

Teachers' Guide for Cobblestone

March 2013: Check Out the Library of Congress

By Debbie Vilardi

Debbie Vilardi is an author of poetry, lesson plans and works of fiction. She is seeking an agent and publisher for her historical fiction chapter book, *Flood*, set during Hurricane Katrina.

Goal: To learn about the history, collections and current role of the Library of Congress.

*Always have a parent or trusted adult help with web research.

Before Beginning:

Study the cover and discuss how the images might be related to a library. What do you think the Library of Congress could be?

"Not Your Typical Library" by Audrey Fischer (Pages 4-7)

Vocabulary: unbiased

Comprehension:

1. What was the original purpose of the Library?
2. How is the original purpose related to the current primary mission?
3. Why was the Law Library established?
4. Why was the Copyright Office established?
5. What effect did the U.S. Copyright Office have on the collection?
6. How does the Library assist those who are blind and physically handicapped?
7. What are the purposes of the Library's websites?
8. How has the Library extended its reach globally?
9. Read the sidebar on page 7. What was the basis for the Copyright law and how does the law protect creative work?

Math Activities:

1. How many years passed between the creation of the Library of Congress and the creation of the Law Library?
2. If 2.8 million volumes is 20% of the collection, how many books are in the total collection?
3. How much time passed between the first copyright law and the establishment of the U.S. Copyright Office?
4. If each blind or physically handicapped person who used the Library received the same number of resources, how many resources would he receive?

Research Topics: Library of Congress, Law Library, Ainsworth Rand Spofford, U.S. Copyright Office, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, World Digital Library

“Building a ‘Book Palace’” by John Y. Cole (Pages 8-10)

Comprehension:

1. How and why did Thomas Jefferson help the Library grow?
2. What happened to the Library in 1814?
3. What was Jefferson’s response?
4. Why did he feel a broad library was important and why did he want it to be publicly available?
5. What influence did Spofford have on the developing collection?
6. Why was a new building necessary?
7. Why do you think the Library has separate reading rooms for researchers?

Writing Activity: Jefferson argued that a member of Congress might need information on any subject. Do you agree or disagree with this claim? Support your position with events from history or the present day.

Research: War of 1812, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison

“Finding Space” by John Y. Cole (Page 11-13)

Vocabulary: Italian Renaissance, Art Deco, module

Comprehension:

1. How did the size of Congress change between 1800 and 1870?
2. Why were the Library’s three main buildings given their specific names?
3. What are some of the features of the Thomas Jefferson Building?
4. What is housed in each of the other two buildings?
5. Read “Still Growing” on page 13. What are the other two spaces used for and how can the public gain access to these materials?

Research: John Adams, Madison Memorial Hall, National Audio-Visual Conservation Center

“Inside the Jefferson” by Jennifer Gavin (Page 14-17)

"Top Treasures" (Pages 18-21)

"More Top Treasures" (Pages 26-29)

Vocabulary: frieze, cupola, vellum

Comprehension:

1. Why is the Jefferson considered Washington's most beautiful building?
2. Why weren't Alaska's and Hawaii's seals included in the stained glass display?
3. What happened to many of the books Jefferson donated?
4. How were these volumes replaced and how are they organized?

Classify the items listed into groups with these categories: History of Communication, Works of Art, Geography, American Pastimes, Music, National History, and Other.

Research Activity: The artworks, displayed items, architectural elements and other treasures mentioned in these articles often relate in some way to the mission of the Library. Select one of these items to research. Describe its history, including how it came to be in the Library, and how it relates to the Library's mission if it does.

Research: Edwin Blashfield, Swann Gallery, John w. Kluge Center

"The World's Largest Inbox" by Erin Allen (Pages 22-23)

Comprehension:

1. How do most materials arrive at the Library?
2. How do other materials arrive?
3. Why does the Library have foreign offices?
4. How are items selected?
5. What process does each item go through as it is added?
6. What steps can be taken to preserve items?
7. How has the Library reacted to the abundance of digital media?

Research: Cataloging in Publication, Herbert Block, Stradivarius, Abraham Lincoln, the NAACP, the Library's Preservation Division, the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program

"Yeah, They've Got That" by Jonathan Abreu (Pages 30-32)

Vocabulary: philanthropist, graphic novels

Comprehension:

1. Why does the Library keep old films and photos, music and maps?
2. How do researchers use these items?
3. How did the collection of musical instruments begin?

Writing Activity: Read the captions that accompany pictures in this article. Why might Gertrude Whittall have funded a stage so the instruments could be played? Why is it important to maintain the equipment necessary to play all forms of media the Library has in its collections?

Research: Thomas A. Edison, Prints and Photographs Division, Benjamin K. Edward's Collection, Cy Young, Ty Cobb, Geography and Map Division, Gertrude Clarke Whittall, Serial and Government Publications Division

"A Place Just for Kids" by Guy Lamolinara (Pages 33-34)

Comprehension:

1. What is the mission of the Center for the Book?
2. How does the Young Readers Center help fulfill that mission?

Research: Center for the Book, Young Readers Center, Dr. James H. Billington, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Rep. Robert Aderholt, Elizabeth and Victoria Kann, M.T. Anderson

"Meet the Reading Ambassador" by Guy Lamolinara (Page 35)

Vocabulary: illiterate

Comprehension:

1. What is the role of the ambassador?
2. What message does Mr. Myers spread?

Discussion: How important is reading? Imagine you are illiterate. How would this impact your daily life? Consider that if you were illiterate, you would not be able to write a response to this topic.

Research: The National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, Walter Dean Myers, Katherine Paterson, Jon Scieszka

"A Rewarding Experience" by Meg Chorlian (Pages 36- 37)

Vocabulary: primary sources

Comprehension:

1. What is the most rewarding part of Ms. Sweeting's job?
2. What excited her students about the project she submitted?
3. How did Ms. Sweeting fulfill her role as Teacher-in-Residence?
4. What other methods will the Library use to reach teachers?

Research: Earnestine Sweeting, Library of Congress' Educational Outreach Office, Teacher-In-Residence

"Strange but Wonderful" by Marcia Amidon Lusted (Pages 40-41)

Vocabulary: rhombicuboctahedron

Research: World libraries

Activity for the Entire Issue: The Library of Congress has many divisions and employees. If you were seeking employment at the Library, what job would you like to have and why do you think you might be suited to that position?