

### Follow-up Activities

- Thomas Jefferson was an avid scientist, and was particularly interested in learning all about the plants and animal species in the unknown territory. Help students to research some of the species that Lewis and Clark's expedition helped introduce to Americans on the east coast such as the prairie dog, pronghorn antelope and grizzly bear, and what is now the Montana state flower, the bitterroot. Ask students to try and discover if these plants and animals are still thriving or not, and to draw their own images of these species.
- Thomas Jefferson designed and built a huge mansion called Monticello in Virginia and used his inventive mind to fill his living space with many interesting ideas to make life more convenient, such as beds that were built into walls to save space, and dumbwaiters built under the dining room to carry things up from the basement. Ask students to use their creative skills to design a dream house that includes features that they think would make their own life easier.
- When Thomas Jefferson was the U.S. ambassador to France, he traveled to Southern France where he tried vanilla ice cream for the first time and Northern Italy where he first tried macaroni. He brought home with him recipes for new foods such as these and loved to make them for his guests at Monticello. Ask students to research the history of their favorite foods, locate the place that originated their favorite dish on a map and maybe even prepare a sample for the class!
- Ask students to think about the words "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" and to write a journal entry that reflects what those rights mean to them. In the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, ask students to write their own personal "Declaration of Independence". To capture the way the original Declaration of Independence was written, ask students to peer edit a classmate's work, offering suggestions to improve their partner's work.
- To have students better understand the sequence of events leading up to the Declaration of Independence, ask them to create a time line or storyboard that describes the moments leading from the Second Continental Congress through George Washington's reading of the document to the Continental Army.
- Students can act out a meeting between the British and the American colonists before the Revolution began. Have one group play the colonists and formulate a list of demands, based on what they find in the Declaration of Independence. Have another group play the British, who answer the demands, mostly by refusing. When the role-play is completed, ask the students which side had the best arguments and why.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/jefferson](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/jefferson)  
The Library of Congress provides this site that is written for young students and contains interesting information from the life and times of Thomas Jefferson.
- [memory.loc.gov/ammem/mjthtml/timeline/allboxes1.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mjthtml/timeline/allboxes1.html)  
Based on the Thomas Jefferson Papers, this pictorial time line provides an excellent overview of some of the highlights from the life of Thomas Jefferson.
- [www.monticello.org/index.html](http://www.monticello.org/index.html)  
The Thomas Jefferson Foundation offers students a tour of Monticello, which includes numerous images of the beautiful home and gardens.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Adler, David. *A Picture Book of Thomas Jefferson*. Holiday House, New York, NY; 1990.
- Burgan, Michael. *The Declaration of Independence*. Compass Point Books, Minneapolis, MN; 2001.
- Freedman, Russell. *Give Me Liberty! The Story of the Declaration of Independence*. Holiday House, New York, NY; 2000.

#### TEACHER'S GUIDE CONSULTANT

Jeffrey W. Litzke, B.A., Political Science, M.Ed.  
Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

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## THOMAS JEFFERSON

### Grades K-4

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting this program. The guide provides you with a brief historical overview, previewing and follow-up discussion questions, vocabulary, focus questions for assessing comprehension, extension activities and print and Internet resources.

**Before Viewing:** Give students an introduction to the topic by relaying aspects of the program overview to them. Select pre-viewing discussion questions and vocabulary to provide a focus for students when they view the program.

**After Viewing:** Review the program and vocabulary, and use the follow-up questions and activities to inspire continued discussion. Encourage students to research the topic further with the Internet and print resources provided.



## Historical Overview

At a time when most countries in the world were ruled by kings and queens, Thomas Jefferson helped create a new country and a new kind of government — a government that was for the people and run by the people — a democracy.

Jefferson was born into a wealthy family in Virginia, the largest and most influential colony in America. As a young person he developed a very studious nature and loved reading, writing and language, as well as science and invention, and eventually became a lawyer and member of Virginia’s colonial legislature. Because of his powerful words of protest against the policies of the British government, Jefferson became an important leader in the colonies, and in 1776 he was chosen to write one of the most influential documents in American history — the Declaration of Independence, which announced America’s final break with Great Britain.

Thomas Jefferson became the third president of the United States in 1800, and became the first president to live in the new capital of Washington, D.C., which he helped design. As president, he nearly doubled the size of America by purchasing the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, and he greatly increased Americans’ knowledge of this area by promoting the famous expedition of Lewis and Clark.

Although Jefferson’s ownership of slaves leaves us with many unanswered questions about his writing, “all men are created equal,” many people still choose to remember him as a champion of human freedom and personal rights. Jefferson is often referred to as the “Father of Democracy” and his famous words are forever memorialized at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.

## Vocabulary

**architect** — A person who plans and designs buildings.

**colonies** — Places that are settled far from one’s home country, but are ruled by the home country. The people who live in colonies are called colonists.

**Native Americans** — The first people in America who arrived thousands of years ago.

**House of Burgesses** — The legislature in colonial Virginia that at one time included famous Founding Fathers such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington.

**taxes** — Fees that are added to goods or services to help a government raise money to do business.

**Monticello** — The mountaintop mansion where Thomas Jefferson lived in Virginia. Jefferson designed the building, which is filled with his inventive ideas.

**A Summary View of the Rights of British America** — One of the most important documents written by Thomas Jefferson, written in 1774 to argue that the British had no right to rule the colonies. *(Continued)*

**militia** — A group of citizens that protects its area in times of conflict.

**Revolutionary War** — The war in which America defeated the British and that resulted in America’s independence.

**Second Continental Congress** — A group of colonial representatives that gathered in Philadelphia in 1775 to talk about their problems with the British. The group voted to form a committee to write the Declaration of Independence.

**inalienable rights** — Words used by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence to describe the basic rights that all people have, including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

**democracy** — A type of government in which citizens rule themselves.

**The Declaration of Independence** — A document issued on July 4, 1776, that declared that the American colonies were free and independent states. Thomas Jefferson was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence.

**ambassador** — A person whose job is to help his or her country maintain a good relationship with a foreign country.

**secretary of state** — A cabinet position in the United States responsible for maintaining relationships with foreign countries.

**census** — A count of the total number of people in a country.

**The Louisiana Purchase** — A large area of land between the Mississippi River and Rocky Mountains that Thomas Jefferson helped America purchase from France in 1803. The purchase nearly doubled the size of the United States.

**Library of Congress** — The national library of the United States, originally formed as a library for the U.S. government in 1800, and is now the largest library in the world.

## Pre-viewing Discussion

- Explain to students what a democracy is. Ask why they think it is important that people be given the opportunity to participate in their government.
- Do students know who Thomas Jefferson was? What is he most remembered for in American history? Jefferson is considered one of America’s “Founding Fathers.” Ask students to discuss what “Founding Father” means in their own words.
- Ask students about the significance of the date: July 4, 1776. What do Americans celebrate on July 4th? How do students celebrate on this popular holiday?

## Focus Questions

1. Why was the government that Jefferson helped create for the United States so new and different?
2. What kinds of things did young Thomas Jefferson like to learn in school?
3. What was the House of Burgesses? *(Continued)*

4. Why was Patrick Henry famous in Virginia and the colonies?
5. What strong opinion did Jefferson write about in A Summary View of the Rights of British America?
6. Who was on the committee to write the Declaration of Independence?
7. Why was Jefferson chosen to write the Declaration?
8. What is a secretary of state?
9. What was the importance of the port of Louisiana?
10. What did Jefferson imagine might be in the western part of North America?
11. Who were Lewis and Clark?
12. What were some of the interesting inventions that Jefferson had at his home in Monticello?
13. Why is Jefferson known as the “Father of Democracy”?

## Discussion Questions

- As president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark to explore the Louisiana Territory. Jefferson hoped they would find a river that stretched all the way to the Pacific Ocean and instructed Lewis and Clark to write down all they could about the plants, animals and people of this area. If you were president at that time, what would you have wanted to learn about the Louisiana Territory and why?
- Thomas Jefferson was elected the third president of the United States in 1800. What qualities do students think Jefferson had that made him a good choice for this important position?
- Thomas Jefferson was a writer, architect, scientist, inventor and musician, and, of course, president of the United States. Ask students if they have interests or wish to develop interests in many different areas. What are the good and bad parts of having so many different interests?
- To protest against the British government, Thomas Jefferson wrote some very strong and powerful words, knowing that these words might lead to war. Ask students to discuss how Jefferson and others who spoke out against the British must have felt. What would you have done if you were an American colonist at that time?
- The American colonists used violence to disobey Great Britain and obtain the right to rule themselves. Thomas Jefferson is known to have said that people have the right to protest against their government — and even use violence to try and make change. Discuss with students whether they agree with Jefferson’s idea that “a little rebellion now and then is a good thing.”