

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Selections from *The Leviathan*- Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

Human Equality

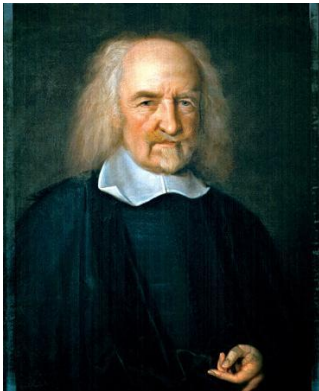
Nature has made men so equal, in the talent of the body and mind; even though one can find a person stronger in body, or more intelligent thinking than another, when everything is calculated together, the difference between one person and another is not that great.

For such is the nature of people, that in many ways they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more persuasive, or more learned than themselves. Yet even as people say these things, they will hardly believe there are many people as smart as themselves...

Summarize in your own words:

The State of Nature:

Since everyone has this equality of ability (mentioned above), all people hope to obtain their ends. Therefore, if any two people desire the same thing, which they could never both enjoy, they become instant enemies...



People need a strong ruler to prevent people from focusing on their enemies (all other people). People need a strong ruler with a lot of power to keep the people in awe so they do not do anything foolish. If people do not have a leader with a lot of power the people will be in a condition of constant war. People need a strong ruler to tell them what to do, or society will become every man against every man in a battle of constant warfare. The opposite is also true: if the ruler is weak, than people will be more willing to fight each other.

Summarize in your own words:

In these conditions (if these battles are allowed to occur by a weak ruler) there is no place for meaningful work, because no profit is guaranteed, and consequently no farming of the land, no navigation or use of goods imported by sea, no building, no knowledge of the face of the earth will ever take place. Instead, people need a strong government power to set them straight and prevent people from becoming barbaric towards each other. Without a strong government, the life of men is short, lonely, poor, nasty, brutal, and short. Since people need a strong government, they do not have the right to rebel against a strong government but instead should listen to the ruler at all times and do what they say—otherwise chaos will occur. Therefore, people should agree to give up some freedoms to allow a strong ruler to create peace, safety, and order for everyone.

Summarize in your own words: