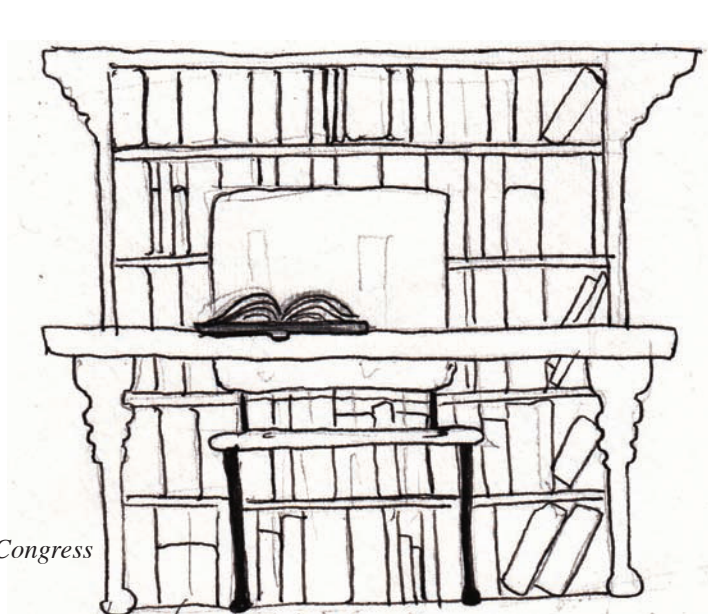


# LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library of Congress began in 1800, when President Adams signed a bill that created a library for members of congress to use, containing only books that they might need to use for work. Unfortunately, the original collection was lost when the British burned down the U.S. Capitol during the War of 1812. An *avid* reader, former president Thomas Jefferson donated his collection of books to re-establish the nation's official library. Jefferson believed that all subjects were important to refer to, and suggested that the new Library of Congress keep materials on all subjects. The Library of Congress began collecting books of all kinds, as long as they were *copyrighted* in the U.S. After they began running out of space in the Capitol, a new building was built on the National Mall in 1886, where it stands today. The library also researches American life, documenting and keeping *multimedia* records of unique cultures, societies, and ways of life in the United States.



*Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.*



*A reading room at the Library of Congress*

## **Vocabulary**

*avid*: enthusiastic. "He is an avid comic book collector."

*copyright*: the right to make copies of or sell an artistic work. "We can't use that photo for our website because the copyright doesn't expire for another ten years."

*multimedia*: several different types of media used at the same time, such as video, sound recording, and printed text. "The multimedia part of this project will count for ten percent of your grade."

**Answer the questions below on a separate piece of paper.**

1. Do you think it is important for the U.S. to keep copies of books about many different subjects? Why or why not?

2. Why do you think the library conducts its own research of American life?