

Exemplar of Close Reading #1: (on Mac/English/Eng 30/Reading comp/Exemplar of close reading #1)

Text: Background Information: This is the opening paragraph of an essay, "On Civil disobedience," originally written in 1849 by Henry David Thoreau, a well-known figure in nineteenth century American cultural and literary thought.

In its entirety:

I heartily accept the motto, -- "That government is best which governs least"; and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe -- "That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it.

First Reading: Paraphrasing and Interpretation

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Second Level: The Thesis

Clarification of Thesis:

Elaboration of Thesis:

Exemplification of Thesis:

Illustration of Thesis: