

Thoreau Judges a Science Fair: The Ending is Shocking

Beginning:

Dr. C: Ahhhh, the science fair. My favorite day of the year. The one time I can judge my students, and they can't do anything about it! Today I am here with Harvard graduate, environmentalist, and acclaimed writer of *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau, and we are here to judge the students. We hope to see great accomplishments in the field of STEM today.

Thoreau: Ugh, why would you bring someone such as myself here? The lights, the people, and all these little kids **look at the students in the crowd** It's all so fake

Dr C: We are here to see all these new inventions. The innovation, the progress, I love it!

Thoreau: I...despise it... I propose everyone try the "tonic of wilderness" "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Dr. C: Don't be like that, maybe you will find something you like!

Walks over to the Complex Presenter

Complex Student: Good morning!

Thoreau: Good Morrow. Please **TRY** to enlighten me on your project.

Dr. C: **smile and give a thumbs up**

Complex Student: Hi, I am Olivia, and this is my science fair project **Points to project** I have cured Neoplasia, Tumors, Carcinoma, Sarcoma, Leukemia, Lymphoma...

Thoreau: Affront only the essential facts

Complex Student: Oh, um...I cured Cancer

Thoreau: Ok... So? "Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at; as railroads lead to Boston or New York. We are in great haste to

construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate." "Our life is frittered away by detail... simplify, simplify."

Complex Student: What do you mean by 'so?' I've cured the disease that has caused the most hardship, the most life-threatening and devastating disease of all time!!

Thoreau: I bet this cancer, whatever that is, isn't very important. And even then, do we not already have medicines and treatments? This serves no true end. Let this cease to trouble my mind.

Complex Student: *Crashes tf out and starts having mental breakdown*

Thoreau: "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." I give you a 0/10. The gradual thawing of ice provided a greater yield than this present creation.

Middle:

Dr C: *Pulls Thoreau to the side* Let's try not to be too harsh to the students, Thoreau. They've worked so hard (approximately six months) to get to this point. You should try to have a more understanding mindset. I mean, she has literally cured one of the hardest diseases to fight.

Thoreau: However, that student's project was of a superfluous nature and failed to have substance! Nothing is to be admired in this project. I hope for my time here to be deliberate, not a complete waste of time.

Dr. C: Thoreau, this won't be a complete waste of time if you try to understand the entire picture of what they are trying to accomplish. If you continue to grovel in this manner, you will feel as though it *was* a waste of time!

Walks over to the next student (with the project of the teleportation)

Regular Student: Good morning, can I tell you about teleportation? I have invented a portal which I can program to take you anywhere in the world!

Thoreau: This project lacks the vitality of a true thought, Next!

Regular Student: Wait! How much do you know about teleportation?

Thoreau: I know a little, particularly about time travel. But I do detest this project!

Dr C: No, give me more. Why, Thoreau? You need to justify your reasoning.

Thoreau: Always you have to contend with the stupidity of men. But if you must. First, this must be a huge waste of the environment. All the trees around Walden must be cut down for this frivolous device to run. Second, man is born with legs, designed for walking. Roads are meant for walking. To shun the invigorating stride is to invite weight upon the body and spirit.

Regular presenter: Did you just call me fat?

Thoreau: Yes

Dr C: Elaborate, tell me more

Thoreau: According to the dimensions of the presenter in front of me, they could clearly do more walking. The dimensions of this presenter are out of proportion. They must seek healthy communion with their better self. There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers. Dr. C you know nothing of living deliberately. Everything must have a purpose. This serves no purpose, therefore we must move on.

Dr. C: This presenter has revolutionized travel in a way that has never been discussed before. The reconstruction of the complex matter of atoms has never been discovered before!

Thoreau: But why reinvent something if walking already worked before? There is no need. I used to walk one whole mile to get to town. To walk a mile was to immerse oneself in the changing landscape. People of these times cannot do such profound things as I did.

Dr. C: *Defeated Silent* ok next

End:

Simple Student: Hello, I studied the life of a bean plant.

Thoreau: Do tell, you know I once grew a bean farm.

Simple Student: So for a plant to live they need sunlight, water, and air. Because plants can't eat, they need the sun to make food by photosynthesis.

Thoreau: Revolutionary, absolutely revolutionary. I never knew about this process. Pho-to-syn-the-sis what is that?

Dr. C: *Death staring at Thoreau and shaking his head*

Simple Student: Oh, it is just the process needed to keep plants alive. Plants don't have mouths to eat, so they turn sunlight into food instead.

Thoreau: Amazing! 10/10 *claps* This is truly what we want to see here, understanding the central parts of the world. "I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours." And I believe the same fate will happen to you. One cannot try to innovate on the world without knowing how it works in the first place.

All students: *Enter Complex and Regular student* So you see,

Complex Student: Not all complex ideas are necessary to make an excellent science fair project! Sometimes less is more.

Simple Student: Even as Thoreau said, "Follow your genius closely enough, and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour."

Regular Student: Jack grew a bean, which didn't require any intricate gameplan or skills, but still had an impact on someone like Thoreau. Thoreau regularly took care of his bean farm, and yet didn't know the basics to something as easy as photosynthesis.

Complex Student: This shows that you need to lay the foundation to anything you want to do before moving onto something more complex.

So you see, less is more.

