

# presidents of the *United States of America*



"I was the principal author of the Declaration of Independence and served as the 3rd President of the United States."



**Thomas Jefferson**





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# Become a Presidential Historian by Solving This Puzzle

In this book, you'll learn all sorts of facts about Thomas Jefferson's amazing life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

In his free time, Jefferson engaged in archaeology and loved studying fossils. In his home, he owned the bones of an extinct animal, and we need to find out what kind of animal it was. You can help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this book carefully to find them and fill the letters into the blanks below in the order they appear.

— — — — —

Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

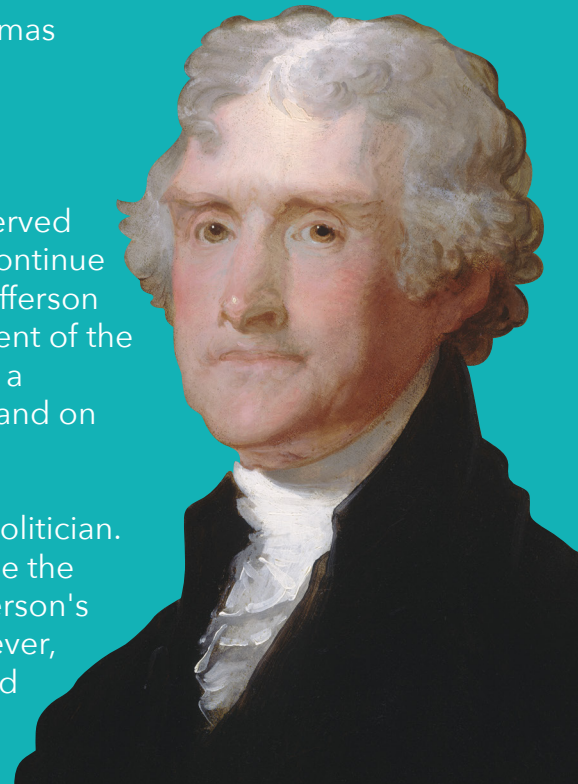
## Meet Thomas Jefferson

Words are powerful things. With words, you can inspire people or offend them. You can encourage your close friends or hurt their feelings. The Founding Fathers knew that words mattered. When they decided to break off from Great Britain and start a new country, the Founders knew they had to use the right words to explain their decisions. They hoped that, with the right message, they could motivate people to support their cause.

To come up with that message, they turned to one of their own—Thomas Jefferson. The Founders chose him to write the first draft of the most important document they would ever publish: the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Jefferson's words, that "all men are created equal," and deserved "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," changed the world and continue to inspire people to this day. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Jefferson served as the Secretary of State, Vice President, and the third President of the United States. For these achievements, Americans honored him with a memorial in Washington, D.C. and put his face on Mount Rushmore and on currency.

Jefferson **m**ay have been an eloquent writer, but he was a **shrewd** politician. He created a new party, the **Democratic-Republicans**, which became the main party in early American history. Not everyone agreed with Jefferson's beliefs and, at times, he made controversial decisions. No one, however, can deny his accomplishments. Jefferson was a truly brilliant man and remains one of the most influential figures in history.





# Youth and Early Career

Thomas Jefferson was born on April 13, 1743 in Shadwell, Virginia. He was the oldest son and third child of Peter and Jane Jefferson. His father was a successful planter, and his mother came from a distinguished Virginia family. As a boy, young Thomas spent a lot of time outdoors, playing in the woods. When he wasn't outdoors, he loved reading—a love that would last for a lifetime. He was a top student at the boarding school he attended.

In the midst of this happy childhood, tragedy struck Thomas and his family when he was 14—his father, Peter, died. It was a devastating loss. He did, however, inherit a large estate and several enslaved people. Thomas emerged from the tragedy determined to succeed in life. He enrolled in the College of William and Mary at the age of 17. Here, he studied even harder, focusing on science, mathematics, rhetoric, philosophy, and literature for up to 15 hours a day. Thomas's professors were so impressed by his intelligence that they invited him to dinners to debate the major issues of the day with them.

After college, Jefferson became a lawyer. He also fell in love with a wealthy widow named Martha Wayles Skelton. They married in 1772 and moved to Jefferson's Virginia plantation, Monticello. They would eventually have six children. Sadly, only two of them would live past childhood.



# Interesting Facts

- He was the first Secretary of State, the second Vice President, and the third President of the United States.
- He was a member of the Democratic-Republican Party.
- He had about 6,500 books in his personal library.
- In addition to being a political figure, he also invented several gadgets, studied science, designed many buildings, and loved playing the violin.
- He spoke four languages—English, French, Italian, and Latin—and he could read Greek and Spanish.
- He was the first president to be inaugurated in Washington, D.C.
- He helped make macaroni and cheese, french fries, and ice cream popular in the United States.
- He died on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

## Quote

"The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time."

- July 1774

# The American Revolution

Jefferson entered politics in 1769 when he was elected to **Virginia's House of Burgesses**. During these years, the American colonies were challenging oppressive British taxes. The British had imposed them without allowing the Americans any representation. In 1774, Jefferson wrote a pamphlet titled *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, where he defended American rights against British oppression. The pamphlet made him famous across the colonies and gave him a reputation as a talented writer.

The following year, the Colony of Virginia sent Jefferson as a delegate to the **Second Continental Congress** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Congress had gathered to figure out what to do about the situation with Britain. Also attending were delegates George Washington of Virginia and John Adams of Massachusetts.

After war between America and Britain broke out in April of 1775, Congress appointed Washington as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. Then, John Adams worked hard to convince his fellow delegates to officially break free of Britain

and become an independent nation. The only thing left to do was to officially announce the break. In June of 1776, Congress assigned Jefferson, along with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman to draft the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson ended up writing the first draft which, after a few edits, Congress adopted on July 4, 1776. Jefferson's famous line that "all men are created equal" remained in the final draft. **T**hrough these words, Jefferson ensured that the United States was founded on the principles of equality and freedom. He did all this at the youthful age of 33.

Shortly after, Jefferson returned to Virginia and worked hard to make the ideals of the Declaration a reality. He supported several laws that guaranteed freedom in Virginia, especially the right to practice whatever religion you believed in.

The war was hard on everyone, but Jefferson suffered an especially difficult loss. In September 1782, his beloved wife Martha died of complications during childbirth. Jefferson was truly heartbroken at her death.

## Quote

"We hold these truths to be sacred & undeniable; that all men are created equal & independant, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent & inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, & liberty, & the pursuit of happiness."  
- First draft of the Declaration of Independence, June 1776







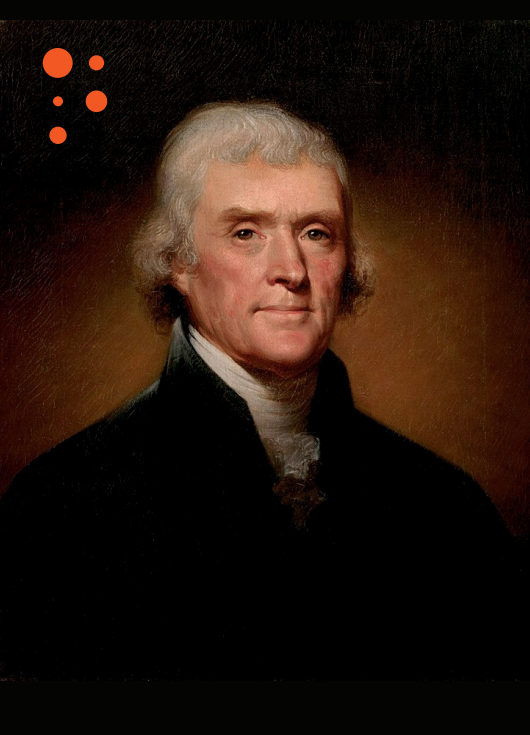
## After the War

In 1783, the Americans won the war against the British and officially became an independent nation. From 1785 to 1789, Jefferson served as his nation's Minister to France—America's ally during the war. He fell in love with French culture and collected recipes for macaroni, french fries, and ice cream.

After many of the Founders drafted the Constitution in 1787, the country elected the hero of the Revolution, George Washington, as its first president and John Adams as its first vice president in 1789. Washington then selected Thomas Jefferson to be the first **Secretary of State of the United States**—a very important position in the president's **Cabinet**. When John Adams was elected president in 1796, Jefferson was elected vice president, the second-highest ranking office in the country.

Jefferson had a hard time during his years as Secretary of State and vice president. He strongly disagreed with many of Washington's and Adams's policies. His greatest political foe at this time was Washington's Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton, who believed in strengthening the federal government and having closer ties with Great Britain, America's main trading partner. Jefferson, by contrast, believed in keeping the federal government weak and having closer ties with France. Although Jefferson claimed to be loyal to Washington, he supported newspapers that attacked him, as well as Adams and Hamilton. These attacks left Washington and Adams feeling that Jefferson had betrayed them.

Jefferson teamed up with a brilliant congressman from Virginia, James Madison, to start the **Democratic-Republican Party**, while Hamilton created the **Federalist Party**. Soon, the two parties were strongly criticizing each other in the newspapers.



## A Nasty Election

Thomas Jefferson ran for president in 1800 against **incumbent** John Adams. It was a heated campaign and, once again, the newspapers were full of attacks against both candidates. After the people had voted, there was a bit of confusion during the election because Jefferson's **running mate**, Aaron Burr, tied him with the same number of votes in the **Electoral College**. According to the Constitution, the election went to the House of Representatives where, after many votes, they elected Jefferson as the third President of the United States.

### Quote

"I have sworn upon the altar of god eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."  
- September 1800

## President

Thomas Jefferson took office in 1801 and delivered a very inspirational inaugural address, calling for both sides to come together as Americans. He then quickly went to work cutting taxes and spending. He wanted Americans to live as free as possible without the government telling them what to do.

Jefferson had several successes as president. In 1802, he founded the U.S. Military Academy, now known as West Point. In 1803, he completed a deal with the French to buy the Louisiana Territory for a mere four cents an acre—an incredible real estate deal that doubled the size of the entire country. Jefferson later sent an expedition led by his secretary Meriwether Lewis and Army Captain William Clark to explore the new territory.

Jefferson also sent a naval expedition to defeat the **Barbary Pirates** in North Africa after they had harassed American ships for years. This victory led other countries to give the United States more respect. Lastly, he cut the national debt from \$80 million to \$57 million. Many of these successes led the American people to re-elect Jefferson in a landslide in 1804.

Despite these triumphs, Jefferson also made major mistakes. He reversed his predecessor, John Adams's policies to build a strong navy and, instead, replaced ships with more ineffective **gunboats**. This left America unprepared for its enemies in a future war. Worst of all, Jefferson signed the **Embargo Act in 1807** to end trade with all of Europe. This was in response to the fact that Britain and France were attacking American ships on the high seas and kidnapping American sailors. Jefferson hoped this would pressure both countries to respect the United States. Instead, the embargo destroyed much of the U.S. economy without really affecting Europe. U.S. exports fell from \$108 million to \$22 million. For much of his career, Jefferson fought to limit the power of the government, but the embargo was a major, and failed, expansion of government power. In the last year of his presidency, Congress reversed Jefferson's mistake and repealed the Embargo Act, allowing trade with European countries other than Britain and France.



# Retirement

After serving two terms, Jefferson followed Washington's example and declined to run for a third term in 1808. He was weary from years of public service and was glad to return to Monticello when his presidency ended in 1809. His close friend, and Secretary of State, James Madison succeeded him as president. Jefferson continued to read books and conduct scientific experiments. Always a believer in education, he founded the University of Virginia in 1819, planning its lessons for students and designing its buildings.

Jefferson's political battles left many of his fellow Founders, including John Adams, upset with him. In 1812, however, after both men had left office, they began writing to each other and rekindling their friendship. They debated many of the great political issues of the day, but this time as friends and not as rivals.

Both Adams and Jefferson grew into old age. In an amazing twist of fate, they both died on July 4, 1826—the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Adams had lived 90 years while Jefferson had lived 83 years. It was fitting that the two men who had the most to do with the Declaration both passed away on the document's fiftieth anniversary.

## Quote

*"Nature intended me  
for the tranquill  
pursuits of science, by  
rendering them my  
supreme delight."  
- March 1809*

## Quote

*"A wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government."  
- March 1801*





# Legacy

Thomas Jefferson will always be remembered as the principal author of the Declaration of Independence. That achievement alone makes him an important historical figure, but he did so much more. As a public servant—especially as the third president—he helped make America a free and powerful nation, especially through his support for religious freedom and presiding over the Louisiana Purchase.

Jefferson deserves recognition as one of the most brilliant thinkers in American history. Because he was well-spoken and thoughtful, people often believed that Jefferson was a peaceful philosopher who sat at his estate in Monticello thinking about democracy. In reality, Jefferson was a shrewd politician who knew how to obtain power and was willing to scheme

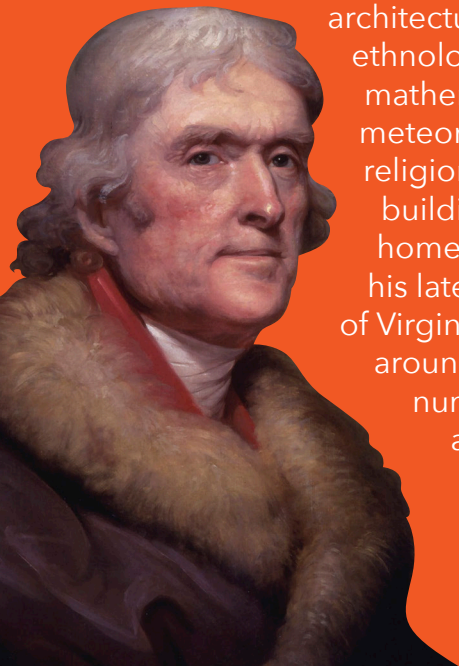
against his friends. He also made his share of mistakes, such as signing the destructive Embargo Act and stripping down America's navy. The gunboat navy Jefferson established failed miserably during the War of 1812 after his presidency and almost allowed Britain to defeat the United States.

Jefferson's political skills, though, did earn him the two terms as president. They also allowed him to create a party, the Democratic-Republicans, which became the dominant party in early American history.

Thomas Jefferson was a complex figure. He was both a thoughtful man and an astute politician. Above all, he was a man of great achievement, supremely dedicated to liberty.

## Renaissance Man

Thomas Jefferson loved learning about anything and everything. When he wasn't managing his plantation or serving in government, Jefferson studied agriculture, archaeology, architecture, astronomy, botany, ethnology, geology, mathematics, medicine, meteorology, philosophy, and religion. He designed several buildings, including his home at Monticello and, in his later years, the University of Virginia. He also tinkered around and invented numerous gadgets, such as an iron blow, a pasta roller, a gravity-powered clock, a revolving chair, and an early copy machine.







Jefferson kept learning for his whole life. He tried to solve hard problems about politics, government, and policies. Try to solve these math problems. The missing values are the whole numbers between 1 and 9. Each number is only used once. Each row is a math equation. Each column is a math equation. Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.



|   |   |    |   |     |    |
|---|---|----|---|-----|----|
|   | x |    | - |     | 54 |
| ÷ |   | x  |   | -   |    |
|   | - | 6  | + |     | 3  |
| + |   | +  |   | -   |    |
|   | - |    | + | 9   | 11 |
| 5 |   | 43 |   | -12 |    |

|    |   |   |   |   |    |
|----|---|---|---|---|----|
|    | - | 5 | + |   | 5  |
| ÷  |   | + |   | - |    |
|    | - | 1 | - |   | -7 |
| x  |   | + |   | + |    |
|    | - |   | - |   | -3 |
| 14 |   | 8 |   | 3 |    |

ANSWERS ON PG 10

## Slavery

Like many other colonists of his time, Thomas Jefferson had enslaved servants at his estate. Throughout his life, he enslaved and profited from a total of about 600 people. Jefferson repeatedly said throughout his career that **slavery** was evil, calling it a "moral depravity" and a "hideous blot." In 1778, he drafted a Virginia law to ban the importing of slaves, and in 1784, he proposed a measure to ban slavery in America's Northwest territories. Jefferson believed that the best way to get rid of slavery was to pass laws gradually freeing the enslaved over time. He feared that eliminating slavery too quickly would perhaps lead to a violent conflict between blacks and whites and destroy the young country.

Many people then and now have criticized Jefferson for owning slaves. While it is true that Jefferson benefited from slavery, he also strongly believed it was immoral. Also, his vision of a society where all men are created equal inspired future generations to fight for a more perfect Union—one where every American enjoyed the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.



## Quote

Below is a quote from Thomas Jefferson. Can you decode the message? The letters from each cell are below the puzzle. Try to rebuild the original message by choosing the letters for each cell.

|   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| C |   | N | N | O |  |   |
|   |   | I | V |   |  |   |
|   | I |   | H |   |  | T |
|   |   |   |   | K |  |   |

L T  
A T O O S  
W B O I E U

ANSWERS ON PG 10

# Glossary

**Shrewd:** Being able to make decisions wisely to achieve a goal.

**Democratic-Republican Party:** The party that formed in the 1790s in the United States that believed the federal government should remain relatively weak and that states should have more power. It was led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

**Virginia's House of Burgesses:** The legislative body of the Colony of Virginia.

**Secretary of State:** The government official in charge of the U.S. Department of State who advises the president on foreign policy issues. The Secretary of State is one of the highest ranking officials in the government.

**Cabinet of the United States:** A senior group of advisors to the President of the United States. Its members include the Vice President of the United States and the top agency and department leaders in the federal government, such as the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Treasury, and the Attorney General.

**Federalist Party:** The party that formed in the 1790s in the United States that believed the federal government needed to be strengthened at the time for the country to prosper. It was led by George Washington, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton.

**Incumbent:** The person who is currently holding an office or position.

**Running Mate:** A candidate for a political position who runs closely with another candidate who is also running for a similar or related political position.

**Electoral College:** The group of people that, according to the U.S. Constitution, elect the President and Vice President of the United States.

**Barbary Pirates:** Sea-traveling people from North Africa who often attacked and robbed ships.

**Gunboats:** Small, fast ships with guns that operate mainly near coastlines.

**Embargo Act in 1807:** A law, signed by President Thomas Jefferson, that ended trade between the United States and all foreign nations. Jefferson signed it in response to British and French attacks on American ships. He hoped that it could convince both nations to respect the United States, but it backfired and damaged the American economy.

**Slavery:** A system in which people are allowed to own other people and make them work without paying them.

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## Answers:

EXTINCT ANIMAL JEFFERSON OWNED THE BONES TO:  
MASTODON

ALWAYS LEARNING:

|   |   |    |   |     |    |
|---|---|----|---|-----|----|
| 8 | x | 7  | - | 2   | 54 |
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| + |   | +  |   | -   |    |
| 3 | - | 1  | + | 9   | 11 |
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|    |   |   |   |   |    |
|----|---|---|---|---|----|
| 6  | - | 5 | + | 4 | 5  |
| ÷  |   | + |   | - |    |
| 3  | - | 1 | - | 9 | -7 |
| x  |   | + |   | + |    |
| 7  | - | 2 | - | 8 | -3 |
| 14 |   | 8 |   | 3 |    |

QUOTE:

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