

Educator's Guide

*Thomas Jefferson
Builds a Library*
By Barb Rosenstock

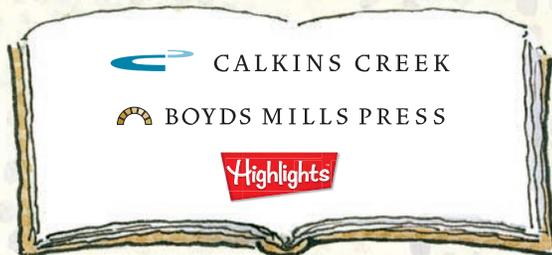
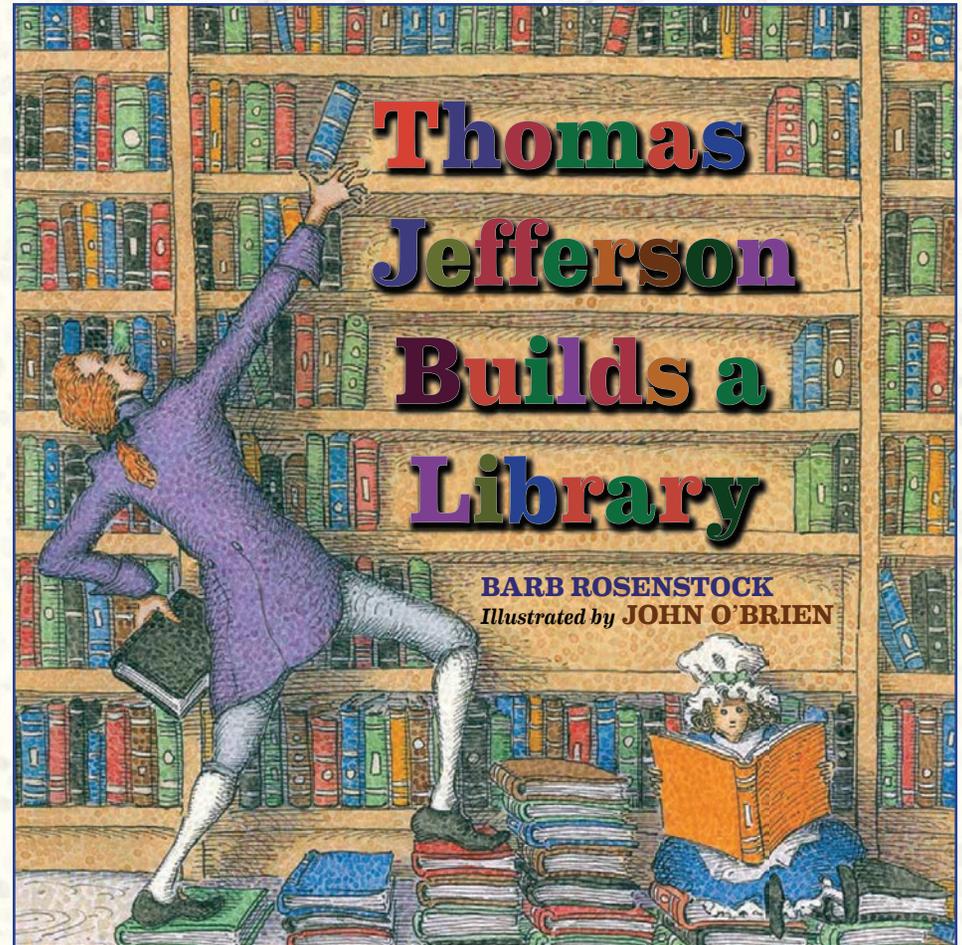
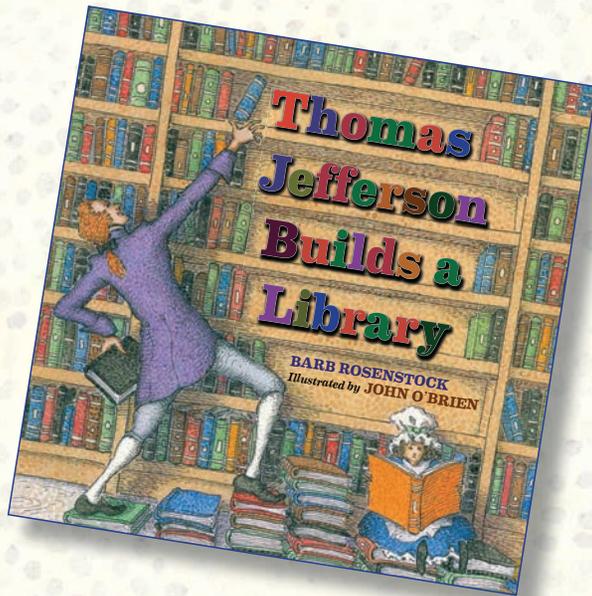
Full-color illustrations
by John O'Brien

978-1-59078-932-2

Ages 8 and up

Grades 3 and up

\$16.95



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This guide was created by Clifford Wohl, Educational Consultant

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In *Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library*, Barb Rosenstock and John O'Brien offer us a portrait of a man who was the author of the Declaration of Independence, one of America's earliest diplomats to France, the governor of Virginia, our second vice president, and the third president of the United States. At the same time, Jefferson was an avid reader, a book lover, and an intellectual who found answers and made decisions based in part on the books he read.

This history/biography opens up opportunities for your class to delve into the early years that shaped our nation and into the various roles one of our forefathers played, all the while extolling the virtues and pleasures of reading. This guide is designed to help you take full advantage of these curriculum possibilities: reading; language arts (persuasive writing, creative writing, script writing, speech); history; geography; research; art; classification; and cooperative learning.

You'll find connections to the Common Core State Standards noted with each activity.

Common Core abbreviations used in this guide:

RI—Reading: Informational Text

W—Writing

SL—Speaking & Listening

For the complete Common Core State Standards, visit corestandards.org the standards.

Getting Started

Introduce the book by showing the illustration of Jefferson happily reaching for a book in his colorful, crowded library. Ask students to infer the main idea from the cover art.

[RI 3.7]

As your students read *Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library*, they should keep a shared list of the most surprising things they learn from this book. To get the class started, ask: Who knew Thomas Jefferson had red hair? Who knew that he played the fiddle?

[RI 3.1, RI 4.1]

Quick Questions

Ask your students to read for details. Use these questions to be sure they understand and retain some of the facts presented in *Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library*.

- ★ What do *Amo libros!* and *J'aime lire!* mean? In what language is each phrase written?
- ★ Where did Thomas Jefferson attend college?
- ★ What is the name of Jefferson's home outside of Charlottesville, Virginia?
- ★ What important role did Jefferson play at the second Continental Congress in Philadelphia?
- ★ Why did Jefferson go to France?
- ★ How many terms did Jefferson serve as president of the United States?
- ★ How was the first Library of Congress destroyed?
- ★ What did Thomas Jefferson do to reestablish the Library of Congress?

[RI 3.1, 3.2, 4.1]

History/Biography/Geography: Important American Places

If you live near Charlottesville, Virginia, you and your students can arrange for a tour of Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson. If that's impossible, you and your students can make a friendly virtual visit and learn many facts about Jefferson along the way. Visit <http://explorer.monticello.org> and click on "General House Tour" for a narrated tour of Monticello.

[RI 3.5]

History

Each student should build a timeline of important events, not only in the life of Thomas Jefferson but also in the earliest years of the country. They will find many events in the book itself, but students will want to fill in more from Internet or other research.

These websites may be useful to your students:

- ★ <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/pres/jefferson/>
- ★ <http://www.shmoop.com/thomas-jefferson/timeline.html>

[RI 3.3, 3.5, 4.5]

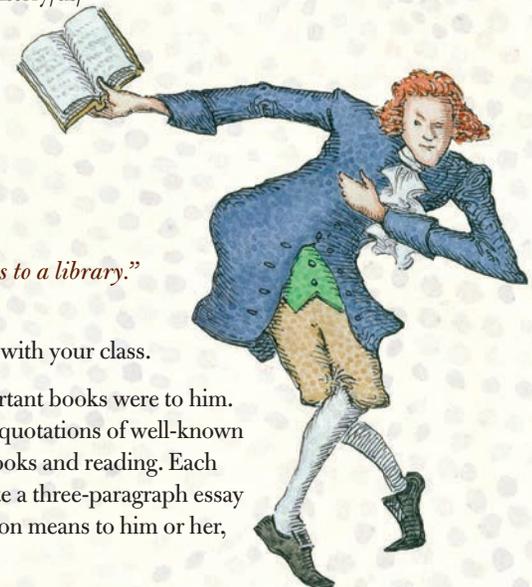
Language Arts: Writing/Fine Arts

"All that is necessary for a student is access to a library."

—Thomas Jefferson, 1790 (page 7)

Discuss the meaning of this quotation with your class.

Jefferson often spoke about how important books were to him. Have the class look at the following list of quotations of well-known people expressing their thoughts about books and reading. Each student should select a quotation and write a three-paragraph essay telling about the speaker, what the quotation means to him or her, and why he or she selected it.



“On Reading”

- ★ “I cannot live without books.”—Thomas Jefferson
- ★ “A room without books is like a life without meaning.”—Thomas Jefferson
- ★ “I am a part of everything that I have read.”—Theodore Roosevelt
- ★ “The person who deserves most pity is a lonesome one on a rainy day who doesn’t know how to read.”—Benjamin Franklin
- ★ “I read my eyes out and can’t read half enough. . . . The more one reads the more one sees we have to read.”—John Adams
- ★ All I have learned, I learned from books.”—Abraham Lincoln
- ★ “The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”—Dr. Seuss, *I Can Read with My Eyes Shut!*
- ★ “I cannot sleep unless I am surrounded by books.”—Jorge Luis Borges
- ★ “Books are a uniquely portable magic.”—Stephen King, *On Writing*
- ★ “Books are the plane, and the train, and the road. They are the destination, and the journey. They are home.”—Anna Quindlen, *How Reading Changed My Life*
- ★ “I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.”—Groucho Marx
- ★ “Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.”—W. Fusselman

[RI 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.6; W 3.1, 3.6, 4.1]

Next, each student should come up with his or her own quote about books, and then create a broadside using the quote. In colonial times, broadsides, or posters, were used to inform the public about important events. They could have pictures or be all text. In fact, after Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, it was published as a broadside and distributed so that that people could read it. To give your class a sense of what broadsides looked like and how they communicated their messages, view some early colonial broadsides here:

- ★ <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/makingrev/war/text5/warnewsbroadside.pdf>
- ★ <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/makingrev/war/text3/militarybroadside.pdf>

[RI 3.2, 3.5, 3.7, 4.2, 4.7; W 3.7, 4.7]

Classification/Library Skills

Thomas Jefferson started buying books at a young age and kept building his collection throughout his life. “He spent weeks organizing books. Huge folios on the bottom shelves, palm-sized duodecimos on top. . . . Tom’s library wasn’t in alphabetical order like others. He grouped books by subject. . . . Tom spent hours deciding exactly where each book belonged.” (page 9)

Discuss with your class about organizing a book collection. Start with questions like:

- ★ Why would a collection of books have to be organized?
- ★ What kind of classification system makes sense? By size, by color, by title, by author, by subject? Why?
- ★ What organization or classification system do your school and local public libraries use?

Work with the librarian at your school or public library to introduce your class to the Dewey decimal system. Arrange for a class visit to a library so that the children can see how books are organized.

[RI 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2; SL 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3]

As a follow-up activity, have each child create three cards representing nonfiction books he or she has read. (For this activity we are not including fiction. Fiction is arranged alphabetically outside of the Dewey decimal system.) Each card should include the name of the student who read the book, its title, author, and illustrator.

Put all the cards in a box. Create a horizontal chart with ten large spaces for each of the major Dewey decimal categories.

Select a card at random. Ask the student who read the book to tell the class what the book is about. Have the students discuss which category they think is the proper one for that book. When the class agrees, it should be taped into its proper box. Continue until all of the books have been discussed and the cards have been taped appropriately. Some books are straightforward, but you’ll find others take more evaluation to decide their proper place. For example, where would students put *Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library*—in biography or history? Let the class debate this question and others that are sure to arise. They’ll soon understand not only the importance of classification, but also how tricky it can be. Invite the school librarian into the class to view the chart and see how successful the children were.

[SL 3.1, 4.1]

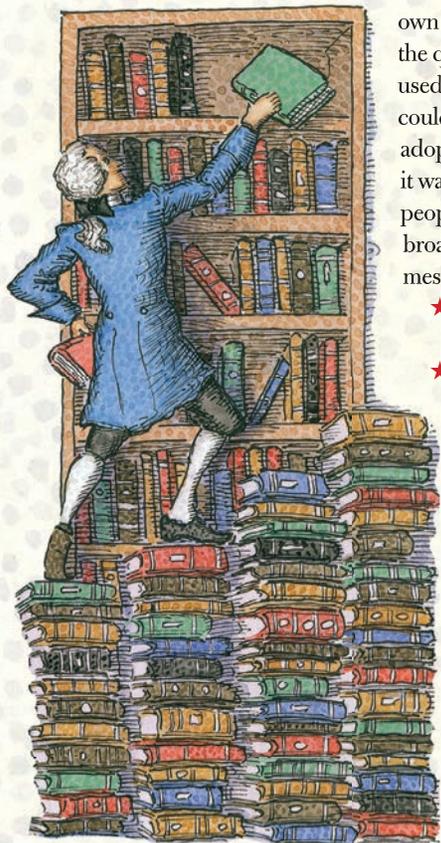
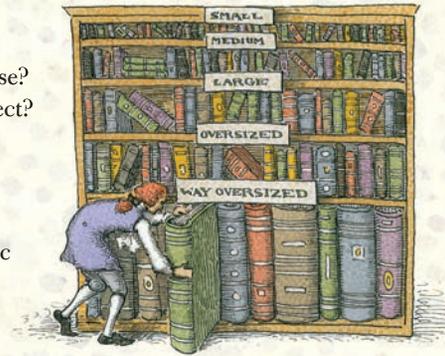
Book-Making/Creative Writing/Art

“In Jefferson’s time, books were commonly sold unbound. The pages were then taken to a book-binder, who stitched and covered the book in the way the owner wanted.” (page 14)

Each of your students should create a “Book of Books” in which they can keep track of the books they read. In fact, their books should be two-sided, with one side being a list of books read and their responses to them—reviews, poems, drawings, and stories that they are inspired to create after reading—and the other side being a “commonplace” book, just as Thomas Jefferson had. Commonplace books were a type of journal popular in colonial times. Readers, students, and scholars used them to remember and keep track of the things they learned or read.

Every day each student should write in his or her commonplace book at least one thing he or she learned. At the end of the week, have students share with each other one thing they learned. On the next page, we’ve provided instructions for making this two-sided reading/writing journal.

[W 3.2, 3.8, 4.2, 4.8; SL 3.1, 3.4, 4.1, 4.4]

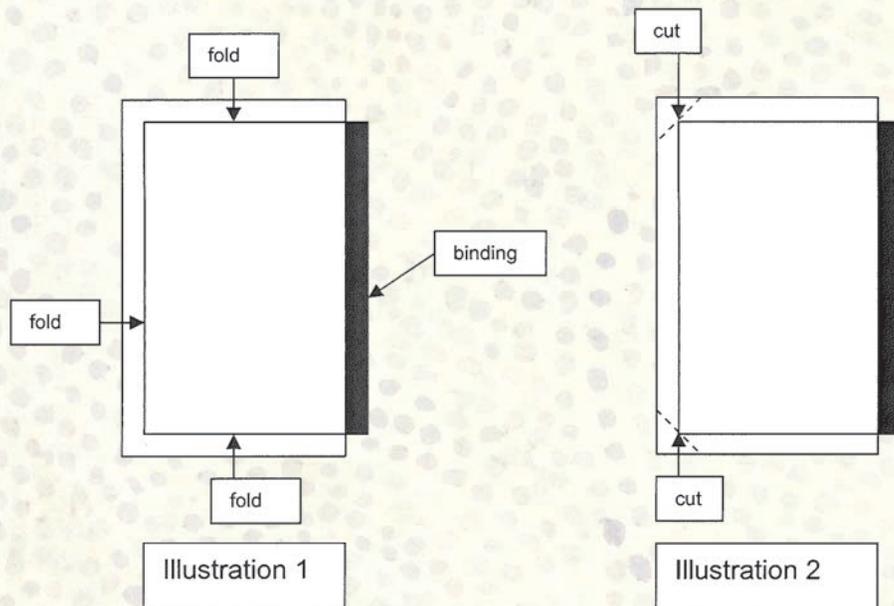


How to Make Your Very Own Reading/Writing Journal

To make a two-sided writing journal, you'll need:

- ★ an unlined blank 8 x 10 composition notebook
- ★ two sheets of white glossy drawing paper cut to 10 x 14 inches
- ★ 10-inch piece of 3-inch-wide fabric tape
- ★ white glue
- ★ colorful markers or crayons
- ★ scissors
- ★ ruler

1. Place one of the sheets of paper on the book so that the long edge is up against the edge of the book's binding. Make sure that the paper overhangs the sides of the book equally. (See illustration 1)
2. Make folds in the paper around the edge of the book.
3. Set the book aside.
4. Draw a diagonal line across the folds in the paper. (See illustration 2)
5. With your scissors, cut the small triangles away.
6. Place white glue on the flaps of the paper and carefully glue the flaps to the inside front cover of the notebook.
7. Repeat the procedure for the back of the book.
8. Finish off with a new piece of tape for the binding.
9. On the front side of the journal, write "My Book of Books." Flip the book over and write "My Commonplace Journal."
10. Decorate both covers.



Language Arts: Writing

"[Thomas Jefferson] wrote at least nineteen thousand letters, many about books. He told people what to read and when. . . . He listed books to read and sent boxes of books as presents." (page 23)

Ask each student to write a letter to a friend or relative telling about a favorite book. They should explain why they enjoyed the book and why they think the letter recipient should read it.

[W 3.1, 4.2]

Social Studies/Survey

From the age of six, Thomas Jefferson loved to read. He read in his father's library, in a boat, in the garden, in his study, and even during the Continental Congress. There was no place he wouldn't read. What about your students? Where do they like to read? Have your students survey the boys, girls, and adults in your school to find out their favorite places to read. Gather the results onto a chart and distribute it around the school.

[W 3.7, 4.7; SL 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3]

History/Research/Language Arts: Writing

Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library focuses closely on one aspect of Jefferson's character and one of his contributions to our nation. As your class studies the book and explores this guide, they will encounter some of Jefferson's other accomplishments.

Divide your students into three groups and assign each group one of the following topics to research as a team.

- ★ Thomas Jefferson Writes the Nation: The Declaration of Independence
- ★ Thomas Jefferson Expands the Nation: The Louisiana Purchase
- ★ Thomas Jefferson Explores the Nation: The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Each team should prepare an oral presentation to report on what they've learned about their subject. They should develop a script and can include visual aids like maps, charts, illustrations, and even costumes. Designate a day for all the groups to present their programs. At the end of the day, have students add to the list of surprising Thomas Jefferson facts they created as part of the "Getting Started" section of this guide.

[RI 3.7, 4.7; W 3.2, 3.7, 3.8, 4.2, 4.7, 4.8; SL 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4]

