

What did Thomas Jefferson mean when he said, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?”

What socioeconomic, political, and personal contradictions did Thomas Jefferson show throughout his lifetime?

- Subject:** History and Social Sciences
- Grade Level:** Second Grade
- Topic:** Thomas Jefferson; Biography; Contributions and Impact in the 18th and 19th century
- Guiding Questions:** What did Thomas Jefferson mean when he said “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?”
What socioeconomic, political, and personal contradictions did Thomas Jefferson show throughout his lifetime?
- VA SOL:** 2.7e - The student will apply history and social science skills to describe the revolutionaries who fought for America’s freedom (1764-1781), including, but not limited to:
- a. John Adams;
 - b. Benjamin Franklin;
 - c. Alexander Hamilton;
 - d. Patrick Henry;
 - e. Thomas Jefferson
 - f. James Madison (“Father of the Constitution”);
 - g. Paul Revere; and
 - h. George Washington (“Father of our Country”).

Required Materials: [Thomas Jefferson: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Everything Picture Book by Maira Kalman](#), 1 pencil/student, 1 index card/student, Copies of primary source photos (Appendix A/B), Cardstock, Construction Paper, Scissors, Glue.
*OPTIONAL – [Equity Sticks](#)

Before you begin...

Create a resource packet with 2 primary source photos that students will use throughout the lesson. Print 5 copies of each primary source photo to be distributed/passed around.

Distribute 1 index card to each student.

Recommendation – Allow students 30 to 60 seconds to think of a response to the question. For responses, use a classroom set of equity sticks for quicker responses.

Introduction

As a whole group (utilizing equity sticks) –

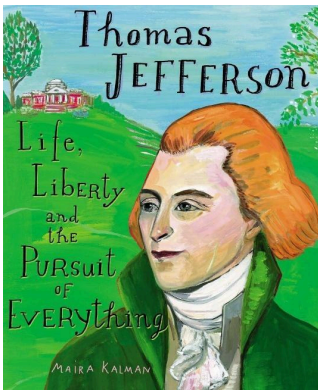
- a. Display book cover and ask students: “What do you notice about this book cover?”
Appropriate responses: “Outside, Green Grass, Man, House, etc.”

- b. Ask students the first guiding question: “Let’s think back to our citizenship unit. We all have rights as American citizens. In America, each citizen has a right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. What do you think that means?”

Pre-Reading Activity

Pair students in groups of 2 to 4. Explain that a discussion will be done after I read the book, so it is very important for them to follow along.

Notice & Wonder – Have students write 1 thing they notice on one-side of their index card and 1 thing they wonder about based on their observation (their notice). Choose 2 to 3 students to share.



Read the Book

Ask students the second guiding question: “How did what Thomas Jefferson contradict what he said?” Define contradiction for students. Example: “A contradiction doesn’t really make sense. It is thinking or saying one thing and then believing/doing another thing. For example, Patrick [student name] says he lost another pencil. He does not understand why he never has pencils.”

Ask students to put a tally mark on their index cards for how many contradictions they hear throughout the story.

Understanding through Quotes & The Utilization of Text Structure

Quotes: After reading the book, ask students how many tally marks are on their index card. As a whole group, identify the 3 contradictions (quote them from the book pages). You can use a [YouTube video read aloud](#) (pre-marked by minute and second) for each contradiction. Pause the video on each of the 3 contradictions and use your classroom set of equity sticks to call on students. Example appropriate response: “He said he wanted slavery to end, but he owned a lot of slaves.”

Text Structure: Why is this book written in cursive? Why are some words large and some words bold?

Introduce Primary Sources

Show students with 2 pictures of primary sources. Ask students if these pictures look familiar to what they saw/read in the book. Ask: How are they the same/different? How do they help us better understand the story and who Thomas Jefferson is?

OPTIC Project

Students will now work with their assigned group for “OPTIC” project

O=Overview, P=Parts, Colors, Settings, etc., T=Title, I=Interrelationships, C=Conclusion

O: Discussion – As a whole group, discuss the main idea.

- “Why was it important for the author to write this book for us? What does it teach us?” 2 to 3 groups should share their responses.

P, TI, and I: Project – Each group will create a Thomas Jefferson book cover.

- **REQUIREMENTS:** Students are required to have a setting, at least the main character (but they are welcome to put more characters), and easily identify things that are specific to Thomas Jefferson. For example – A headstone, Monticello home, White House, etc.
- **MATERIALS:** Students will utilize card stock, construction paper, photos of primary sources (for collaging), colored pencils/crayons/markers, scissors, and a glue stick. Explain to students that they will be making their own book cover about Thomas Jefferson and the main idea of this story. They may use the responses that were just shared as ideas to help them with their cover. The book cover and all its details will be glued on the white cardstock. They can use construction paper and colors to create shapes, faces, etc., to glue onto the cardstock. They will only have the cardstock to display at the end, so everything **MUST** be on the cardstock.

Allow 15-20 minutes for this project.

C: Whole Group Discussion (SCAPE) and Presentation

- Review aloud SCAPE (Story Elements) – S=Setting, C=Characters, A=Action, P=Problem, E=Ending (*You can also just review the main Story Elements – Characters, Setting, Problem, Resolution.*)
- **DISCUSSION:** Discuss the SCAPE/Story Elements of the book.
- **PRESENTATION:** Each group will share their book cover and why they chose those specific colors, objects, etc.

Closing

Return to the guiding question, concluding the OPTIC activity by asking, “What did Thomas Jefferson mean when he said, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?”

Lesson Created by:

Sierra Sallah | Second Grade Teacher

Wasena Elementary | Roanoke City Public Schools

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Appendix A

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for ^{one} people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the ^{separate and equal} station to which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to ~~do so~~ ^{separation}.

We hold these truths to be ^{self-evident}, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with ~~unalienable~~ ^{unalienable} Rights, that among these are ~~Life, Liberty, & the pursuit of Happiness~~ ^{Life, Liberty, & the pursuit of Happiness}; that to secure these ~~rights~~ ^{rights}, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles & organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light & transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. but when a long train of abuses & usurpations [begun at a distinguished period, & pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them ^{under absolute Despotism} ~~to absolute Despotism~~, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, & to provide new guards for their future security. such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; & such is now the necessity which constrains them to ~~alter~~ ^{change} their former systems of government. the history of ^{the} present ^{King of Great Britain} is a history of ^{repeated} injuries and usurpations, among which, ^{appears no solitary fact} ~~appears no solitary fact~~ to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, ^{all of which} ~~all of which~~ have in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. to prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world, for the truth of which we pledge a faith not unswerving by falsehood.

Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence Rough Draft – June 1776

Document of Image Retrieved From https://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj1.001_0545_0548/?sp=1&st=image

Appendix B



Image Retrieved From <https://www.loc.gov/item/2019685388/>