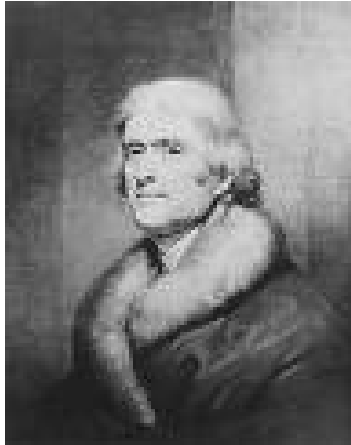


“May I present Mr. Jefferson?”

An introductory unit to present the life and work of Thomas Jefferson



A Curriculum Project Lesson Plan Unit
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“May I present Mr. Jefferson?”

Title and Rationale:

“May I present Thomas Jefferson?” is a series of lessons designed to introduce students to the personality and work of Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson was many things to many people. He was the author of the greatest document of freedom known to the world. He served our new nation in a variety of capacities. He was an inventor and a scientist as well as a man learned of history, literature, and languages. On a more complex level, Thomas Jefferson was a man of contrasting opinions who sometimes appeared to contradict his own beliefs.

Presentation:

Fifth grade students will be introduced to Thomas Jefferson during a series of lessons conducted in the library under the direction of the librarian. The lessons will conclude in the classroom with a variety of activities led collaboratively by the librarian and the classroom teacher.

Purpose:

Students need to be introduced to Thomas Jefferson so that they may learn about the man and his contributions to American society. The political and historical significance of Thomas Jefferson should be weighed with the other aspects of his life in order to present students with a well-rounded picture of one of our nation’s founding fathers.

Objectives:

When my students finish these lessons they should be able to:

- Describe Thomas Jefferson’s many occupations and hobbies
- Discuss the major political events of Thomas Jefferson’s life
- Explain how Thomas Jefferson affected American life.

Resources:

A bibliography of print and electronic material will be used for source material and provided as a separate appendix. A separate bibliography for teachers with which to further their knowledge will be included as well.

Instructional Process:

Each lesson should take approximately 30 minutes with some notated at 45 to 55 minutes.

Evaluation:

At the conclusion of the unit, the students will create a project that represents what they have learned individually as well as in the group setting about Thomas Jefferson. A list of suggestions will be provided in Appendix H.

“May I present Mr. Jefferson?”

Lesson Procedures

Lesson One:

The librarian will use the “Who is Mr. Jefferson?” activity in Appendix A to introduce Thomas Jefferson to each class of fifth grade students.

1. Divide students into small groups.
2. Give each group the “Who is Mr. Jefferson” activity in Appendix A.
3. Instruct the students to use their best guesses to complete the activity.
4. Allow approximately 15 minutes for completion.
5. Discuss with the students their responses to the activity but do not give them the correct answers.

Lesson Two:*

The librarian will use the reading in Appendix B to provide the base information on Thomas Jefferson for each class of fifth grade students.

1. Use the reading “Introducing Thomas Jefferson” in Appendix B to present Thomas Jefferson to each class of fifth grade students.
2. Following the reading, bring out the “Who is Mr. Jefferson?” activity from Lesson One and discuss the responses.
 - How is Thomas Jefferson different from your guesses in Lesson One?
 - What are some new things we have learned from the reading in Lesson Two?
 - What surprises you about Thomas Jefferson?
 - What did you already know about Thomas Jefferson before the reading?

*Lesson Two may take from 30 to 55 minutes to complete.

Lesson Three:

The librarian will provide biographies of Thomas Jefferson for the students to read in and outside of the classroom. Several websites will be introduced by the librarian in the library setting. The classroom teacher will provide time in the classroom for the students to explore the websites and read the material. Copies of the student bibliography listed in Appendix C will be provided so that the students may try and read as many books as possible. In addition, handouts with notes guidelines will be give to assist the students in their note-taking. These are provided in Appendix D.

Lesson Four:**

After the students have spent two weeks reading a variety of biographies of Thomas Jefferson and taking notes, they will be placed into groups and engage in two activities designed to test and expand their knowledge. They will need to use a higher level of skills in Bloom’s Taxonomy in order to analyze their material and place the information into the appropriate categories.

Teacher Preparation: Jefferson Condensed

1. Prepare larger copies of the Jefferson Condensed chart as shown in Appendix E.
2. Prepare strips of paper with Jefferson’s information as shown in Appendix F.
3. Divide students into groups. Give each group a chart with an envelope of strips.
4. Instruct the students to read each information strip and analyze what type of information it represents about Thomas Jefferson. The students should then place the information strip under the appropriate heading.

Allow about 15-20 minutes for students to finish. Discuss the results.

Teacher Preparation: Jefferson as a Venn Diagram

1. Prepare a copy of the Venn diagram in Appendix G for each group.
2. Instruct the students to take the information from the Jefferson Condensed chart and place it on the Venn diagram.

Allow 15-20 minutes for this activity then discuss the results with the students comparing and contrasting the different aspects of Jefferson's life.

**This lesson may be completed at one time or done at two separate times.

Lesson Five:

Conduct a group discussion with the students about what they have learned about Thomas Jefferson.

Allow them to use their notes and activities if they feel more comfortable. Some points to consider:

- What were the influences from Jefferson's childhood that shaped his actions as an adult?
- How did Jefferson develop his ideas about how people, especially young people, should live?
- How did Jefferson's many hobbies and interest affect how he thought about life?
- What did Jefferson think of politics?
- How did Jefferson feel about rebellion and revolution?
- What actions show how Jefferson felt about public service versus family life?

After the discussion, wrap up by asking the students how they personally feel about Thomas Jefferson and his life and work. Discuss the various ways they could express their knowledge and opinion of Jefferson.

Evaluation:

Assign the students a project to convey the knowledge they gained from these lessons. They need to creatively show what they have learned about Thomas Jefferson. Suggestions for projects are provided in Appendix H. A rubric guide for grading is including in Appendix I. A suggested reading list for teachers can be found in Appendix J.