

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography Page Count: 16 Word Count: 1,187

Book Summary

Lawyer, slave owner, architect, writer, Founding Father, secretary of state, president—Thomas Jefferson was all these things. Readers will learn how Jefferson authored the Declaration of Independence, served the American colonies, and helped shape the United States into the nation it is today. Students may know him as the third president, but Thomas Jefferson was much more.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions


Objectives

- Ask and answer questions to understand text
- Identify elements of a biography
- Recognize and use possessive nouns
- Identify how the suffix *-ion* changes the meaning of words

Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—*Thomas Jefferson* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- A nickel, two-dollar bill, picture of the Jefferson Memorial, picture of the Declaration of Independence
- Highlighters or markers
- [Ask and answer questions, elements of a biography, possessive nouns worksheets](#)
- [Discussion cards](#)

 Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](#).

- Content words:
 Story critical: ***Declaration of Independence*** (n.), ***democracy*** (n.), ***Founding Fathers*** (n.),
plantation (n.), ***representatives*** (n.), ***right*** (n.)
 Enrichment: ***government*** (n.), ***independence*** (n.), ***statute*** (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Show students a nickel, a two-dollar bill, a picture of the Jefferson Memorial, and a picture of the Declaration of Independence. Ask them what all these items have in common. Lead a discussion on what students may know about Thomas Jefferson and what questions they may have about him.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Explain to students that engaged readers help themselves to understand what they are reading by asking questions before, during, and after reading. Discuss with students how interacting with the text by asking questions will help them understand and remember what they read.
- Model how to ask questions.
Think-aloud: *From what I see on the covers and title page, it appears as though this book is about Thomas Jefferson. I'm curious to know what I will read about him. I know he was president of the United States, but I see him on the cover writing by candlelight. This makes me wonder what he is writing. I can also use the table of contents to think of more questions I would like to have answered about Jefferson. For example, the second section is titled "A Lover of Words." I wonder if this has anything to do with him writing. Before I read, several questions often come to mind about the topic. As I read, I enjoy looking for answers to my questions, which often sparks further curiosity and questions to answer while I read.*
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Elements of a biography**

- Ask students to review with you the difference between a biography and a story (biography: the true story of a real person's life written by someone else; story: made up by the author, with characters who may or may not be real). Explain that this book is a biography and that all biographies have common elements or parts: they are about real people and contain well-researched facts. They usually read like a story with a beginning, middle, and end because they follow the person's life from birth to death. A biography will also give the reader insight into the person by including information about his or her personality, accomplishments, and influence on the world.
- Write the words *Personality*, *Accomplishments*, and *Influence* in on the board. Discuss with students the meaning of each of these words (*personality*: the qualities that makes each person unique; *accomplishments*: success achieved through practice or training; *influence*: an effect on someone or something).
Think-aloud: *As I read through each section of this book, I am going to stop and think about what I've learned about Thomas Jefferson. As I read, I can think about these categories. By categorizing the information this way, I know I will understand more about him, the events of his life, and why he was important.*

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Provide them with two different color highlighters or markers. Have them use one color to highlight *Declaration of Independence*, *democracy*, *Founding Fathers*, *government*, *representatives*, and *statute*. Pronounce the words aloud and have students repeat them. Explain to students that these words are specific terms that refer to our government and its history. These words are called *Tier 3 words*—words that would only be learned or used to explain the U.S. history and government. Have students take turns reading the definitions.

- Ask students to use another color to highlight *independence*, *plantation*, and *right*. Explain that these words are Tier 2 words—they are probably a bit unfamiliar to students, but they can be used for a variety of subjects, and their word parts can give clues to their meaning. For example, the word part *depend* and the prefix *in* gives us a clue that *independence* probably has something to do with the opposite of needing help or support from others. Ask a volunteer to read the definition.

Set the Purpose


- Have students read to find out more about Thomas Jefferson and his contributions to American government. Encourage students to ask and answer questions while reading.


During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Create a chart on the board similar to the [ask-and-answer-questions worksheet](#), and distribute a copy to students. Ask them to think about the title of the section *“And the Winner Is . . .”*
- Model recording a question on the chart.
Think-aloud: After reading the title of this section, I wondered what Thomas Jefferson might have won. I will write this question on my chart.
- Ask students to write a question in the first section on their worksheet. Invite them to share some of their questions and write them on the class chart.
- Read page 4 aloud with students. Ask them to see if this part of the text answered their question.
- Model answering a question and filling in the second section of the ask-and-answer-questions chart on the board.
Think-aloud: Before reading, I was curious about what Thomas Jefferson may have won. While reading, I discovered that Thomas Jefferson won the presidential election in 1800. I will write this answer on the ask-and-answer-questions chart on the board.
- Point out to students that often when reading, one question will get answered but others will be generated. As an example, discuss how your first question was answered, but that generated the questions, what is a Founding Father? and why is the Declaration of Independence one of the most important documents in American History? Record these questions on the board.
- Have students read to the end of page 6. Return to the chart on the board, and model how to record biographical details.
- **Think-aloud:** *After reading these first two sections, I learned some details about Jefferson’s personality. He was a shy boy, loved the outdoors and music but loved reading best of all. He was always reading and thinking, and he liked to write down his thoughts rather than speak them. I will write this on my chart under the heading Personality. He read all the books in the family library by the age of six. I will write this under Accomplishments. I will also write that he went to William and Mary College and studied law after that.*
- Ask students to write answers to their question(s) and any additional questions they raised on their ask-and-answer-questions worksheet. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read this section. Write shared responses on the class ask-and-answer-questions chart on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read pages 7 through 9. Have them write answers they found while reading on their worksheet and any additional questions that came to mind, for example, specific questions about the tension between the colonies and Great Britain. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read this section.
- Ask students to identify Jefferson’s personality, accomplishments, and influence from the discussion and their reading. (Personality: quiet, not a very good speaker, excellent at preparing his law cases, thought government had a responsibility to take care of and help its citizens; Accomplishments: became a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses; Influence: voted to stop buying British goods.)

- Introduce and explain the **elements-of-a-biography worksheet**. Write the information about Jefferson's personality, accomplishments, and influence on the chart on the board, and have students write the information on their worksheet. Discuss with students the words from the book that support the information on the chart.

 Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to the questions on their ask-and-answer-questions worksheet. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to their worksheet as they read and to think about what they are learning about Jefferson's personality, accomplishments, and influence in each section of the book.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions and helps them understand and enjoy what they read.
- **Think-aloud:** *Before reading, I wondered why the Declaration of Independence is considered one of the most important documents in American history. I now know that it inspired the colonists to become independent from Great Britain and spelled out many of the freedoms Americans have today. I also know that many of Jefferson's personal beliefs went into the document.*
- **Independent practice:** Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text. Brainstorm to generate a list of other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions (for example, websites, books, and so on). Invite students to write one more question they still would like to know about Thomas Jefferson. Ask students to share questions they added.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Discuss how Jefferson's personality influenced his accomplishments. Facilitate the discussion with questions such as: How would you describe Jefferson's personality? What characteristics of his personality might have influenced him to do the things he did in life? How did his accomplishments influence other people and the forming of American history?
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the elements-of-a-biography worksheet. If time allows, have them share what they wrote in the remaining space of their worksheet.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about a very influential man in American history, Thomas Jefferson. Not only was he one of the first presidents, but he created and shaped America through his writing. Now that you know this about Jefferson, what do you think about the power of words? Can one person's writing change the way a nation is built?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Possessive nouns

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Jefferson's thoughts and words would shape the United States forever.* Read the sentence aloud, pointing to the phrase *thoughts and words*. Ask a volunteer to explain whose thoughts and words the sentence is referring to (*Jefferson's*). Explain that the word *Jefferson's* shows that the thoughts and words belonged to him.
- Review or explain that words like *Jefferson's* are called possessive nouns. A *possessive noun* is formed by adding an 's (or just an apostrophe if the word is plural and ends in an s already) to the end of a word to *show ownership, or possession*.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Thomas Jefferson

- Direct students to page 5. Have them find a possessive noun in the first sentence (*family's*). Ask a volunteer to read aloud the sentence containing the possessive noun *family's*. Ask another volunteer to explain what belongs to the family (*plantation*).
- Have students find another possessive noun in the third paragraph of page 5 (*Thomas's*). Repeat the process, explaining the placement of the apostrophe.



Check for understanding: Have students find and circle the possessive nouns in the book and underline the item that each one owns.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [possessive nouns worksheet](#). Discuss answers aloud after students finish.

Word Work: **Suffix -ion**

- Explain or review that a *suffix* is a word part added to the end of a base word to change the meaning of the word or to change its part of speech. Have students provide examples of suffixes and explain how each one changes the meaning of the original word.
- Write the word *quest* on the board. Ask a volunteer to tell the meaning of the word or to look it up in the dictionary (to search for). Write the word *question* on the board. Explain that the suffix *-ion* has been added to make a new word. Ask a volunteer to tell the meaning of the new word (to ask for further information about something).
- Ask students to explain the similarities between the meanings of the two words (both definitions involve the search for more information).
- Explain that the suffix *-ion* means the result or outcome of an action.
- Write the word *collect* on the board. Have a volunteer use the dictionary to find the definition of the word *collect* (to gather together). Write the word *collection* on the board. Have students use the definitions of the word and the *-ion* suffix to explain the meaning of the new word (the objects accumulated as a result of collecting).
- Explain that when the *-ion* suffix is added, the spelling of the base word may change. Write the words *educate* and *education* on the board. Ask a volunteer to tell how the spelling of the base word *educate* was changed when the suffix was added (the e was dropped before adding the suffix *-ion*).
- **Check for understanding:** Write the words *tense* and *elect* on the board. Ask students to define each word. Have them tell whether a spelling change is needed when the suffix is added. Have volunteers write the new words on the board: *tension* and *election*. Discuss how the meaning of each word was altered when the suffix was added.



Independent practice: Challenge students to search through the text and find the words with the suffix *-ion*. Have them underline the base word and circle the suffix. If time allows, discuss the base-word meanings, whether the spelling changed, and the parts of speech.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them discuss the connections they made to the book with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing and Art Connection

Provide print and Internet resources for students to further research the life of Thomas Jefferson. Invite students to add to the information from the book by finding three additional facts about perhaps the lesser-known aspects of his personality, accomplishments, and influence, such as plantation owner and slaveholder, architect, inventor, founder of University of Virginia, and founder of the Library of Congress. Citing information from their research on note cards, have students participate in a Did You Know? round-table sharing and discussion format. Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on informational writing.

Social Studies Connection

Provide print, Internet, and other media resources for students to further research the Founding Fathers of the American government. Help students to explore and draw conclusions as to why these men were successful in creating the biggest and most successful democracy in the world. If time allows, ask students to create a bulletin board highlighting the Founding Fathers.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the strategy of asking and answering questions to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify elements of a biography and categorize information by element during reading and on a worksheet
- correctly identify possessive nouns in the text, during discussion, and on a worksheet
- accurately identify and understand the use of the suffix *-ion* in the text and during discussion

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)