

# The Spirit of '76!

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## Overview

**Topic:** Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary War, Louisiana Purchase, Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, United States History. What do an inventor, a violin player, a writer, a university president, a rebel leader, and the President of the United States have in common? Quite a lot if they happen to be the same person: Thomas Jefferson. An interview with Thomas Jefferson on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and a series of hands-on and World Wide Web activities allow students to explore the contributions of the third president of the United States.

## Length of Lesson

3 45-minute periods  
3 or 4 homework assignment periods

## Instructional Video/Technology

*Great Americans #3*, Thomas Jefferson  
*Portraits of American Presidents #1*, Foundations of the Republic

Access to the World Wide Web and to word processing computers (can be done in either a computer lab or with teams of students working on a classroom computer)

(Extensions) CD-ROM, *The Way Things Work*

## Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- describe the contributions Thomas Jefferson made to the Revolutionary War, the establishment of the United States, higher education, and science (Va. SOLs History and Social Science 3.13, 4.3, 5.3)
- demonstrate an understanding of the issues leading to American Independence and the Revolu-

tionary War (Va. SOLs History and Social Science 3.11, 3.13, 4.3, 4.7, 5.3)

- synthesize information learned about Thomas Jefferson and the Revolutionary War into a persuasive business letter (Va. SOLs English 3.8, 3.10, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 5.7, 5.8)

## Materials

For the teacher:

- chart paper
- markers

For the student:

- 1 Jefferson web sheet for each student (attached)
- piece of notebook paper
- pencil

## Pre-Viewing Activities:

**1.** Put a list of words on the board (President of the United States, violin player, inventor, University of Virginia, Lewis and Clark, Louisiana purchase, Governor of Virginia, writer, and Declaration of Independence). Ask the students to look at the words and see if they can figure out what the words



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have in common. If they cannot, tell them to look for the connection while they are watching the videos.

2. On chart paper, create a KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) chart that shows what the students already know about Thomas Jefferson and questions they may have about him. Add to the learned section of your KWL chart as the students complete their Jefferson web sheets during the video.

### Focus for Viewing

Pass out the Jefferson web sheet. Explain to students that today's lesson will explore the many accomplishments of Jefferson. As they watch segments of *Great Americans #3* and *Portraits of American Presidents*, they should look for Jefferson's contributions to American life and list them on their web. Note to Teacher: Do not have students write while viewing. They can write during Pause points.

#### Time Cues

To synchronize your VCR with the time cues that are included with this lesson, zero/reset your time counter at the very beginning of the program, before the introduction and titles. Time cues are expressed as "minutes:seconds;" for example, 3:15 means three minutes and fifteen seconds.

### Viewing Activities

1. **Focus:** Ask the students: Are books important? Why do you think Thomas Jefferson's books might be important? Tell the students to listen for Jefferson's philosophy about books and whether it agrees with what they said. Zero the counter for *Great Americans #3* at the EBE logo. Fast Forward to the 2:03 mark where Jefferson and the reporter are standing at the window, and the reporter says the view is spectacular. **PLAY. STOP** at 2:42 mark after Jefferson says he believes that knowledge is power and the reporter agrees with him. Ask students what Jefferson's philosophy about books was?

Did it agree with the ideas they thought of before watching the video? What did Jefferson do with his books? Give them a minute to recall that he donated his books to start the Library of Congress. Have them enter this information in their Jefferson web.

#### NOTE TO THE TEACHER Pause vs. Stop

When using a video interactively with students, teachers need to decide when to use **PAUSE** and when to use **STOP**. **PAUSE** the video when the anticipated discussion or activity will take less than two minutes. **STOP** for longer periods. Pausing for too long at one time can cause video heads on the VCR to become clogged which may require cleaning to correct.

2. **Focus:** Ask students if they know of an important paper written by Thomas Jefferson. Tell the students to listen for the name of this paper. Ask them to listen for reasons why this paper was so important. **FAST FORWARD** to 3:38 after Jefferson says, "I was elected to go" (both men are seated). **RESUME** the video and **STOP** it at 5:12, after Jefferson, who is standing and facing the camera, says, "It was the first time such ideals were to be acted upon by an entire nation." Ask the students to tell you the name of the paper. Then ask them to tell you what was important about the Declaration of Independence. Give them time to write down the Declaration of Independence on their Jefferson web.

3. **Focus:** Thomas Jefferson used his talents as a writer to make many laws that still affect us today. During the American Revolution, he served as Governor of Virginia and he wrote three important laws. What kinds of laws do you think Thomas Jefferson wrote? What kinds of freedoms do you think he might have felt were important enough to be laws? (Allow time for discussion and brainstorming.) I want you to listen and see if you can remember the names of these laws. **RESUME** the video. **STOP** the video at 6:15 after Jefferson says, "I've even written an analysis of the Bible." Ask students to list the three laws (reform of land distribution, education system for all, Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom (separation of church and state). Can the

students tell which of these laws formed the basis for one of the laws in the Bill of Rights? (Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom) Give the students time to write down the laws in their Jefferson web.

**4. Focus:** After the Revolution, Thomas Jefferson served as a foreign ambassador to France, Secretary of State under George Washington, Vice President of the United States under John Adams, and then President of the United States. What do you think his most important accomplishment was? I want you to listen to this next segment and see if you can figure out what Jefferson felt his biggest accomplishment was as President and why. **FAST FORWARD** the video to 8:04 after Jefferson says, "I was pleased when my friends formed a second party, the Republicans, and asked me to be their candidate for president." **RESUME. STOP** the video at 8:58 after Jefferson says, "until it shall fill the entire continent." Ask the students to list Jefferson's big accomplishments (the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the country and the Lewis and Clark expedition). Have them write these accomplishments in their Jefferson web under "President."

**5. Focus:** Ask the students if they know what University was built by Thomas Jefferson? Ask them to list reasons they think he might have decided to build a University after he was President of the United States. Tell the students to listen for the name of the University and the reason Thomas Jefferson decided to build it during the next part of the video. **FAST FORWARD** the video to 9:57, after Jefferson finishes discussing slavery with the comment, "I continue to hope that future generations will find a way to end slavery," and before he begins, "In my old age . . ." **RESUME. STOP** the video at 10:36 after Jefferson talks about forming an aristocracy of talents. Ask the students to list the reasons Jefferson had for starting a university. Give them time to put the University of Virginia on their Jefferson webs.

**6.** Eject the *Great Americans* video tape and insert the *Portraits of American Presidents* video tape. Zero the counter for Portraits at the picture of Thomas Jefferson that does not have any sound. **FAST FORWARD** the video to 6:46 after the narrator says "Jefferson's second term has been called

### Memory Function

Most newer VCRs have a feature often referred to as "memory." If the memory function is "on," then when rewinding OR fast forwarding a tape, the tape will automatically stop at zero. If the counter is purposely reset or zeroed at a particular place in a program, the memory function can be used as a quick way to replay a segment or to cue to a different segment on the same tape.

the anticlimax of his political career."

**7. Focus:** What kind of hobbies do you have? What kinds of things do you think Thomas Jefferson might have liked to do in his free time? Ask the students to see if they can find at least four interests that Jefferson pursued after he retired from the presidency. **RESUME. PAUSE** the video at 7:16 after the narrator says "agriculture, architecture, and botany." Ask the students to list those interests (botany, agriculture, architecture, reading, writing) and record them on their Jefferson webs. **REWIND** the video to 6:46 and **REPLAY** the segment if the students had trouble hearing each of the four interests the first time.

**8. Focus:** In addition to being President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson was also an inventor. What kinds of things do you think he invented? Ask the students to see how many of Jefferson's inventions they can find in the final segment. **RESUME** the video. **STOP** the video at 8:05, after the Blue Ridge Mountains appear. Ask the students to list and record the inventions they spotted (seven day clock, double automatic doors, inlaid parquet floors, revolving pantry doors, dumbwaiter, and architect's desk). **REWIND** the video to 7:16, where they talk about him being an inventor, and **REPLAY** the segment so that the students can have a second look at all of the inventions that were shown. **STOP** the video just as the gardening segment begins. Have the students add to their lists of inventions.

### Post-Viewing Activities

**1.** Discuss the students' webs. Have them review their lists and star the three accomplishments they

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think were Jefferson's most important. During class discussion, have the students explain the reasons for their selection.

2. Share with the students the inscription on Jefferson's grave. When Thomas Jefferson died on July 4, 1826 at the age of 83, he asked that his three most important accomplishments be engraved on his tombstone. That tombstone reads, "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, and father of the University of Virginia." Tell them that these are the things Jefferson thought were the most important things he did in his lifetime. Ask them if they agree or disagree with Jefferson's assessment. As the students defend their positions, record their arguments on the board.

3. For homework, have the students select the one accomplishment of Jefferson's that they feel was most important. Ask them to write a paragraph (with at least 5 sentences) stating their reasons for selecting this accomplishment and giving examples of how it affects their lives today. This assignment will serve as a launching point for the web quest and will also allow students to compare their thoughts after viewing the videos and discussing Jefferson's accomplishments in class with their thoughts after completing their web quest research.

4. Have students complete a Web Quest. The Web Quest asks the students to pretend that they are Thomas Jefferson and that they have to convince the Congress to support the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, or the \$15 million purchase of the Louisiana Territory. Have students use the World Wide Web and texts to conduct their research. After completing their research, the students will write a business letter to their Congressional colleagues that outlines why the issue is important, what benefits the country will receive by adopting Jefferson's position, the potential risks of adopting Jefferson's position, and why the Congress should vote with Jefferson despite the risks.

### Assessment

The students' lists, homework, and answers to questioning throughout the video will serve as assessment. In addition, the letter created as a result of the Web Quest will evaluate student application of the key concepts.

### Action Plan

1. Have students visit Monticello for a hands-on examination of Jefferson's life and accomplishments. For more information, contact the Monticello Foundation at 804-984-9822.
2. Have students visit the Academical Village at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. The tour includes the archeological influences of Thomas Jefferson and his educational philosophies. For more information, contact the University of Virginia at 804-924-7969.
3. Have students select an issue in their own school or community that they feel is important. Ask them to brainstorm what they can do about that issue. Have students write a letter to the principal or to the local city or town governing body.

### Extensions

**Science:** Construct a pulley like the ones used in Jefferson's seven day clock and dumbwaiter. The principle of simple machines is illustrated with text and video in David Macaulay's CD-ROM, *The Way Things Work*, and in the video *Simple Machines*.

#### Social Studies and Writing:

- Have students compare and contrast the principles in the Declaration of Independence and the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedoms as a writing assignment.
- Have students create a newspaper dated July 5, 1824 that evaluates and critiques Jefferson's accomplishments during his lifetime.

**Reading:**

- Read stories about Thomas Jefferson, such as *A Picture Book of Thomas Jefferson* by David A. Adler or *Meet Thomas Jefferson* by Marvin Barrett. Students can perform Readers' Theater or role play scenes from the books.
- Read stories about other famous Virginians of the Revolutionary War era, such as George Washington, Patrick Henry, James Madison, and James Monroe. Compare and contrast their achievements with those of Thomas Jefferson.

**Math:** Have students calculate how much each acre of land in the Louisiana Purchase cost the United States government. The government purchased 830,000 acres for \$15 million. Have students compare the cost of land to land costs today.

**Internet Resources/Sites:**

<<http://www.monticello.org>>

The official Monticello home page features “a day in the life” of Thomas Jefferson and his slaves, as well as information to help you plan a visit to Monticello.

<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/glimpse/presidents/html/tj3.html>>

This page includes a biography of Thomas Jefferson, his first and second inaugural addresses, and selected quotations.

<<http://141.104.22.210/Div/Charlottesville/SCHOOLS/CLARK/>>

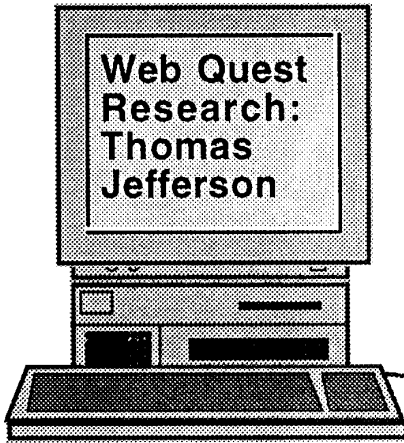
Click on projects to find a web quest about Thomas Jefferson with activities for your students to complete

<<http://www.monticello.org>>

The official Monticello home page

<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/glimpse/presidents/html/tj3.html>>

A biography of Thomas Jefferson and selected quotations

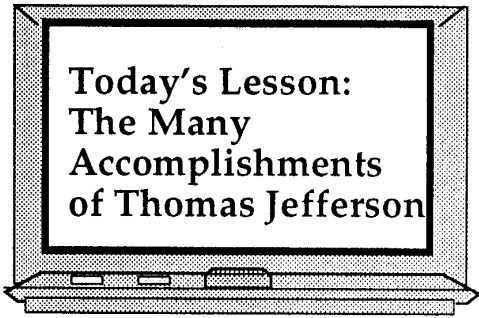


Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle the topic you have picked for your research: The Louisiana Purchase, the Declaration of Independence, or the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom.**

1. Which achievement of Thomas Jefferson's did you pick? Tell (in your own words) what your topic is and why you selected it.
  
2. Name at least three positive (good) things that this paper, law, or purchase gave to the United States.
  
3. Why was this achievement important to the United States? (use your research)?
  
4. Were there any risks (bad things) involved with deciding to write this paper, make this law, or purchase this land? What were the risks?
  
5. List the resources you used to complete this research. Write the title of books and their author. List all World Wide Web addresses you used.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

