

# THOMAS JEFFERSON

## A P R E S I D E N T ' S V I S I O N

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND FURTHER RESOURCES

#### POSTER PROJECT

Ask students what they would change if they could redesign the poster. Pose questions such as: What images of Jefferson would you choose? What programs or legislation passed during Jefferson's administration would you represent? What images or primary sources would you choose to reflect the issues?

Divide students into teams and have each develop a new poster on Jefferson to be included in the *President's Vision* series. Use the class textbook, the President's Vision website, and other outside sources to find images and primary sources to create the new poster.

#### DEBATE

Divide the class into two groups and have opposing sides develop arguments in anticipation of a debate over the following statement:

“President Jefferson's vision successfully transformed the nation and addressed the country's most pressing problems.”

One side should research and argue the affirmative. The other side should research and argue the negative. In addition to the primary sources and items on the poster, students should use the class textbook and outside resources to prepare their arguments.

#### CURATING A MUSEUM EXHIBITION

In groups of four or five, students should prepare a museum exhibition using the primary sources available on the *President's Vision* website and on the poster.

The exhibition should focus on Jefferson's time in office. It should examine the ways in which his ideas and values influenced the nation's development, using selected quotes from speeches, letters, and other sources, as well as images.

Groups can present their exhibitions as PowerPoint presentations or by printing images and quotations to create physical exhibitions.

#### ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS

- Looking back at the images and text on the Jefferson poster and the additional primary source documents on the *President's Vision* website, write a short essay that explains Jefferson's presidential vision and how it sought to address the problems the nation faced when he became president.
- Consider Jefferson's personal history as well as the decades during which he matured and established his political career. Name at least three personal and/or societal factors that shaped the development of his presidential vision. Explain your answer.
- Using your textbook, the web, and the *President's Vision* website, find additional images of President Jefferson. Compare the images you find with the images featured on the poster. What new information do these images reveal about Jefferson?

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For related educational resources, visit [www.presidentsvision.org](http://www.presidentsvision.org)



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- Identify an issue or an event significant to Jefferson's presidency that you feel should have been addressed in the poster but is not. Why should this issue or event have been included on a poster addressing Jefferson's presidential vision? Use your textbook, the web, and the *President's Vision* website to find an image that best represents this particular issue or event. Provide a brief description of the image and explain why you chose this particular image.
- Using your textbook and the web as a resource, identify another quotation from Jefferson that you feel best represents his presidential vision. Explain your choice.
- Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal." To what extent did he work to fulfill this ideal during his term as president? To what extent was his status as a slaveholder consistent with this assertion when made by a man of his era?
- Jefferson was renowned as a scholar and scientist. The Lewis and Clark expedition was a reflection of his intellectual interests and ambitions for the nation. Is the advancement of science and exploration an appropriate task for government to sponsor and fund? Explain your answer.
- Thomas Jefferson is remembered as a great idealist, yet his success in political office required him to be a pragmatic leader as well. What policies or accomplishments of his presidency should be attributed to his idealism? What policies or accomplishments of his presidency should be attributed to his pragmatism?
- During the 1790s, Thomas Jefferson argued that the Constitution should be read strictly and that those in power should not incorporate "implied powers" in their application of the document. Yet, as president, he worked with Congress to double the size of the nation by acquiring the Louisiana Purchase territory from France. Since the Constitution neither granted nor denied the power to annex territory, was Jefferson violating his principles when he signed the Louisiana Purchase treaty?
- As an advocate of westward expansion, Jefferson was committed to a policy that entailed the removal of Native American tribes from their homelands. Was he right to support expansion? Should he have done more to preserve Native Americans' rights?
- Rather than declare war on Great Britain in 1807, President Jefferson imposed an economic embargo on international trade. Did he have the constitutional authority to do so? Was this an effective defense policy in the context of the time?

### FURTHER RESOURCES

- Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln: Three Great Presidents Primary Source Set:  
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/presidents/>
- The Library of Congress American Memory site on Jefferson's papers:  
[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson\\_papers/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/)

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