



Name _____

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July 4, 1826

The Declaration of Independence was made public on July 4, 1776. Two very important people helped create that document. Their names are Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Jefferson wrote the first draft. Members of the committee, including John Adams, made changes to it. Then the Continental Congress changed it some more. At last, it was ready. It was read aloud on the steps of Independence Hall. The document lists the reasons why the colonists wanted to break free of Great Britain.

John Adams went on to serve as a **diplomat** to foreign countries. He was also vice president under George Washington. Then he became the second president of the United States. Jefferson also served as a diplomat to France.

He was the governor of Virginia. He was also secretary of state under Washington and vice president under Adams. Then he became the third president of the United States.

Adams and Jefferson became political opponents during their presidential years. After retiring from public life, they restored their friendship. Both fell ill in 1826. When the 93-year-old Adams died on July 4, 1826, his last words were: "Thomas Jefferson survives." He didn't know that five hours earlier, the 83-year-old Jefferson had passed away. It seems fitting that two of the great heroes of American freedom died hours apart on the fiftieth anniversary of the United States' birth.

Check Your Understanding

1. From the context of the passage, what is the meaning of **diplomat**?
 - a. a political leader
 - b. a representative to a foreign country
 - c. a president
 - d. a businessman
2. Which job did Adams and Jefferson *not* have in common?
 - a. diplomat to foreign countries
 - b. president of the United States
 - c. vice president of the United States
 - d. governor of Virginia
3. You can infer that during their presidencies, Adams and Jefferson
 - a. were less friendly and opposed each other's policies.
 - b. fought in duels.
 - c. regretted the Declaration of Independence.
 - d. paid no attention to each other's opinions.
4. Which event occurred third?
 - a. Adams made changes to the Declaration of Independence.
 - b. Jefferson wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence.
 - c. The Continental Congress made changes to the Declaration of Independence.
 - d. The Declaration of Independence was publicly proclaimed.

