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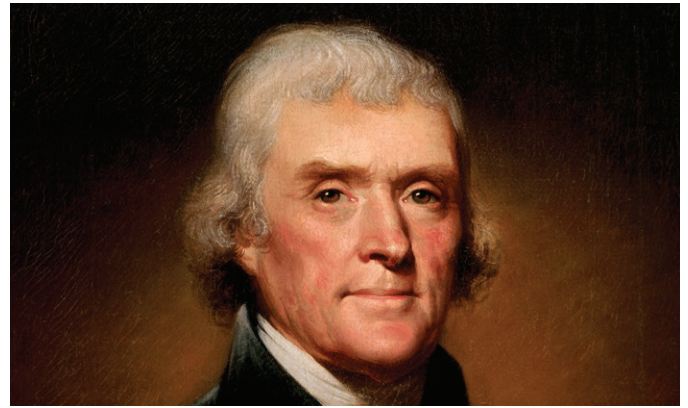
Thomas Jefferson: A Leader in Early America

Thomas Jefferson was the third president of the United States and one of the most important leaders in early American history. He was born on April 13, 1743, in Virginia. Jefferson grew up on a large farm and enjoyed reading, studying, and learning about science, government, and architecture.

Jefferson is best known for writing the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This document explained why the thirteen American colonies wanted to separate from Great Britain. Jefferson wrote that all people have rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. His words became an important part of American history.

Before becoming president, Jefferson served in several government positions. He was governor of Virginia, the first U.S. secretary of state, and vice president under President John Adams. In 1801, Jefferson became the third president of the United States. He served two terms, from 1801 to 1809.

One of Jefferson's greatest achievements as president was the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The United States bought a huge area of land from France for about \$15 million. This purchase nearly doubled the size of the country. Jefferson



then sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the new territory and learn about its land, plants, animals, and people.

Jefferson was also interested in education. After leaving the presidency, he helped create the University of Virginia. He designed several of its buildings and believed education was important for a strong country.

Jefferson's life also had serious contradictions. Although he wrote about liberty and equality, he enslaved people at his home, Monticello. Historians study this part of his life to better understand both his achievements and the injustices of his time.

Thomas Jefferson died on July 4, 1826, exactly fifty years after the Declaration of Independence was adopted. Today, people remember him for his writing, leadership, ideas about freedom, and role in shaping the early United States.

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Multiple Choice

1. Which president was Thomas Jefferson?
 - A. First president
 - B. Second president
 - C. Third president
 - D. Fourth president
2. What important document did Jefferson help write?
 - A. The Constitution
 - B. The Declaration of Independence
 - C. The Bill of Rights
 - D. The Gettysburg Address
3. What happened because of the Louisiana Purchase?
 - A. The United States became smaller.
 - B. The United States nearly doubled in size.
 - C. France became part of the United States.
 - D. Jefferson moved to France.
4. Who did Jefferson send to explore the new territory?
 - A. George Washington and John Adams
 - B. Benjamin Franklin and James Madison
 - C. Lewis and Clark
 - D. Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant
5. What university did Jefferson help create?
 - A. Harvard University
 - B. University of Virginia
 - C. Yale University
 - D. University of Pennsylvania

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Comprehension Questions

6. Name two government positions Jefferson held before becoming president.

7. Why was the Louisiana Purchase important to the United States?

8. What subjects interested Thomas Jefferson?

9. What contradiction do historians study about Jefferson's life and his ideas about freedom?

10. Write three facts you learned about Thomas Jefferson from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

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ANSWER KEY

Comprehension Questions

6. Name two government positions Jefferson held before becoming president.

Possible answers: Governor of Virginia, U.S. secretary of state, or vice president.

7. Why was the Louisiana Purchase important to the United States?

It added a huge amount of land and nearly doubled the size of the United States.

8. What subjects interested Thomas Jefferson?

Possible answers include science, government, architecture, reading, and education.

9. What contradiction do historians study about Jefferson's life and his ideas about freedom?

Jefferson wrote about liberty and equality but also enslaved people at Monticello.

10. Write three facts you learned about Thomas Jefferson from the passage.

Answers will vary but should include three accurate facts from the passage.