

## Setting the World Ablaze: George Washington 1732 – 1799



He was unanimously elected the first president of the United States of America. He served as president from April 30, 1789, until March 4, 1797. He served two terms as president. His vice president was John Adams, who was later voted the second President of the United States. George Washington was born on February 22, 1732, in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

Washington's father died when he was 11 years old. He has very little formal schooling, but taught himself to be an expert woodsman, surveyor, and mapmaker. Washington grew to be over 6 feet tall, which was very rare in Colonial times.

As a young man, Washington joined the Virginia militia. He and six men traveled 500 miles north to the shores of Lake Erie to deliver a message to the French. The French were ordered to stop settling land that was claimed by the British. This land dispute led to a battle in which Washington and 160 men lost to the French. This was the beginning of the French and Indian War when the British and the Colonists fought the French and some Indian tribes. After many heroic battles, Washington became a colonel and the leader of Virginia's militia. The British eventually won the French and Indian War.

In order to pay for the expensive French and Indian War, the British taxed the colonists (the Stamp Tax), angering them. In Boston, the Colonists revolted, dumping precious tea into the Boston Harbor, this is now called the Boston Tea Party. In 1775, Washington was chosen as the Commander in Chief of the Colonial Army. In 1776, the colonists declared their independence from the British. General led the Patriot troops who were poorly trained, barely paid, badly equipped, and outnumbered by the British. However, Washington, with some help from the French late in the war, defeated the British in 1781 and the Americans were now independent of the British.

George Washington married Martha Custis in 1759. Martha was a rich widow who had two children, Martha "Patsy" and John "Jacky". Their home in Virginia was called Mount Vernon. Martha and George did not have children of their own. Washington died on December 14, 1799, at his home. After his death, the nation's capital was moved from Philadelphia to a location on the border of Virginia and Maryland near Mt. Vernon, and was named Washington, District of Columbia (D.C.) in his honor.

Activites:

1. Before reading and studying about George Washington, work with a partner to discuss and start a KWHL chart. **K** stands for what you already **know** about Washington. **W** stands for **what** you want to learn. **H** stands for figuring out **how** you can learn more. **L** stands for what you **learn** as you read and complete learning activites. You will continue to go back and add to this chart throughout the unit.

2. George Washington Biography Quiz to be completed after reading the biography:

1. During what years was Washington President of the U.S?
2. How many terms did Washington serve as President of the U.S?
3. In which state was Washington born?
4. Washington fought the British for independence during which war?
5. When did this war start and when did it end?
6. What is Washington's home called?
7. Who did Washington marry?
8. How old was Washington when he died?

3. Complete a bio- cube on George Washington using the website:

[http://readwritethink.org/materials/bio\\_cube/](http://readwritethink.org/materials/bio_cube/)

4. Portrait Quest. Go to <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/maps/portraits/lansdowne.html> and view the famous Lansdowne portrait of George Washington. Answer and discuss the following questions with your partner.

- What objects do you see in this painting? If these objects all belong to Washington, what might they suggest about him?
- When was this portrait painted? At what point in his life do we see Washington? Does he appear to be young, middle aged, or old?
- Why is this portrait different from other portraits of Washington? What is Washington doing in the painting?

Make a chart of objects in this painting, and in the second column, brainstorm how the objects relate to the man in the painting.

5. Create a portrait of your partner. Include props, or images, objects, etc. that help to tell viewers something about the subject.

## Setting the World Ablaze: John Adams 1735 – 1826



John Adams was born on October 30, 1735 in Braintree Massachusetts to John and Susanna Boylston Adams. A Harvard educated lawyer, he early became identified with the patriot cause; a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congress, he led in the movement for independence. He was the second president of the United States of America, serving from 1797 to 1801.

In 1764 he began his 54 year marriage with Abigail Smith. She was wise, learned, strong willed, passionate and patriotic. Together they had five children; Abigail, John Quincy, Susanna, Charles, and Thomas. Like Adams, Abigail played a major role in the American Revolution.

During the Revolutionary War John Adams served in France and Holland in diplomatic roles, and helped negotiate the treaty of peace. From 1785 to 1788 he was minister to the Court of St. James's, returning to be elected Vice President under George Washington. Adams' two terms as Vice President were frustrating experiences for a man of his vigor, intellect, and vanity. He complained to his wife Abigail, "My country has in its wisdom for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived."

When Adams became president, the war between the French and British was causing great difficulties for the United States. The major crisis he faced arose from the strained relations with revolutionary France. When, in the so-called XYZ Affair (1797 – 98), American peace commissioners returned from Paris with lurid stories of deceit and bribery, Adams called for an assertion of national pride, built up by the armed forces, and even accepted the Alien and Sedition Acts as emergency national security measures. Adams did not want to go to war. Although he was opposed by men such as Thomas Jefferson, he continued his non violent negotiations, defused the crisis and made an agreement with France. Because of his lack of desire to go to war he was forced out of office after one term. Adams was a progressive thinker, an honest and moral man who personified the best of what the nation could hope of its citizens and leaders. After a lifetime of fighting for independence, he died on July 4, 1826, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Activities:

1. Work with a partner to draw and illustrate the following vocabulary words/terms found in John Adams' biography. You may use a dictionary and context clues to help you find the best meaning of the words in relation to John Adams.

- Patriotic Cause
- Independence
- Diplomatic
- Vigor
- Contrived
- Deceit

How do each of these words relate John Adams?

2. Go to <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/ja2/about/bio/adamsxx.htm> and choose one or more of the following links to read

- Childhood
- Education and Early Career
- Lawyer
- Early Patriot
- The Boston Massacre
- Farewell to Politics
- Back into the Fray

Then write a Biography Poem about John Adams

Line One: First name

Line Two: 3 adjectives to describe him

Line Three: Important relationship (father to, husband of...)

Line Four: 3 feelings he experienced

Line Five: 3 things he feared

Line Six: Accomplishments

Line Seven: His residence

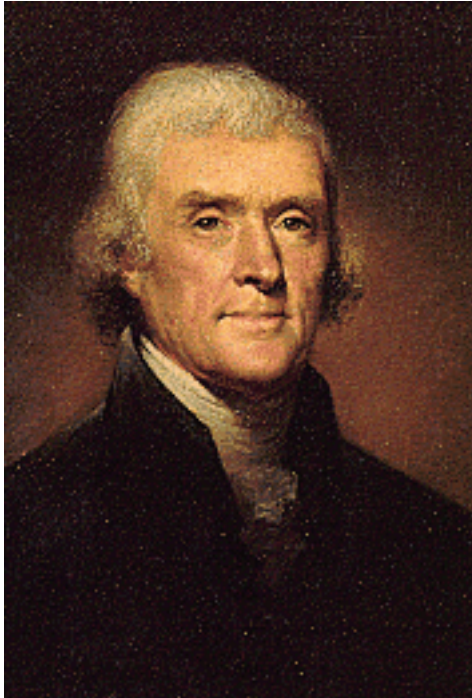
Line Eight: Last name

3. John Adams was a very intelligent and reflective man who always kept a journal. His government jobs also left him away from home a lot, he kept in touch with his family by writing letters. Do some research on Abigail Adams, and then write her a letter as though you were John Adams.

4. Go to <http://www.thelizlibrary.org/suffrage/abigail.htm> and read the letters between Abigail Adams and John Adams. Choose one paragraph from one of the letters to rewrite. Make sure you rephrase the main idea, look up words you don't know, and keep the mood of the letter intact.

5. Look up the Alien and Sedition Acts on Grolier online and explain, in a paragraph what they were/are.

## Setting the World Ablaze: Thomas Jefferson 1743-1826



Thomas Jefferson was born on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1743 to Jane Randolph, who was of very high social standing, and Peter Jefferson, a planter, land owner and a surveyor, in Albemarle County, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson served as the wartime Governor of Virginia, first United States Secretary of State, second Vice President and was the third president of the United States. He was the principle author of the Declaration of Independence and an influential founding father for his promotion of the ideals of republicanism in the United States. He was a powerful advocate of liberty. He and his wife, Martha Wayles Skelton, and their children lived in Monticello, a mansion that Jefferson designed on his own.

Freckled and sandy-haired, rather tall and awkward, Jefferson was eloquent as a correspondent, but he was not a very good public speaker. In the Virginia House of Burgesses and the Continental Congress, he contributed his pen rather than his voice to the patriot cause. As the “silent” member” of the congress, Jefferson, at the age of 33, drafted the Declaration of Independence. In the following years he labored to make its words a reality in Virginia. Most notably, he wrote a bill establishing religious freedom, enacted in 1786. Jefferson favored states’ rights and a strictly limited federal government and separation of church and state. His work and beliefs soon made him the leader of the Republicans, who sympathized with the revolutionary cause in France.

Jefferson served two terms as president. During his presidency he slashed Army and Navy expenditures, cut the budget, eliminated the tax on whiskey, reduced the national debt by one third, and acquired the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon. He became unpopular when an embargo upon American shipping worked badly and retired to Monticello. A French nobleman observed that he had placed his house and his mind “on an elevated situation, from which he might contemplate the universe.” Jefferson died on July 4, 1826.

Activities:

1. Go to <http://www.pbs.org/jefferson/enlight/sstips1.htm> and compare and contrast Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence to George Mason's Declaration of Rights and answer the questions on the bottom of the webpage:
  - What differences do you notice among these nearly parallel expressions about political beliefs?
  - What do these differences tell you about Jefferson's mind and character?
  - To what extent does Jefferson tell us not what we are as Americans but what we can be?
2. Complete a bio-cube on Thomas Jefferson using the website:  
[http://readwritethink.org/materials/bio\\_cube/](http://readwritethink.org/materials/bio_cube/)
3. Go to [http://www.pbs.org/jefferson/archives/documents/frame\\_ih198036.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jefferson/archives/documents/frame_ih198036.htm) to look at a photograph of the "Original Rough Draught" of the Declaration of Independence and read the typed version with a partner. After you are finished reading and discussing this document, choose one or more important sentences/ideas to put into your own words and explain what it means to you and why you feel that it is important.
4. Visit Monticello! Go to <http://www.monticello.org/> and click on Monticello Explorer: An in-depth, multimedia look at Monticello with 3-D models of the house, narrated tours, special animations, and an interactive map.
5. Compare and contrast the three founding fathers that we have studied; George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. Work with a partner to complete a three circle Venn Diagram.