University of Virginia Printable Reading Comprehension
Name_____

The University of Virginia was founded in 1819 by Thomas Jefferson in Charlottesville, Virginia. It was built on land originally owned by America's fifth president, and trustee of the university, James Monroe. Jefferson envisioned the university as a center of knowledge separate from religious influence. Although Jefferson attended the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, he became unhappy with the institution because of its emphasis on religion over science.

Jefferson's University of Virginia would prove an entirely different educational experience than of typical universities of the time. First, students could attend any of eight independent schools where they could focus on medicine, law, chemistry, ancient languages, modern languages, natural philosophy, and moral philosophy. The university would become the first to allow students to focus their educations on astronomy, architecture, botany, philosophy, and political science. In most other universities, student choices were limited to law, medicine, or divinity.

The University of Virginia was the first university to be centered around a library instead of a church. The university reflected Jefferson's strong position concerning a separation of church and state and lacked a school of divinity. Jefferson believed religion stifled education and that the University of Virginia would be a place "based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind." It held its first classes on March 7, 1825. Jefferson was intimately involved with the university and often hosted dinners for faculty and students at his nearby home, *Monticello*. Jefferson was so proud of his university, that he included "Father of the University of Virginia" on his gravestone.

1. **Why was Thomas Jefferson unhappy with the College of William and Mary?**
   A. He thought it emphasized science over religion
   B. He thought it emphasized law over science
   C. He thought it emphasized religion over science
   D. He thought it failed to emphasize religion enough

2. What question is not answered in the passage?
   A. What classes did Jefferson teach?
   B. How was Jefferson involved with the university?
   C. Why did Thomas Jefferson decide to establish the university?
   D. What kinds of classes could students take?

3. What made the University of Virginia different from other universities?
   A. Religion was an important part of studies at the University of Virginia
   B. A library was at the center of the university
   C. It was built on land owned by Thomas Jefferson
   D. All of the above

4. To which of the following would Thomas Jefferson likely agree?

   A. It is a university's responsibility to teach religion to its students
   B. When done correctly, religion is a positive influence on education
   C. The focus of students should remain firmly fixed on medicine or law
   D. Students are best served by universities with the absence of religion

5. What does Jefferson mean by "illimitable" in the sentence below?

   Jefferson believed religion stifled education and that the University of
   Virginia would be a place "based on the illimitable freedom of the human
   mind."

   A. living
   B. mortal
   C. ending
   D. unlimited

**6. For which of the following statements could the following be used as
supporting evidence?**

   Jefferson was intimately involved with the university and often hosted
   dinners for faculty and students at his nearby home, *Monticello*.

   A. The university allowed students to pursue many paths of study
   B. Thomas Jefferson was very proud of the University of Virginia
   C. Thomas Jefferson enjoyed interacting with the people of his university
   D. Thomas Jefferson built the University of Virginia around a library instead
      of a church

7. Which is NOT true about the University of Virginia?
   A. It provided a different educational experience from other colleges and universities at the time
   B. Classes began in 1819
   C. James Monroe was one of the university's original trustees
   D. Students could pursue studies focused on astronomy, architecture, and many other topics