

# Thomas Jefferson—The Man, the Myth, the Legend

## Lesson Plan Template

**Title:** “Thomas Jefferson—The Man, the Myth, the Legend”

**Descriptive Subtitle:** A Look into Jefferson’s views on education, slavery and innovations

**Grade level:** Upper Middle (6-8)

**Topic/subject:** Monticello Architecture and Furnishings Jefferson’s Inventions and Innovations, Jefferson’s Public Life and Politics, Slavery and Plantation Life, Primary Documents & Jefferson Writings, Civics, Government, History: U.S.

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**Duration:** 60-90 min

**Overview:** This lesson can take place at the beginning of the Revolutionary War unit. Students will participate in stations learning about Jefferson’s multi-faceted life. They will then create a finished product demonstrating their interpretation of who Thomas Jefferson was and the impact he had on America.

**Prior knowledge:** Students should be familiar with events leading up to the Declaration of Independence. This lesson will provide the background into who Thomas Jefferson was before examining the Declaration of Independence.

**Standards:** (Based on Wisconsin State Social Studies Standards, Grade 8)

B.8.1 Interpret the past using a variety of sources, such as biographies, diaries, journals, artifacts,

eyewitness interviews, and other primary source materials, and evaluate the credibility of sources used

B.8.4 Explain how and why events may be interpreted differently depending upon the perspectives of participants, witnesses, reporters, and historians

B.8.5 Use historical evidence to determine and support a position about important political values, such as freedom, democracy, equality, or justice, and express the position coherently

B.8.6 Analyze important political values such as freedom, democracy, equality, and justice embodied in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights

B.8.7 Identify significant events and people in the major eras of United States and world history

### **Objectives:**

*Students will demonstrate their understanding of who Thomas Jefferson was as an individual, what his beliefs were and what he valued. (big, transferable concepts and ideas represented in this lesson)*

*Students will be able to ...*

- *Use primary sources to interpret Jefferson's beliefs and values*
- *Compare and contrast elements from Jefferson's time to current day*
- *Identify advantages and disadvantages innovations of some of life in Jefferson's day*
- *Analyze Jefferson and create an outcome based project that defines their interpretation of his character and importance in American History*

*Students will know...*

- *Jefferson's innovative ideas and how he applied it to Monticello*
- *Jefferson's perspective of education and his vision for the development of the University of Virginia*
- *What the life of a slave was like at Monticello, using first person accounts*

**Steps:** Provide teachers or students with instructions for completing the lesson or challenge, giving step by step directions. Indicate the time needed for each step.

1. Provide each students with the handout, "Thomas Jefferson—The Man, the Myth and the Legend." Individually, have them brainstorm as many ideas that they already know about Jefferson and place them around his portrait on page 1 of the handout.
2. Have students watch the brief introductory video to Monticello.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0\\_Y9DCXdoM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0_Y9DCXdoM)
3. Divide students into four groups. Have them each start at one of the four stations. Directions will be placed at each station as to what they specifically need to accomplish. They should record all of their responses on their handout. Collaborate over ideas as needed. Students should complete the stations about slavery, innovations and education, along with one topic of their choosing.
4. Once the student completed all of the stations, they should spend some time reflecting about what they just discovered and learned. Have them identify five characteristics of Jefferson that they feel are important and why.
5. Have students return to the first page of handout and highlight all of the facts surrounding

Jefferson's portrait that they correctly identified. If it is not a correct fact, do not highlight. Have them add more to the page, as needed.

6. Discuss the activity and handouts as needed with the whole class, clarifying any questions students may still have.
7. Student will then complete a final project of their own that illustrates their perspective of the impact Jefferson had on the United States.

**Materials:**

Tablet/Device

Earbuds

Handout

Pen/pencil

(All websites and links are included on the handout)

**Assessment(s):** *consider diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies*

Students will be assessed informally based on class discussions and completion of the handout.

Summative assessment will include their individual project of choice that will demonstrate

- What the students learned about Thomas Jefferson
- Student impressions of the man he was,
- Jefferson's contributions to America.

**Assessment Criteria (rubric, checklist, etc.):**

The project must include the following criteria:

- At least five facts you feel are important about Jefferson's life including at least one fact about his contributions to education, innovations, and role in slavery.
- The following terms or phrases: Monticello, Mulberry Row, academical village, freedom, equality, liberty, Declaration of Independence,
- Creatively integrated and displayed, with main ideas thoroughly expressed

**Accommodations:****ESL/Special Needs**

Students may select only one station or answer partial questions at each station. They also have the flexibility to select a project option, suitable for their needs, to demonstrate what they learned about Jefferson.

### Gifted and Talented

- Allow students the option to research more deeply on one of the topics in the station rotation, or select an additional topic of interest to them relating to Thomas Jefferson.
- Compare/Contrast the lyrics of the musical, *Hamilton*, to what the students learned in this lesson.
- Research the role of Jefferson as president of the United States and compare and contrast his beliefs and ideals to what he accomplished during his presidential terms.

The logo for Thomas Jefferson Monticello, featuring a stylized script of "Th. Jefferson" above the word "MONTICELLO" in a serif font.

Th. Jefferson  
MONTICELLO