

Thomas Jefferson Grows a Nation

By: Peggy Thomas

Activity Level: Advanced

PURPOSE

Students will explore vocabulary words to comprehend the text by writing, defining, and drawing vocabulary. Students will compare and contrast rural versus urban settings using a Venn diagram and communicate their type of community in a collage.

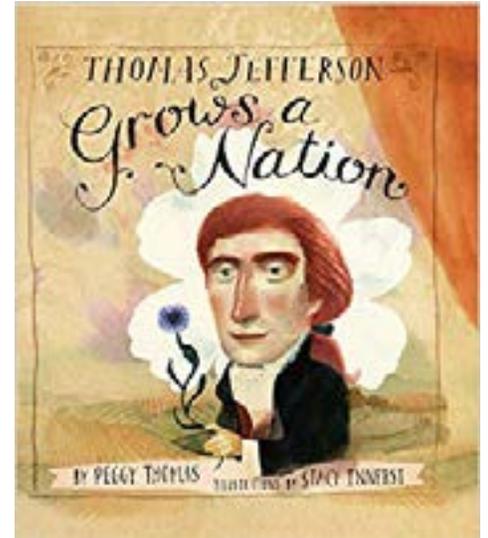
NEBRASKA STATE EDUCATION CONTENT STANDARDS CONNECTION

LA.5.RI.8

Read and comprehend a wide range of informational text of appropriate complexity for Grade 5 independently and proficiently

LA.5.SL.1

Prepare for and participate in structured discussions and collaborations about 5th grade topics and texts.



WHAT'S THE CONNECTION TO AGRICULTURE?

Explore and begin to understand the beginning of farming in the early days of our nation, and the science that was used as well as the struggles between the push for industrial growth, while trying to keep the family farm at the center of it all.

Gain an appreciation of our agricultural history and how agriculture events have affected our lives in America today.

MATERIALS

- Vocabulary sheet (1 per student)
- Venn Diagram sheet (1 per student pair)
- Collage supplies (1 8.5"x11" blank sheet of paper per student, newspapers, markers, scissors, magazines, and glue)

VOCABULARY

Acquisition – something acquired

Bungling – to make mistakes in doing something; to not do something well or successfully

Fashioning – to form something into something else; to make something from something else

Fertility – the ability to support the growth of many plants

Fostering – to help something grow or develop

Harnessed – to use something for a particular purpose

Infestation – a swarm of insects that attack plants; the state of being invaded or overrun by parasites

Monumental – great importance, extent or size

Plenipotentiary – a person, especially a diplomat, invested with the full power of independent action on behalf of their government, typically in a foreign country

Ravages – acts of destruction

Unprincipled – not having or showing concern for what is right

BACKGROUND AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

Thomas Jefferson was more than a president and patriot. He was also a planter and gardener who loved to watch things grow – everything from plants and crops to even his brand-new nation. As minister to France, Jefferson promoted all things American, sharing corn and pecans with his Parisian neighbors. As secretary of state, he encouraged his fellow farmers to grow olives, rice, and maple trees.

Just as Jefferson was passionate about promoting American agriculture and wildlife around the world, agriculturalists still do that today. While less than 2 percent of the population grows our food and 9 percent are involved in the food system (processing, wholesaling, retailing, service, marketing, and inspection), people all over the world rely on American farmers to produce a safe, healthy, and tasty food supply.

Agriculture is present in both rural and urban communities—rural may be more production focused and farming. But agriculture is more than just farming, it is also present in urban communities—agricultural communications like marketers and public relations experts, agricultural economist like a grain broker and agricultural policy analyst, agricultural education like farm managers and extension agents, agricultural engineering like a machine design engineer and structural engineer, are just a few examples of the diversity in the agricultural industry!

Jefferson was seeking the best plants and crops for American soil and to feed our population. Still today, agriculturalists are working to find the best crops for the land to be good stewards of resources like air, water, and soil. Farmers take extra care to select the crops and animals to grow in the correct environment and ensure the proper use of all care measures (fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, antibiotics, etc.).

INTEREST APPROACH

- Watch this video for a brief introduction to Thomas Jefferson in a fun, musical introduction!
- Pose a few *listening questions*:
 - How many men signed the Declaration of Independence?
 - 55
 - Who was the main author of the Declaration of Independence?
 - *Thomas Jefferson*
 - What were some of the things Thomas Jefferson did to develop our country?
 - *He was a thinker, philosopher, inventor, scholar, writer, spoke 5 languages, traveled and made allies*

□ What was the exploration across the American West that he initiated?

- *The voyage of Lewis and Clark*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2sugD-NiwU>

PROCEDURE

1. Read *Thomas Jefferson Grows a Nation* aloud to the class.
2. Review vocabulary from the book and complete the vocabulary worksheet. First, write the word, next to it, write the definition, in the last box, draw a picture to illustrate the word's meaning, based on the text.
3. Reference the section of the book with the disagreement between Hamilton and Jefferson (page 15 in book). Ask the students to define "urban" and "rural" communities and to list the characteristics of each. Make a list on the board or on chart paper. Encourage students to discuss the following aspects of communities: transportation, schools, homes, shopping, nature, and businesses.
4. Give students a copy of the Venn diagram, and working with a partner, ask them to list characteristics of each that they observed in the book. (Having more than one copy of the book available, for a resource, would be helpful.)
5. Bring students back together and discuss what characteristics define each community and which are similar to both types of communities. Make special notes of the community in which they live.
 - a. Discuss that while less than 2 percent of the population grows our food and 9 percent are involved in the food system (processing, wholesaling, retailing, service, marketing, and inspection), people all over the world rely on American farmers to produce a safe, healthy, and tasty food supply. Agriculture is present in both rural and urban communities—rural may be more production focused and farming. But agriculture is more than just farming, it is also present in urban communities—agricultural communications like marketers and public relations experts, agricultural economists like a grain broker and agricultural policy analyst, agricultural education like farm managers and extension agents, agricultural engineering like a machine design engineer and structural engineer, are just a few examples of the diversity in the agricultural industry!
6. Students will create a poster collage on an 8.5"x11" blank sheet of paper using magazine clippings and drawings, to represent the community they live in.
 - a. Students will share collages with classmates and discuss similarities and differences.
 - b. Connect agriculture to the student collages.
 - i. What businesses are represented in your collage? Are there any related to food, fiber, fuel, or energy?
 - ii. What types of natural resources are present in the collage?
 - iii. What does the landscape look like? Crops, trees, gardens, factories? How is that related to agriculture?

LISTENING QUESTIONS

- Who was Thomas Jefferson and how did he contribute to our country's development?

- *He was a Founding Father, author of the Declaration of Independence, 3rd President of the United States*
- What were some of the things Thomas Jefferson grew at Monticello?
 - *Potatoes, peppers, pippins, peaches, juniper, larkspur, peas, flowers, fruit trees, and wheat*
- What was Jefferson's response to French naturalist Count Buffon's belittling of America?
 - *He wrote a book called "Notes on the State of Virginia", went to France to defend American wildlife, landscape, and natural resources, sent an actual moose (femur, hoof, bits of fur, and antlers) to Buffon in France*
- Thomas shipped sacks of rice from Italy to South Carolina and Georgia. What happened with the dry rice?
 - *The dry rice helped the family farmers, but it failed as a cash crop.*
- What was the capital of the United States in 1789?
 - *New York City*
- When Thomas was secretary of state for President George Washington and Alexander Hamilton was the treasury secretary, they each had different visions for our country. What was each man's vision?
 - *Jefferson's vision was small towns and family farms. Hamilton's vision was a nation of cities and factories.*
- In 1794, Jefferson returned to Monticello and after being gone for 10 years, found that his farm needed a lot of work. What were some of the farming practices he did to return Monticello to its former glory?
 - *Inspected fields to be more productive, he rotated his crops to nurture the soil, plowed along the contours of the mountain to catch the rainfall, and fertilized with cartloads of manure.*
- What is the connection between Thomas Jefferson and Lewis and Clark?
 - *Jefferson wanted to discover what lay in the west. He organized an expedition led by his private secretary, Meriwether Lewis, to "explore the Missouri river and the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent." Lewis and his partner, William Clark, prepared to travel over foreign land, but with the Louisiana Territory, they would ford American streams and climb American mountains. Lewis and Clark would send back knowledge: reports, skins of antelope, deer, prairie dogs, foxes, and boxes of seeds: snowberries, Pani corn, currants, peas, and beans.*

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

- What sort of vision did Thomas Jefferson have for our new country? How did this differ from the vision that others had?
 - *Jefferson envisioned a society that was based mainly on the presence of many small farmer. He particularly did not want a great deal of manufacturing to be done in the U.S. He argued that manufactured goods could be imported from Europe while the US could remain agrarian. Hamilton saw the U.S. industrialized and a system of workers and bosses; mainly a country of larger cities of commerce.*
- How do these two different types of communities work together in our world today, and why is that important?
 - *Rural and urban areas rely on each other; often rural areas produce commodities (meat, milk, grain) and they are processed and sold in urban areas. The urban areas often are the major company's headquarters, where government is centered, and where most colleges and universities are located.*

- What were some of Thomas Jefferson’s contributions as President? In agriculture?
 - *He wrote the Declaration of Independence, made the Louisiana Purchase, launched Lewis and Clark expedition, experimented with various gardening techniques, and advanced sustainable agriculture like crop rotation and fertilizers*
- Discuss how the look of the “family farm” has changed from Thomas Jefferson’s era to today.
 - *Family farms today are generally understood to be a farm owned and/or operated by a family. Family farms today are often parts of cooperatives and farm advocacy organizations; while they still are independent in farming practices, they often are part of a larger community. In Thomas Jefferson’s era, family farms were disconnected from each other and considered completely independent.*

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Agriculture—The Center of the Economic Web (Nebraska AITC)
 - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Agriculture--The-Center-of-an-Economic-Web.pdf>
- Farming in a Glove (Nebraska AITC)
 - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Farming-in-a-Glove.pdf>
- Food Systems Feed the World (Nebraska AITC)
 - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Food-Systems-Feed-the-World.pdf>
- My Ag Roots (Nebraska AITC)
 - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/My-Ag-Roots.pdf>

COMPANION RESOURCES

- Nebraska Farm Family video
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8fqwWLhGA4>
- Book
 - *Who Was Thomas Jefferson* by Dennis Brindell Fradin

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LITERACY OUTCOMES

- **Culture, Society, Economy & Geography**
 - **T5.3-5 c.** Explain how agricultural events and inventions affect how Americans live today
 - **T5.3-5 d.** Explain the value of agriculture and how it is important in daily life
 - **T5.3-5 f.** Understand the agricultural history of an individual’s specific community and/or state