

# I cannot live without books. How did Jeffersons enlightened attitude shape his guiding principles?

## General

### Grade Level

High School

### Author Info

Ewan McCallum

[ewanmccallum25@gmail.com](mailto:ewanmccallum25@gmail.com)

John O'Gaunt Community Technology College

Priory Road

Hungerford, Berks, AL

### Type of Lesson

Cooperative Learning

### Duration

60 minutes

## Objectives

### Overview

This is the second lesson of a unit of study, and follows the lesson entitled “‘In matters of principle, stand like a rock’: What inferences can we make about Thomas Jefferson’s guiding principles?”. However, with minor adjustments it is also a lesson that would fit neatly into another established unit of study.

The aim of this lesson is to build on students initial inferences made about Jefferson in the first lesson of this unit and through a study with his relationship to the enlightenment students will with either support or re-appraise their initial inference. The lesson will specifically focus on his role as a ‘tinkerer’ of

established inventions working to improve and adapt to meet his own needs, his staunch focus on education throughout his life and his attitude towards religious freedom. Students will also tackle the issue of trust when using sources of evidence as historians, and be encouraged to think critically and move beyond accepting sources at face value.

## **Prior Knowledge**

As this lesson is intended as the second in a series, students will have already been introduced to Jefferson and will have made a range of inferences around his guiding principles based on analysis and discussion around famous primary source material. Students that also have an understanding of scientific development through time, the emergence of enlightenment thought and an understanding of industrial development and innovation may also be able to make interesting and thoughtful links and connections between these areas of enquiry and the issues raised in this lesson. Furthermore, students who have dealt with source work may be able to work through the analysis task with greater independence that outlined below.

## **State Standards**

### **English Key Stage Three History Standards**

#### **Key Concepts –**

Significance

Interpretation

#### **Key Processes –**

Historical Enquiry

Using Evidence

Communicating about the past

#### **Personal Learning and Thinking Skills –**

Effective Participators

Self-Managers

Independent Enquirers

Team Workers

## Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Develop an understanding of how enlightenment thought influenced Jefferson and fostered the contributions he made.

Analyse a written source, critically thinking about how far it can be trusted.

Work effectively in a pair/team; be an effective participator.

## Technology Connections/outcomes

Contextual knowledge about Jefferson; students should also make clear links between the issues raised through the analysis undertaken in the previous lesson (for example, linking the inscription on his gravestone with religious freedom).

## Additional Learning Outcomes

Students will develop a understanding of how wider social, cultural and political thought together with Jefferson's staunch focus on education impacted his guiding principles. They will also critically approach a written source. Using the information they have learned in this lesson, they will then reappraise the inference they have made, adding weight to their initial ideas or use knowledge and evidence to reappraise this. Students will also work collaboratively and independently throughout the lesson; debate and discussion is absolutely encouraged!

## Essential Questions

Key question: "I cannot live without books". How did Jefferson's 'enlightened' attitude shape his guiding principles?

## Procedures

### 1. 15 min

Students will begin the lesson through a peer review and assessment of homework set from the previous lesson – to write a five sentence paragraph that makes an inference around the kind of man Thomas Jefferson was. In the last lesson, the whole class worked together to establish the criteria for this, however, this could easily be adapted to meet the needs of students in specific contexts. Students will then offer a positive comment (what went well), and constructive feedback to develop the quality of their work (even better if...); this should be based around the established criteria only. This episode is concluded through the sharing of examples as a teacher-led whole

class activity and focusing on good practice among the students.

2. *20 min*

Information Hunt: Information is printed onto A3 paper and posted around the room. Examples of information that could be shared are Jefferson's library, the inventions he 'tweaked', his focus on education, time spent in France and childhood experiences among others will be shared. It is important to consider where these are being displayed to allow students enough room to be able to move around the room work from these resources alongside other students. In doing this, students will be made a little uncomfortable; they will have to read, think and process the information before they make their notes. To help facilitate this, a matrix could be used which limits the room students have to make their notes; this forces them to carefully scrutinise and synthesise the information and record only relevant and appropriate information.

Students should be encouraged to adopt their own strategy to the task, however working in pairs and small groups is encouraged. Here, students may choose to split up, note take and come back together. Here, it is important that different issues are **discussed** and students make their own personal notes... no copying allowed. In doing this, students explaining will develop and imbed their knowledge and understanding through discussing and explaining, whilst their peers will have to listen, think and question to ensure they have also developed an appropriate level of understanding. By giving the group ownership of the task and encouraging students to rely on each other, this will help encourage all students to engage with the task and work to the best of their ability.

3. *15 min*

Students will undertake analysis of a source written by Sarah Randolph, one of Thomas Jefferson's grandchildren; this is an interesting source which makes clear reference to Jefferson's focus on education and how he valued it above his own material wealth, however, the context of the source raises interesting questions. In analysing this source, students will begin by reading and picking out key elements of the content in the main body of the source. Next, students will focus on the source guide sentence and, thinking about where the source comes from and think critically about its provenance and the questions this raises. Finally, students will be encouraged to make close links between the knowledge they have gained through engaging in the information hunt with what they have learned in analysing the source. Students will then answer the question around the issue of trust; this may be kept simply as "How trustworthy is this source?", however this could be tailored to match the wording used by an exam board or mirror the language used in assessments (see PDF attachment).

4. *10 min*

Having already made and assessed their inference paragraph, students will now reflect on the feedback they were given by their peer in the starter activity and the whole-class conversation and action this. Students will revisit their paragraph and build on this using what they have learned through this lesson; here, students will need to direct their own work and either add greater weight to the inference they have already made by adding further facts and evidence in support of this, or alter their perspective if appropriate.

At this stage, students are likely to have developed an increasingly positive image of Jefferson

which will have been reaffirmed in this lesson. This will be challenged when the issue of slavery at Monticello is dealt with.

## Materials

### Materials Needed

#### 'Trustworthy' source

Jefferson's fathers' eagerness for information was inherited to an extraordinary degree by his son, who early evinced that thirst for knowledge which he preserved to the day of his death. He made rapid progress in his studies, and soon became a proficient in mathematics and the classics. In after years he used often to say, that had he to decide between the pleasure derived from the classical education which his father had given him and the estate he had left him, he would decide in favour of the former.

*Sarah N. Randolph, The Domestic Life of Jefferson: Compiled from Letters and Reminiscences, Harper and Brother Publishers, New York, USA, 1871 – Sarah Randolph was Jefferson's Granddaughter*

## Assessment

### Homework

To aid the learning in the next lesson which focuses on Jefferson as an explorer and adventurer, students should visit the Monticello Online Classroom and read the article entitled 'Jefferson prepares for the Lewis and Clark Expedition' –

<http://classroom.monticello.org/teachers/resources/profile/380/Jefferson-Prepares-for-the-Lewis-and-Clark-Expedition/>

### Assessment

Formative: this will take place through circulating the class as they conduct their information hunt, listening to the conversations that are taking place, asking questions and getting informal feedback from students about this method of learning.

Summative: this could take place through teacher's assessment of the extended writing around the source analysis.

# Accommodations

## Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

**By Resource:** To aid in the information hunt, it may be appropriate to provide students with more simplified information, or create a resource which will allow them to understand and access the information, such as a vocabulary card with key words and definitions.

**By Task:** When analysing the source, students may wish to focus on guided questions that allow them to deal with different parts of the source in turn (this is detailed under the appropriate step).

## Accommodations – Advanced Learners

**By Resource:** During the information hunt, it may be appropriate to create a set of more detailed information with more challenging concepts and language. These could be presented as information cards, or displayed in the same way but on a different colour of paper.

**By Task:** Students may also be given some primary documents to use to add evidence and greater depth to the information they synthesise, the challenge for students here being to link this evidence with their newly-acquired knowledge (a key exam skill).

**By Outcome:** More able students will produce a more detailed and refined response to the concept of trust in their source response recognising how this source is both trustworthy and untrustworthy; students would be expected to imbed parts of the source throughout their answer.