly indicates that it is deeply rooted in his historic circumstances during his time of existence in the nation. The leader went ahead to state that in order to finish slavery, violence may be necessary. Though Benjamin Franklin also wrote in regards to the personal freedom, his articles are not as touching and emotional as those of Thoreau who went to

explain in details on how these slaves were bartered and how they were subjected to hostile environments.

It is known that the time of Thoreau is one of the major periods with revolutionary political change and transformation socially. Thoreau mocks the government and the standing army regarding their leadership in his literature. This literature raise a lot of questions and up to date people try to get the real meaning of what the writer really meant.

Both Henry David Thoreau and Benjamin Franklin had features in common which showed their dedication in individual freedom and how they tried to help mankind achieve this most especially those affected by the slavery. The leaders had several things in common which include:

**They both had a concentration on the individual's preference in religion, ideas, ideology, morality and social custom**

They both held favor on methods of evolution since they felt it can bring change to the mankind way of living in terms of education, experiences and experiments.

**They both emphasized on personal exploration and experience which they felt was a way of promoting personal independence**

Both leaders also supported individuals to do exactly as they please as long as it was legal. Despite the controversy of Benjamin keeping slaves, he was a man of honor and a man who valued the freedom of others. Both Benjamin Franklin and Thoreau are famous leaders who have supported United States

of America politically and economically throughout history. Not only were they in political and economical issues of the country but they also contributed in religious ethics most especially Benjamin Franklin who carried enlightenment philosophy globally in Protestant Ethic. Both leaders were good family men. Though Benjamin Franklin is said to have left his family while travelling to Europe on trips which gave him a lot of profits, he wrote letters to his family. The leader is also said to have helped philanthropic charities a trait that blend him to be recognized as a man of many contradictions. The leader not only wrote down things but is also known to be a leader who primarily acted upon the works he wrote and thus acting as an example and a mentor towards the rest of the world.

Thoreau differs from Benjamin Franklin in various areas where he criticizes the government and its mode of paying taxes and all this is displayed in his essays. Thoreau interest in personal freedom is clearly indicated in his vision to stop slavery and abolish it completely while Benjamin Franklin interest is shown in his personal and social circumstance. Thoreau showed his disapproval on the government collecting taxes which were used to support the slaves. However this does not mean that he does not respect and obey his government. He was a leader who had full recognition on the government's power though he is said to have been arrested sometime in his life for not paying taxes. It is clear that though it is the right of the government to seek taxes, they have to do it in the right way and not take advantage of the individuals just because it is their rights.

In conclusion, both the Benjamin Franklin and Henry David Thoreau are portrayed as significant and respectful ancient leaders in the United States of America. They are leaders who were both known for their support in individual freedom though they expressed their views in different ways. Benjamin Franklin is said to have kept slaves but the fact is he still preached of individual freedom in his literature. The leaders were both writers who expressed their views towards the world through the literature and essays they wrote. Thoreau spoke mostly about the slave rights and fought for its abolishment and he mostly expressed this through his writing. However, the leaders also helped in the development and growth of United States of America both politically and economically. Both of the leaders felt that each individual has his or her own rights to do what he or she pleased and this is mostly indicated by Thoreau in his essays whereby he gives a description of how wrong it is for slavery cruelty.

## **Works Cited**

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