Name_____

Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence, was born in 1743. Jefferson was born in the South into one of Virginia's most prominent families. Always an avid learner, Jefferson was determined to receive a top-notch education. He attended William and Mary, a college in Williamsburg, Virginia, and went on to study law.

Jefferson would later become involved in politics. He felt strongly that the American colonies should seek independence from Great Britain. His beliefs and eloquence with words would help lead him to his most significant written work: the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson was actually part of a five-person committee, but the other men chose Jefferson to actually write the first draft. Jefferson's work was a document that would eloquently explain the importance of freedom and equality. The Declaration of Independence also listed the reasons the colonies wanted to be free.

In 1803, while president, Jefferson purchased land that tremendously increased the size of the United States. This purchase, known as the Louisiana Purchase, vastly increased the new country's size.

Jefferson's death was a sad time for the nation. He died in his home, Monticello, on July 4, 1826. Ironically, this date was also the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Text Questions

1. Which statement is a fact about the story?
   a. Without Thomas Jefferson's ideals, the Declaration of Independence could have never been written.
   b. Thomas Jefferson was the author of the Declaration of Independence.
   c. The Declaration of Independence is the most eloquently written document in all of American history.
   d. Thomas Jefferson is one of the greatest presidents in American history.
2. What was one purpose of the Declaration of Independence?
   a. to help boost Thomas Jefferson's political career
   b. to free all slaves living in the American colonies
   c. to explain the reasons Americans felt they were being taxed unfairly by Great Britain
   d. to list reasons and explain why the American colonies felt they should be free from Great Britain's rule
3. What is Monticello?
   a. the first draft of the Declaration of Independence
   b. the home of Thomas Jefferson
   c. the name of Thomas Jefferson's first son
   d. a type of violin
4. What is the main idea of this text?
   a. to explain the importance of the Declaration of Independence
   b. to explain the importance of the Louisiana Purchase
   c. to give information about Thomas Jefferson's education
   d. to give information about the importance of Thomas Jefferson to America's history
5. Based on the text, which statement would most likely be true about Jefferson?
   a. A good education was most important to Jefferson.
   b. Jefferson believed all men should reside in Virginia.
   c. One of Jefferson's finest achievements is the Declaration of Independence.
   d. Jefferson assumed he would die on Independence Day.

LIVEWORKSHEETS