

of nature. He recorded the woodland creatures, using both their scientific and common names. He observed the freezing and thawing of the pond. He measured the depth of the pond.

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He also interpreted his experiences with poetry and philosophical writing. His purpose for being at Walden Pond was to gain insight into human society through solitary living. It's important to remember, too, that Thoreau was not in deep wilderness. Walden Pond lay only a couple of miles from the town of Concord and the homes of his parents and of Emerson. He had frequent visitors to his little cabin. As he said, "I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society."

### **Discussion Starters**

Thoreau went to the woods to discover what it is to live. What do you think that means? What is it to live a meaningful life?

Did you know that Walden Pond was so close to town? Does that change how you view Thoreau's experience?

### **Thoreau's Legacy**

Thoreau's legacy is that of an environmental pioneer whose words still hold true today. He was always mindful of what he used and whether it was necessity or waste. He abhorred wastefulness and excess. He said, "A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone."

He felt we needed to treat the environment with respect and to leave portions of it wild and unused for human industry. "We need to witness... some life pasturing freely where we never wander." He was adamant that we must have places that remain wild and not domesticated for human use.

Thoreau laid the groundwork for today's environmental movement by advocating for social responsibility, resource efficiency, and simple living. He felt a good society was one that understood that there is more to the world than itself.

### **Discussion Starters**

Thoreau hated wastefulness. Can you think of ways to avoid wastefulness?

Thoreau felt we should all live simply. What does that mean to you? How might you live simply?

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