

# Does Slaveholding Tarnish Jefferson's Legacy?

**Title:** Does Slaveholding Tarnish Jefferson's Legacy?

**Descriptive Subtitle:** The impact of slaveholding on Jefferson's legacy

**Grade Level:** middle (6-8)

## Author Information:

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**City:** Washington

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**Duration:** 120-150 min

## Overview:

In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to utilize multiple sources in order to answer the larger question of "does slaveholder status overshadow other accomplishments." Depending on class time allotment, this lesson could take approximately two double block classes, or four single block classes. Students will engage in a four corners activity to understand how they feel about interpreting history through context as well as their personal views on mistakes. In a guided teacher model, teachers will facilitate a reading of a secondary source to fill out a graphic organizer about the author's stance, using evidence. Students will then complete a check for understanding of that skill before moving to a gallery walk/station activity. The activity can be done in partners or groups, but each student should be responsible for collecting evidence. This evidence will allow students to answer debrief questions to process the information they read. From here, they will participate in the culminating activity of a Paideia seminar.

## Prior knowledge:

Before completing this lesson, students should have had the opportunity to explore who Thomas Jefferson is in his many roles, from early life, politician, statesman, author, retiree, and his legacy. Students should be aware of his accomplishments such as the author of the Virginia Statute of Religious

Freedom, father of the University of Virginia, and the author of the Declaration of Independence. Students should also have a basis of what life was like on a plantation for both slave-owners and enslaved people.

## **Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4](#)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6](#)

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

## **Objectives:**

*Students will understand... (big, transferable concepts and ideas represented in this lesson)*

- Historical interpretation differs from author to author
- Context impacts how we view history
- Contradiction is prevalent amongst influential leaders

*Students will be able to*

- evaluate multiple sources
- craft and develop a stance on issue
- utilize speaking and listening skills in order complete a Paideia seminar

*Students will know... (consider factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge that students will acquire through the lesson)*

- the process of collecting evidence from a source
- How the term paradox links to Jefferson's stance on slavery

### 1. **Do-Now (5 – 10 minutes)**

Allow students the opportunity to engage with a larger question independently through writing. They will answer the question, "Can a mistake change the way you view someone?" Depending on your classroom structure, you can have students share whole group or in partners.

### 2 **Objective Review (5 minutes)**

Review the objective with the students so they can understand what skills and tools are necessary to be successful with the skill and to be able to explain its importance.

### 3. **Four Corners (15 minutes)**

Students will be given a set of statements to agree and disagree with. They will first review these statements individually and then have the opportunity to move around the room to the "corners" that represent their feelings. The teacher can feel free to allow students to turn and talk with people at their same corner as well as share out whole group their feelings.

### 4. **Vocabulary Review (5 minutes)**

Students will determine the meaning of the word "paradox" in context by examining an example sentence. They will try to determine the meaning and then create their own sentence.

### 5. **Teacher Model (10 minutes)**

Using the handout, the teacher, or a student, can read the first source out loud. After reading, students should fill out the graphic organizer along with the teacher. They need to determine the topic of the work, "The Declaration of Independence," what the author's stance is on our big question "Does slave-ownership overshadow larger accomplishments," provide a piece of textual evidence, and explain how that evidence links back to the claim.

### 6. **Check for Understanding (10 minutes)**

Students will complete the same skill listed in step 5 independently with the second part of the text.

### 7. **Gallery Walk (45 minutes)**

In partners or in small groups, students will move to a particular station or spot on the wall with a source. They will read that source and fill out the graphic organizer, which is identical to what was used in the teacher model and check for understanding. Students should have approximately 5 – 10 minutes at each station depending on the reading level of students.

## 8 Debrief (15 minutes)

After completion of the gallery walk activity, call students back to their seats and have them answer the debrief question. If time allows, have students share with a partner or as whole group.

## Paideia Seminar (30 minutes)

Students will utilize their research and prior knowledge to address the larger question of “does slaveholder status overshadow other accomplishments?” The idea is that the teacher is strictly the facilitator and the students should be moving the conversation along. If this is the first time students are doing a seminar, the teacher could pose some of the debrief questions in order to push the conversation along.

### Materials:

- Handout
- Gallery Walk Sources
- Rubric

Students could benefit from the use of a document camera or smartboard to follow along with the teacher during the teacher model.

### Assessment(s):

Ultimately, the summative assessment is successful completion of the Paideia seminar. During the lesson, there are opportunities for check for understanding during the vocabulary practice, after the teacher model, as well as in the debrief. The do-now and four corners activity also allow teachers to gather data on student opinion.

### Assessment Criteria

Students should be provided with the Paideia seminar rubric.

### Accommodations:

Texts should match your student's reading levels. If they need to be reworded or shortened to lessen the cognitive load, it would make the material more accessible. For students who struggle with speaking and listening skills, they could complete this activity in a smaller group or even answer the question in an essay form. Additionally, to guide students toward their analysis, you could modify the graphic organizer or identify one piece of evidence for them in order to guide their thinking.

*Thomas Jefferson*  
MONTICELLO