1. Thoreau’s essay is called “Civil Disobedience” because he discusses how sometimes it is okay to not always follow the rules or laws the government has set. If people find a rule or law set by the government to be unjust or unfair, then it is acceptable to not follow that law in order to make a point.
2. Government is “the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will” according to Thoreau.
3. Thoreau suggests that people should do what they think is right first and he is referring to men as having a conscience and common sense that should always come first before the law. The subject is the law and it is okay to sometimes rebel against the “subject” or law if that’s what one’s conscience is telling them to do. One’s conscience knows what’s best for themselves. I think he makes this argument to show that the government isn’t always right and sometimes the people have to make a point by rebellion in order for change to happen.
4. I do believe that Thoreau looks down on soldiers, captains, generals, etc. because they are doing things for the man in charge and not on their beliefs or conscience. They are just obeying what the man in charge says even if it is against what they believe. Thoreau says, “a common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captains….marching in admirable order over hill and dale to wars, against their wills, against their common sense and consciences.”
5. Thoreau uses Christ, Copernicus, Luther, Washington, and Franklin as examples of men who were made enemies of society and later vindicated and now held in high esteem.
6. Thoreau exercised civil disobedience by not paying taxes. As a result, he was put in jail. I don’t believe in his actions because I believe that one must be complaint with their country even if they don’t like the laws. I believe law are in place for a reason and just because you don’t like it or see a reason for it doesn’t mean you should just not obey it. Not everybody is going to agree or like the same thing. There is always going to be someone or a group of people that aren’t pleased. With those people, people just have to learn to deal with them or tolerate them and it is by no means an excuse to disobey or be noncompliant with the government. I think I would’ve talked to other citizen or started a petition for change if I didn’t like the choices the government was making.