

Primary Sources

Quotes from Thomas Jefferson and John Adams

[Monticello Classroom Resources](#) (Source for the first two quotes)

“I see my job as trying to bring together and harmonize a variety of different opinions. We are putting together before all of mankind words that are both simple and firm, a justification for the stand that we’re being forced to take.” Thomas Jefferson

“During the whole time I sat with him in Congress, I never heard him utter three sentences together.” John Adams describing Thomas Jefferson

[Extract from Thomas Jefferson’s Notes](#) of Proceedings in the Continental Congress
July 2. [1776]

Congress proceeded the same day to consider the declaration of Independence which had been reported & laid on the table the Friday preceding and on Monday referred to a commee of the whole. the pusillanimous idea that we had friends in England worth keeping terms with, still haunted the minds of many. for this reason those passages which conveyed censures on the people of England were struck out, lest they should give them offence. the clause too, reprobating the enslaving the inhabitants of Africa, was struck out in complaisance to South Carolina & Georgia who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who on the contrary still wished to continue it. our Northern brethren also I believe felt a little tender under those censures; for tho’ their people have very few slaves themselves yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others.

[Extract from the Autobiography of John Adams](#) April – August 1776

“Mr. Jefferson had the Reputation of a masterly Pen.”