

# I cannot live without books.

## General

### Grade Level

Elementary School

### Author Info

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Pick Elementary School

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### Type of Lesson

Cooperative Learning

### Duration

1 class period with extension activities

### Interdisciplinary Connections

Reading/Language Arts and Math

## Objectives

### Overview

Students will learn about Thomas Jefferson's contributions to the Library of Congress. Students will learn about how Thomas Jefferson valued and organized books in his personal collection. Students will explore how Thomas Jefferson obtained books.

### Prior Knowledge

Students should have an understanding of how libraries are organized.

## State Standards

2.10The student will explain the responsibilities of a good citizen, with emphasis on

b)taking part in the voting process when making classroom decisions;

c)describing actions that can improve the school and community;

## Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Students will observe images of Thomas Jefferson's library at Monticello to practice inference skills in determining his views about books. Students will listen as primary source material is read to practice inferecing skills to determine Thomas Jefferson's views about books.

## Additional Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to articulate the importance of libraries and how libraries are developed and organized.

## Essential Questions

How does understanding library organization affect how you access and use information?

## Procedures

1. *10 minutes.*

Display and read the following excerpt from Thomas Jefferson's letter to Samuel H. Smith, September 21, 1814 to students.

"You know my collection, its condition and extent. I have been fifty years making it, and have spared no pains, opportunity or expense, to make it what it is. While residing in Paris, I devoted every afternoon I was disengaged, for a summer or two, in examining all the principal book-stores, turning over every book with my own hand, and putting by everything which related to America, and indeed whatever was rare and valuable in every science. Besides this, I had standing orders during the whole time I was in Europe, on its principal book-marts, particularly Amsterdam, Frankfort, Madrid and London, for such works relating to America as could not be found in Paris. So that in that department particularly, such a collection was made as probably can never again be effected, because it is hardly probable that the same opportunities, the same time, industry, perseverance and expense, with some knowledge of the bibliography of the subject, would again happen to be in concurrence. During the same period, and after my return to America, I was led to procure, also, whatever related to the duties of those in the high concerns of the nation. So that the collection, which I suppose is of between nine and ten thousand volumes, while it includes what is chiefly valuable in science and literature generally, extends more particularly to whatever belongs to the American statesman. In the diplomatic and parliamentary branches, it is particularly

full. It is long since I have been sensible it ought not to continue private property, and had provided that at my death, Congress should have the refusal of it at their own price"

Guide students to explore particular sections to focus on Thomas Jefferson's behavior related to books and how he might feel about them.

2. *30 minutes.*

Read aloud the book *Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library* by Barb Rosenstock. Provide discussion time after reading.

Display the following website and read the related information to students. <http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/sale-books-to-library-congress-1815>

3. *10 minutes*

Ask students to look around the classroom and think about their homes to discuss how books are displayed, organized, or stored. Show students the following website and read aloud the related information:

<http://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/book-boxes>

Show them the linked primary source of Thomas Jefferson's calculations for library shelves.

<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collid=mtj1&fileName=mtj1page056.db&recNum=275>

4. *Varied*

Introduce the small bookcase as the Classroom Thomas Jefferson Library. Label each shelf according to Thomas Jefferson's organization system- one for Memory (History), one for Reason (Philosophy), and one for Imagination (Fine Arts). Explain to students that Memory would hold books of Greek Mythology, History of Wars, Historical Accounts of different events, etc. Reason would hold religious books like the Bible or Koran, and books about law and thinking. Imagination would hold fiction or stories-this category would be most familiar to students. Explain to students that they are going to work in groups to "curate" the Classroom Thomas Jefferson Library. Each month, a group will work to pull books from the classroom or school library to display on these shelves in the correct categories.

## Materials

### Materials Needed

A small bookcase to display in the classroom, hallway, or Library Media Center.

Access to classroom library and/or school library.

## Assessment

Each group member will be required to write a paragraph explaining what one book they chose to display in each of the three categories. They need to explain why they think that book is important enough to be included, and why it fits in the category.

The logo for The Jefferson Monticello, featuring the name "The Jefferson" in a cursive script above the word "MONTICELLO" in a bold, sans-serif font.

*The Jefferson*  
MONTICELLO