

# Thomas Jefferson Timeline

## General

### Grade Level

Middle School

### Author Info

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Summer Creek Middle School

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### Type of Lesson

Cooperative Learning

### Duration

120 minutes including assessment

### Interdisciplinary Connections

The Jefferson Timeline could easily fit into an art or English class if students were asked to do further analysis and interpretation of the piece.

## Objectives

### Overview

The Jefferson Timeline involves students creating a working timeline using the mural by William Woodward, entitled "The Life of Thomas Jefferson", which appears at the Monticello Visitor's Center. They would analyze the mural by using a "windowpane" strategy in which student groups would collaborate on finding details in the painting. They would then research these historical details from the painting so that they could place them in correct chronological order on the timeline.

## Prior Knowledge

It would be helpful to have an organizational strategy for analyzing the painting such as OPTIC or even a factand inference dialectical journal. You will find links to explain these strategies below.

### Lighthouse Initiative for Texas Classrooms

[http://www.tealighthouse.org/ela/classroom\\_strategies/strategies.php](http://www.tealighthouse.org/ela/classroom_strategies/strategies.php)

## State Standards

The following standards are a part of the Common Core Standards for Social Studies and can be found at the link below.

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/history-social-studies/grades-6-8/>

### The student will:

**Establish temporal order in constructing their [students'] own historical narratives:** working forward from some beginning through its development, to some end or outcome; working backward from some issue, problem, or event to explain its origins and its development over time.

**Interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines** by designating appropriate equidistant intervals of time and recording events according to the temporal order in which they occurred.

**Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas,** values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.

1. **Consider multiple perspectives** of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears.
2. **Analyze cause-and-effect relationships** bearing in mind **multiple causation** including (a) **the importance of the individual** in history; (b) **the influence of ideas**, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental and the irrational.
3. **Hypothesize the influence of the past**, including both the limitations and opportunities made possible by past decisions.

## Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Students will create a timeline of the major events of Thomas Jefferson's life by analyzing and evaluating

a mural entitled, "The Life of Thomas Jefferson".

## Technology Connections/outcomes

The Jefferson Timeline could be connected to discussions of Westward Expansion and Sectionalism.

## Additional Learning Outcomes

Students will analyze a piece of art to create a timeline. They will do research on an event from the timeline and will present their findings to the class, as well as, write a critical assessment of Jefferson's importance in U.S. history.

## Procedures

### 1. 10 minutes

Ask students to participate in a think-pair-share about which events they would put on a timeline of their own lives. From what you have already learned about Thomas Jefferson from previous years, what are the top three events of his life? What makes an event on your timeline important? Is it different for Thomas Jefferson? Why or why not?

### 2. 5 minutes

Students will then engage in a whole class discussion about Thomas Jefferson's earliest memory which was of being carried on a pillow by a slave on horseback from Shadwell to Tuckahoe plantation, both of which are in Virginia. A secondary text that describes the story is found below:

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/302264/Thomas-Jefferson>

Using a graphic organizer on the board, ask students to help you diagram what that story tells us about Jefferson's early life.

### 3. 30 minutes

a. Explain to students that they are going to be working in small groups to analyze a mural of Thomas Jefferson's life.

#### William Woodward Renowned Muralist

[http://williamwoodward.com/William\\_Woodward/Jefferson.html](http://williamwoodward.com/William_Woodward/Jefferson.html)

b. Give each group a different section of the mural to analyze. I am going to ask my students to do a fact and inference dialectical journal entry, but you may use any kind of visual analysis sheet you desire. The fact and inference dialectical journal involves dividing their notebook paper into two columns with four lines left at the bottom for a summary. On the left, they will number and list facts or things that they can clearly see in the painting, such as Native Americans. They will then use the right side of the paper for making inferences, or educated guesses, about what those facts tell us about the events of Thomas Jefferson's life.

c. When they are finished with their section, ask the groups to come back together for a class discussion of what events are depicted in the mural.

d. Students will write the events depicted in their portion of the mural in the summary. Ask them to bring this back with them tomorrow.

#### 4. *45 minutes*

a. Ask students to take out their dialectical journals or graphic organizers from the previous day.

b. Show students the butcher paper timeline at the front of the room which begins in 1740 and ends in 1830. Place Jefferson's birth (1743) and death (1826) on the timeline. Explain to the students that it will be their responsibility to fill in the years between with the events of Thomas Jefferson's life.

c. Each group will research the events from yesterday's mural, so that they can not only place them on the timeline, but can write about and describe them to the class. Students should put their findings on copy paper, the date or dates on one side, and the information or pictures about the event on the other. **Because each class's description of these events is going to be compiled in a stapled book, remind students that they will be writing head to toe so that the printing is right side up when they turn the page.**

d. To complete the research, I recommend using the computer lab or a set of books from the library on Thomas Jefferson.

## Materials

### Materials Needed

Students will need butcher paper, copy paper and markers.

## Summary of Public Service

[after 2 Sep. 1800]

I have sometimes asked myself whether my country is the better for my having lived at all? I do not know that it is. I have been the instrument of doing the following things; but they would have been done by others; some of them perhaps a little later.

The [Rivanna river](#) had never been used for navigation. scarcely an empty canoe had ever passed down it. soon after I came of age, I examined it's obstructions, set on foot a subscription for removing them, got an act of assembly past & the thing effected, so as to be used completely & fully for carrying down all our pro[duce.]

1776. ???The declaration of independance

???I proposed the [demolition of the church establishment](#), and the freedom of religion. it could only be done by degrees. towit 1776. c. 2. exempted dissenters from contributions to the church & left the church clergy to be supported by voluntary contributions of their own sect. continued

1776. from year to year & made perpetual 1779. c. 36. I prepared the act for religious freedom in 1777. as part of the revisal, which was not reported [123 ] to the assembly till 1779. and that particular law not passed till 1785. and then 1 by the efforts of mr Madison.

1776. ???c. 2. the act putting an [end to entails](#).

1778. ???c. 1. the [act prohibiting the importation of slaves](#).

1779. ???c. 55. the [act concerning citizens](#) & establishing the natural right of man to expatriate himself at will.

???the act changing the course of descent and [giving the inheritance to all the children](#) &c equally I drew, as part of the revisal

???the act for [apportioning crimes & punishments](#), part of the same work, I drew. when proposed to the legislature by mr Madison in 17852 it failed by a single vote. G. K. Taylor afterwards in 17963 proposed the same subject, made & printed a long speech from which any person would suppose his propson was original4 & that the thing had never been mentd. before: for he takes care not to glance at what had been done before5 and he drew his bill over again, carefully avoiding the adoption of any6 part of the diction of mine. yet the text of mine had been studiously drawn in the technical terms of the law, so as to give no occasion for new questions by new expressions.7 when I drew m[in]e public labor was thought the best punishment to be substituted for death. but while I was in France I heard of a society in England who had successfully introdu[ced] solitary confinement, and saw the drawing of a prison at Lyons in France formed on the idea of solitary confinement.8 and being applied to by the Govr. of Virginia for a plan of a Capitol a[nd] prison, I sent them the Lyons plan, accompanying it with a drawing on a smaller scale better adapted to their use. this was in June 1786.9 mr Taylor very judiciously adopted this idea (which had now been acted on in Philadelphia, probably from the English model) & substituted labor in confinement to the public labour proposed by the commee of revisal; which themselves would have done10 had they been to act on the subject again. the public mind was ripe for this in 179611 when mr Taylor proposed it, and ripened chiefly by the experiment in Philada, whereas in 1785 when it had been before proposed to our assembly they were not quite ripe for it.

In 1789. & 1790. I had a great number of [olive plants](#) of the best kind sent from Marseilles to Charleston for S. Carola & Georgia. they were planted & are flourishing: & though not yet multiplied, they will be the germ of that culture in those states.

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[124 ]

In 1790. I got a cask of the *heavy*12 *upland* rice from the river Denbigh in Africa, about Lat. 9 H. 30' North, which I sent to Charleston, in hopes it might supercede the culture of the wet rice which renders S. Carola & Georgia so pestilential through the summer. it was divided, & a part sent to Georgia. I know not whether it has been attended to in S. Carola; but it has spread in the upper parts of Georgia so as to have become almost general, & is highly prized. perhaps it may answer in Tennessee & Kentucky. the

greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add an useful plant to it's culture; especially a bread grain. next in value to bread is oil.

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Whether the act [for the more general diffusion of knowlege](#) will ever be carried into complete effect, I know not. It was recd by the legislature with great enthusiasm at first. and a small effort was made in 1796. by the act to establish public schools, to carry a part of it into effect, viz. that for the establishmt of free English schools. but the option given to the courts has defeated the intention of the act.[13](#)

I have been drawn to this subject by a publication in [Pleasant's paper](#) of Sep. 2. 1800. wherein are some inaccuracies. viz. my father gave me an education in the languages, which was not quite compleat when he died. after compleating it, I went to the Coll. of W. & M—the Summary view was written[14](#) but not publ'd by me; but by some members of the convention. I was sick on the road.—I married Jan. 1. 1772. mrs Jefferson died in 1782.—I did not draw the Declaration of rights of Virginia. I believe George Mason drew it. I was absent at Congress. I drew a scheme of a constitution which arrived after the Convention had nearly finished theirs. they adopted the preamble of mine, & some new principles.—the writer speaks of one false return & the suppression of another preventing my being declared President. I know not on what this is founded. the return of 2. electors on the republican ticket of Pensva was delayed artfully so that two from the Federal ticket, who were *in truth* not elected at all, gave their votes. one of these however voted for me, so that I lost but one vote by the manœuvre. this made an apparent difference of 2. viz. 68. & 71. when the real vote was 69. & 70. so that mr Adams was duly elected by a majority of a single voice. these are the inaccuracies I note in that publicn.

MS (DLC: TJ Papers, 219:39161); undated; entirely in TJ's hand; frayed margin.

For TJ's efforts to make the [Rivanna river](#) navigable, including the organization of a subscription that raised £200, the appointment of trustees, and the passage of an act by the Virginia Assembly in 1765, see Vol. 1:87–8. [Demolition of \[125 \] the church establishment](#): the text of the bill for establishing religious freedom and its passage by the Virginia Assembly are considered in Vol. 2:545–53. For Madison's role in the passage of this act as part of the revisal of Virginia laws in 1785–86, see Madison, *Papers*, 8:401–2n. TJ's amendment to the “Bill to Enable Tenants in Fee Tail to Convey Their Lands in Fee Simple” resulted in the [end to entails](#) in Virginia and has been characterized as the first of his “great reform bills,” which TJ hoped would change an aristocracy of wealth into an “aristocracy of virtue and talent” (Vol. 1:560–2). For the debate over TJ's role in the authorship and passage of the [act prohibiting the importation of slaves](#), see Vol. 2:23–4n. The [act concerning citizens](#) is

## Technology Needs

projector, computer with internet access

# Assessment

## Homework

Ask students to read and take Cornell notes from the brief biography of Thomas Jefferson found on this site under "Learning Resources".

## Assessment

Students will complete a one page essay in which they comment on what they believe are Thomas Jefferson's three most important accomplishments. They may use their notes in completing the essay and may also use the class created timeline. The prompt for the essay is found below along with links to the two sources cited in the prompt.

Thomas Jefferson's notes on his epitaph, as well as, a transcript of the epitaph are found at the Library of Congress's website on Thomas Jefferson at: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffleg.html>

I have included the entire Summary of Public Service at the bottom of this lesson plan. It can be found in the Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Summary of Public Service, dated after 2nd of September, 1800)

### Writing Prompt:

We are fortunate to have documentation that allows us a vision into what Jefferson believed are his lifetime's most important accomplishments. Jefferson's epitaph and his Summary of Public Service give us his opinions. After careful analysis of these documents, what do you feel are Thomas Jefferson's three most significant accomplishments? You must be able to support each of these accomplishments with at least three facts that substantiate your claims that these are noteworthy.

## Accommodations

### Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs should be given additional time to complete the notes and a shortened writing prompt.

### Accommodations – Advanced Learners

For your gifted and talented population, you may want to have them categorize the events of Thomas Jefferson's life using a GPERSIA (geography, political, economic, religious, social, intellectual or artistic) graphic organizer.

*Thomas Jefferson*  
MONTICELLO