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Activity Guide

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A Picture Book of Thomas Jefferson

ABOUT THE STORY

This book traces the important events in the life of Thomas Jefferson, from his childhood love for learning to his years as the President of the United States. It points out a major contradiction in his character- the fact that one of the country's greatest defenders of freedom kept slaves-and it describes the way in which he helped to found and strengthen our country.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David A. Adler has become well respected through his many biographical works which introduce young readers to famous Americans. In his books, Adler emphasizes the triumphant success of the person in light of the challenges they faced during their lives. There are currently over 25 titles in his biographical series "A Picture Book of...", many of which are also available as Live Oak Media Readalongs. Mr. Adler lives in New York with his wife and children.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

John and Alexandra Wallner have illustrated the other books in the Picture Book biography series, as well as other books for children that they have also written.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they know Thomas Jefferson and his role in our country's history. Write their responses on the chalkboard. Then tell them that this book is a short biography of Thomas Jefferson, who was the third president.

READING ACTIVITIES

Vocabulary

Write the words in the box on the chalkboard. Have children use them to fill in the blanks in the sentences.

colonies vaccine legislature elected represent govern

1. The_____, or ruling body of Virginia, was called the House of Burgesses.
2. A _____, helped prevent disease.
3. Jefferson believed people should rule, or _____, themselves.
4. The American people _____ Jefferson to the presidency.
5. Before the Revolution, America had thirteen _____.
6. As Secretary of State, Jefferson would _____ the United States.

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- a. "When was Thomas Jefferson born?"
- b. "What did Jefferson do with ten thousand of his books?"
- c. "What did Jefferson do for a living after college?"
- d. "What are two things that Jefferson invented?"
- e. "What was the Louisiana Purchase?"
- f. "Why do you think Thomas Jefferson kept slaves?" (*Analyze*)
- g. "What was the most important thing Jefferson did? Explain." (*Make judgments*)

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Science: Jefferson's Inventions

Have children look in encyclopedias or books about Thomas Jefferson to find out more about one of his inventions. Children can work in small groups to learn about an invention and can write a brief description of the invention and how it works for the rest of the class.

Art: Louisiana Purchase

Ask children to work in groups to draw a map showing the area that America bought from France in the Louisiana Purchase. Groups can indicate which states the area now includes.

Social Studies: Time Line

Have children work in small groups to create a time line of Thomas Jefferson's life. They can use the events and dates from the book to mark their line. Remind them to keep the events in chronological order.

Language Arts: Another Biography

Have children choose another figure from the Revolutionary War period as the subject for a brief biographical sketch. Some possibilities include George Washington, Molly Pitcher, John or Abigail Adams, and Crispus Attucks. Children can use encyclopedias and biographies to learn about their subject and then use the information they find write a sketch describing the most important events of the subject's life.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

More About Thomas Jefferson

Have children use the keywords "Thomas Jefferson" to find information on the Internet about the man. Ask them to choose an event from Jefferson's life that is not in the biography. Children can report on what they find to the class