

# I Cannot Live Without Books

## General

### Grade Level

Elementary School

### Author Info

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### Type of Lesson

Challenge

### Type of Project (Individual/Group/Both)

Individual

### Duration

0-30 minutes

## Challenge Question

Thomas Jefferson stated he couldn't live without books. Slaves were discouraged or forbidden to read and write. How does education = liberty?

## Rationale

This activity will encourage students to connect the ideas of education, liberty, and slaves and what they mean to each other. This activity will also encourage students to think about education as a path to liberty both in the past and in the future.

## Steps

1. View these objects in the collection drawer:  
Thomas Jefferson's Books, Virgil's Aeneid owned by Thomas Jefferson, and The Life and Morals

of Jesus of Nazareth created by Thomas Jefferson. Read the information provided for each image. Think about what these three items tell you about how Thomas Jefferson felt about books and education. How does Thomas Jefferson's love of reading and education influence his legacy as it relates to liberty?

2. View the image of Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences. Read the information provided for the image. Think about the idea of liberty providing educational materials, such as books, to slaves. How does liberty connect education to slaves?
3. View the image of Phillis Wheatley. Read the information provided for the image. How is Phillis Wheatley a pioneer for slaves in the context of liberty and education?
4. Thomas Jefferson believed in education and the importance of libraries as a key to free society. This is evidenced by his large libraries and prolific writing. Slaves were denied the right to education as a way to keep them enslaved. Imagine you have been told you may only own three books for the rest of your life. Click the Take Challenge button below and add a text box. List three books you would choose to own for the rest of your life and explain why those are your choices. How will these three books liberate you at a time when you have limited choice?