

Matewan Pk-8

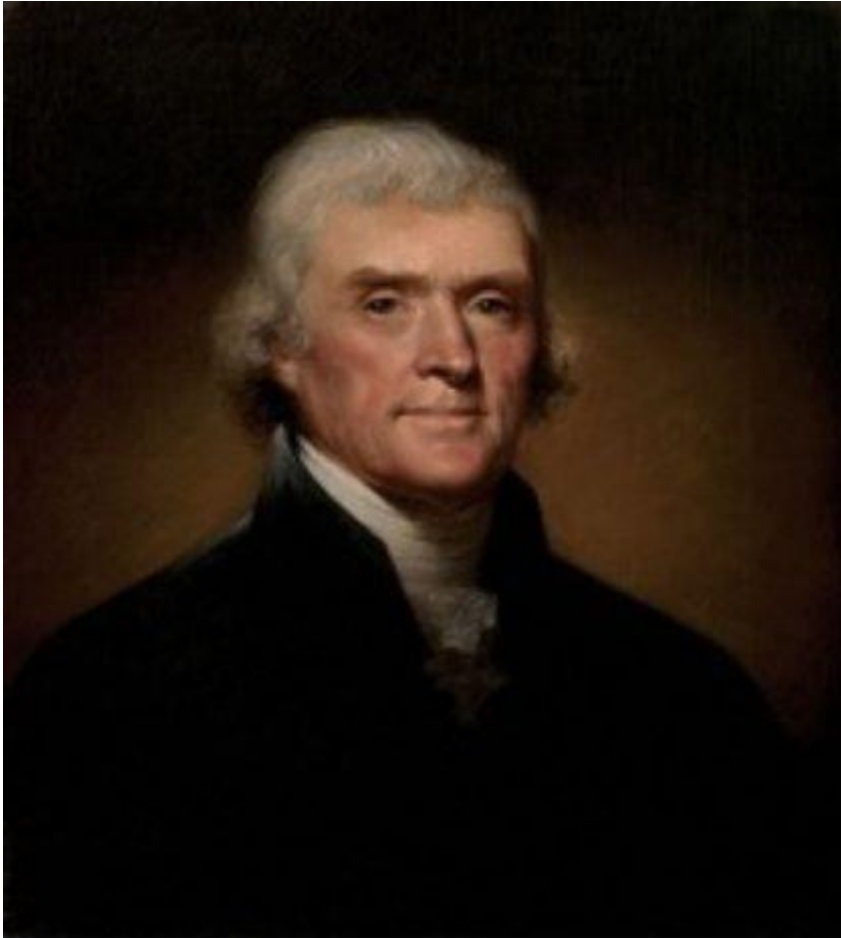
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Grade Level: **4th Grade** Content Area: **Social Studies**

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Thomas Jefferson was the third President of the United States. His tombstone reads, “Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom, & Father of the University of Virginia.” Notice anything odd about this inscription? There is no mention of him being President. This is because Jefferson did not see his presidency as one of his greater accomplishments.

Politics was only one of Jefferson’s many interests. His peers pressured him to run for office. They respected Jefferson for his practical thinking and breadth of knowledge. He was a patron of the arts, an architect, a mathematician, an inventor, and a family man. Jefferson’s peers also admired his genius for writing and his ideals.

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Jefferson strongly believed in people's ability to manage their own affairs. He wanted to keep government small and out of the public's life as much as possible. This ideal of self-government became known as Jeffersonian Democracy. Jefferson worked tirelessly for freedom of speech, press, religion, and other civil liberties. He pushed hard for the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution.

Jefferson's ideals were shaped by his boyhood. He was born on April 13, 1743 on his family's estate in Virginia. He was only 14 when his father died. At 16 he entered the College of William and Mary in nearby Williamsburg. He would later say that his studies and the cultured people he met during college greatly stimulated his mind. During these years, he also trained to be a lawyer. He listened to patriots like Patrick Henry protest Britain's unfair treatment of and taxes on the colonists and formed many of his ideas about people's "natural rights."

Many people remember Jefferson for writing the Declaration of Independence, but he made a lot other contributions to American society as well. Another great achievement came during his two terms as President. The U.S. purchased a vast region of land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains from France. This deal, known as the Louisiana Purchase, nearly doubled the size of the nation. In his later years, Jefferson designed the Virginia Capitol and his famous home, Monticello. He founded the prestigious University of Virginia. He also sold his library, 6,400 volumes in all, to Congress. In short, he began the Library of Congress. Jefferson died on July 4, 1826. His spirit and ideals impact and inspire us to this day.

Today's Lesson:

1. What significant detail is left off Jefferson's tombstone?

- A. his presidency
- B. his part in creating the University of Virginia
- C. his mother's name
- D. his authorship of the Declaration of Independence

2. The fourth paragraph of the passage is about

- A. how Jefferson's father died when Jefferson was 14.

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- B. how Jefferson listened to patriotic speeches.
- C. how Jefferson attended the College of William and Mary.
- D. how Jefferson's ideals were shaped by his boyhood experiences.

3. Which of the following words best describes Jefferson's interests?

- A. political
- B. unusual
- C. numerous
- D. narrow

4. Based on the passage, the word *stimulated* means

- A. distracted.
- B. measured.
- C. inspired.
- D. deadened.

5. According to the passage, what is one reason Jefferson became President?

- A. His peers pressured him to try to become President.

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- B. He needed the money in order to keep living well.
- C. He thought it would help him build the University of Virginia.
- D. He had a dream of buying Louisiana.

7. What were some of the things Jefferson did in addition to being a politician?

(written answer)