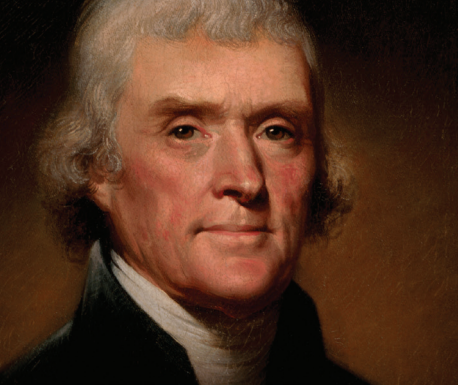




Happy Birthday, T.J.!



Mini Fact:

Thomas Jefferson served as president from 1801 to 1809.

The United States' third president, Thomas Jefferson, was born on April 13, 1743 — 275 years ago! Jefferson was more than just a president. His ideas and actions were important to the formation of our country.

This week, The Mini Page learns more about this fascinating Founding Father.

As a boy

Thomas was born in the colony of Virginia at his family's home, Shadwell. He was the third-oldest of 10 children. When Thomas was just 2 years old, his father's friend William Randolph died. Thomas' father was asked to take care of Randolph's children, so the family moved to Randolph's plantation, Tuckahoe. They lived at Tuckahoe for seven years.

Thomas' family was wealthy. His father had a library full of books, and his parents taught their children to enjoy music and dance. Thomas played the violin. But when he got tired of playing, he read his father's books.

At 9 years old, Thomas went to live with a teacher, Rev. William Douglas, who taught him French, Latin and Greek. Thomas came to believe that education was more important than money or land.

Off to college

Thomas left home for the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, when he was 17. He loved living in the Colonial capital of Virginia, where he gambled, danced and watched politics unfold. He graduated after just two years at college and went on to

study law with professor George Wythe.

During that time, Thomas was invited to dinners and other events where educated, curious people met and talked about science, literature and politics. Jefferson hosted similar gatherings throughout his life, even during his time in the White House.

Entering politics

Jefferson was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1769. This group was elected to make laws for the Colony. Although Jefferson owned and inherited slaves, he used his public office to try to **reform**, or change, slavery. In 1769, he proposed a law that would allow slave owners to free their servants. But his bill never became law.

Other interests

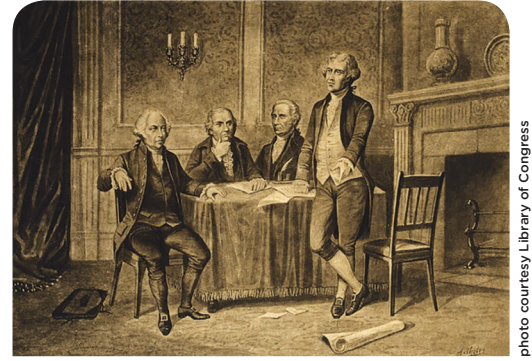
Thomas Jefferson showed great interest in **architecture**, or the art and science of designing and building structures. He was also fond of gadgets, and he invented new ways to do things throughout his life.



Thomas Jefferson's lap desk

photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution

For example, Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence on a lap desk that he designed and had built. He linked his parlor doors with chains under the floor so that when one opened, the other would too.



Jefferson, right, with (left to right) John Adams, Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton during the First Continental Congress in 1774.

photo courtesy Library of Congress

His greatest work

On April 19, 1775, the war between British troops and American Colonists began in Massachusetts. Two months later, Thomas Jefferson left his home, Monticello, and went to Philadelphia to serve in the Second Continental Congress, where statesmen talked about what to do about the war.

Jefferson was not a speaker like Patrick Henry, but he listened and wrote well. In June 1776, the Congress decided a declaration of independence from Britain should be written. John Adams declared that Jefferson should do it.

On July 4, 1776, the Congress approved Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, and the United States became a country.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPJefferson

At the library:

- "Thomas Jefferson: President and Philosopher" by Jon Meacham
- "Thomas Jefferson: The 3rd President" by Josh Gregory

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Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of Thomas Jefferson are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



ARCHITECTURE,	T N E V N I S S E R G N O C H
BIRTHDAY, BOOKS,	S K O O B N O S R E F F E J U
COLLEGE, CONGRESS,	X D I N D E P E N D E N C E E
DECLARATION, GADGETS,	D E C L A R A T I O N C D T G
INDEPENDENCE, INVENT,	R O P O L I T I C S X G N H E
JEFFERSON, LAW, MUSIC,	E R U T C E T I H C R A U O L
POLITICS, PRESIDENT,	F W A L P R E S I D E N T M L
REFORM, SLAVES,	O O K A I N I G R I V W W A O
THOMAS, VIRGINIA.	R C I S U M Z G A D G E T S C
	M S L A V E S B I R T H D A Y

Cook's Corner

Pecan Pie

You'll need:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 1 cup dark corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 unbaked pie shell



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Place sugar, butter, corn syrup and vanilla in a large bowl. Mix well.
2. Stir in eggs. Mix well. Add pecans and mix well.
3. Pour into an unbaked pie shell.
4. Bake in a preheated, 375-degree oven for 1 hour or until firm.
5. After pie cools, slice and serve. Serves 6.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. math with a plus sign (8) _____
2. once, and then again (5) _____
3. doing things (4) _____
4. line of mountains (5) _____
5. moves on hands and knees (6) _____
6. basketball star James (6) _____
7. plugged in (8) _____

LEB	IT	CE	WLS
SY	DGE	ADD	TWI
RI	RIC	RON	EL
ION	ECT	CRA	BU

Answers: addition, twice, busy, ridge, crawls, Lebron, electric.

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Mini Jokes



Martha: What was Thomas Jefferson's favorite dessert?

Jane: Monti-jello!

Eco Note



Farmers, beekeepers and scientists are worried about bees. Bees are disappearing around the world. Researchers think several factors may be contributing: Chemicals meant to kill other insects that eat crops could accidentally harm the bees. Development of wild areas, abandoned farms, growing crops without leaving habitat for wildlife, and growing gardens with flowers that are not friendly to pollinators contribute to poor nutrition for bees, making them less able to fend off diseases.

adapted from climatekids.nasa.gov

For later:

Look in your newspaper for events honoring Thomas Jefferson's 275th birthday.

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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