Civil Disobedience Questions

1. Write down 3 of Thoreau’s arguments (quote first, then a paraphrase). Which do you find convincing and with which do you disagree? Explain your answers.

1. Quote:

Paraphrase:

Agree/Disagree? Why?:

2. Quote:

Paraphrase:

Agree/Disagree? Why?:

3. Quote:

Paraphrase:

Agree/Disagree? Why?:

1. Interpret, “That government is best which governs least…That government is best which governs not at all.” Discuss Thoreau’s view of the role of government and whether you agree or disagree.

What do YOU think the role of government should be?

1. Why does he describe the Mexican War as, “…the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool”?
2. Interpret the metaphor of the “wooden gun” in paragraph 2.
3. Who is ultimately more important—the individual, the citizens as a whole, or the government?
4. Can we reach the government that Thoreau advocates?
5. Do you think that there would be civil order if each person followed his or her own conscience? Explain your answer.
6. What are some situations today where we have examples of people who are working for changes in the name of justice and fairness? To what extent should they go to accomplish their goal?
7. Do you applaud or criticize citizens who work for change? What advice would Thoreau give them?
8. If Thoreau were alive today, how would he judge America?