**From *Walden* by Thoreau**

1 When first I took up my **abode** in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there . . . my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white **hewn** studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, 5 so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum [sap] would **exude** from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this [other-worldy] character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; 10 but few are the ears that hear it.

**1. How does Thoreau describe his cabin?**

a. It is a grand, expensive home c. It is unfinished and raw

b. It is not fit to live in d. It is a hateful place

**2. "I fancied [believed] that some sweet gum [or sap] would exude from [the walls]" (5). Why does Thoreau include this detail?**

a. It shows how natural and primitive his cabin is c. It proves that Thoreau is unsuited for living in the woods

b. It demonstrates his displeasure with the craftsmanship d. It makes Thoreau look like a wimp . . .

3. Provide a line that proves Thoreau is enjoying his experience in the woods.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my [attic]; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive 15 somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those smaller and more thrilling songsters of the forest 20 which never, or rarely, serenade a villager — the wood thrush, the very, the scarlet tanager, the field sparrow, the whip- poor-will, and many others.

**4. What was the only other "house" Thoreau owned?**

**5. Who are some of Thoreau's "neighbors"?**

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to [view] 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. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out 25 all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put [out] all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine [lowness] of it, and publish its [lowness] to the world; or if it were **sublime**, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify 30 God and enjoy him forever."

**6. What does Thoreau mean when he says he wanted to live "Spartan-like" (25)?**

**7. In his passage, Thoreau explains why he moved to the woods. In your own words, try to summarize Thoreau's explanation.**

Still we live meanly [note: not mean like "nasty" or "unpleasant," but mean as in "low"or"base"] , like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and our best virtue has for its occasion a **superfluous** and **evitable** wretchedness. Our life is **frittered** away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, 35 simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not **founder** and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, 40 five; and reduce other things in proportion.

**8. In this section, Thoreau says that people are so busy, so consumed by details that they forget to do what?**

**9. How will "simplicity," in Thoreau's opinion, improve people's lives?**

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. . . . As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence.  . . .

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is [filled] with stars. I 45 cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining-rod and thin 50 rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

**10. If you were take one piece of advice from Thoreau's work and summarize it, what would it be? Write your 4 line summary with your explanation for taking this piece of advice and provide textual evidence to support your claim.**