

## Document Packet 'D'

**Instructions:** Read the background and context, followed by the four documents, then answer the questions that follow.

### Background and Context:

The election of 1796 pitted James Madison the Federalist against Thomas Jefferson the Republican. Because the 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment had not yet been added to the constitution, electoral procedures mandated that each elector cast two votes for President, and that the runner up for President would win the vice-presidential seat. This created a situation in which Adams became President and Jefferson became vice-president, even though they ran against one another.

### Questions:

#### *Document 1:*

- 1) What place does Jefferson want to come in w/regards to the election? Why?
- 2) If there is a tie, what does Jefferson want Madison to do? Why?

#### *Document 2:*

- 1) Why do you think Jefferson writes this letter? What is the purpose of it?
- 2) Do you believe Jefferson when he says "I have no ambition to govern men"? Has he been consistent with what he said in the first letter?

#### *Document 3:*

- 1) Paraphrase what Jefferson is saying about the two "offices" in the first part of this letter.
- 2) Why did Jefferson delay sending the letter to Adams?
- 3) Why do you think Jefferson would send the letter to Madison for his review? What could his motives be?

#### *Document 4:*

- 1) Summarize Madison's reasons for withholding the letter from Adams. Which do you find most interesting? Why?
- 2) What does this letter teach you about the relationship between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison?
- 3) What does this letter teach you about the personality of James Madison?

#### *Overall Questions:*

- 1) What can you ascertain about the political relationship between these men by reading these letters?
- 2) What can these letters teach us about the procedure for electing the President?

Document D1:

To James Madison

Monticello Dec. 17. 96.

Jefferson to Madison

Your favor of the 5th. came to hand last night. The first wish of my heart was that you should have been proposed for the administration of the government. On your declining it I wish any body rather than myself: and there is nothing I so anxiously hope as that my name may come out either second or third. These would be indifferent to me; as the last would leave me at home the whole year, and the other two thirds of it. I have no expectation that the Eastern states will suffer themselves to be so much outwitted as to be made the tools for bringing in P. instead of A. I presume they will throw away their second vote. In this case it begins to appear possible that there may be an equal division where I had supposed the republican vote would have been considerably minor. It seems also possible that the Representatives may be divided. This is a difficulty from which the constitution has provided no issue. It is both my duty and inclination therefore to relieve the embarrassment should it happen: and in that case I pray you and authorize you fully to solicit on my behalf that Mr. Adams may be preferred. He has always been my senior from the commencement of our public life, and the expression of the public will being equal, this circumstance ought to give him the preference. When so many motives will be operating to induce some of the members to change their vote, the addition of my wish may have some effect to preponderate the scale. I am really anxious to see the speech. It must exhibit a very different picture of our foreign affairs from that presented in the Adieu, or it will little correspond with my views of them. I think they never wore so gloomy an aspect since the year 83. Let those come to the helm who think they can steer clear of the difficulties. I have no confidence in myself for the undertaking.....

Letter Available in: *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Federal Edition (New York and London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-5). Vol. 8

Document D2:

I. To John Adams

Dear Sir

Monticello Dec. 28. 1796.

The public and the public papers have been much occupied lately in placing us in a poipt of opposition to each other. I trust with confidence that less of it has been felt by ourselves personally. In the retired canton where I am, I learn little of what is passing: pamphlets I see never; papers but a few; and the fewer the happier. Our latest intelligence from Philadelphia at present is of the 16th inst But tho' at that date your election to the first magistracy seems not to have been known as a fact, yet with me it has never been doubted. I knew it impossible yon should lose a vote north of the Delaware, and even if that of Pennsylvania should be against you in the mass, yet that you would get enough south of that to place your succession out of danger. I have never one single moment expected a different issue; and tho' I know I shall not be believed, yet it is not the less true, that I have never wished it. My neighbors, as my compurgators, could aver that fact, because they see my occupations and my attachment to them. Indeed it is possible that you may be cheated out of your succession by a trick worthy the subtlety of your arch-friend of New York, who has been able to make of your real friends tools to defeat their and your just wishes. Most probably he will be disappointed as to you, and my inclinations place me out of his reach. I leave to others the sublime delight of riding in the storm, better pleased with sound sleep and a »»nn berth below, with the society of neighbors, friends, and fellow-laborers of the earth, than of spies and sycophants. No one, then, will congratulate you with purer disinterestedness than myself. The share indeed which I may have had in the late vote, I shall still value highly, as an evidence of the share I have in the esteem of my fellow-citizens. But still, in this point of view, a few votes less would be little sensible; the difference in the effect of a few more 'would be very sensible and oppressive to me. I have no ambition to govern men. It is a painful and thankless office ... I devoutly wish you may be able to shun for us this war, by which our agriculture, commerce, and credit will be destroyed. If you are, the glory will be all your own; and that your administration may be filled with glory and happiness to yourself and advantage to us, is the sincere wish of one who, tho', in the course of our voyage through life, various little incidents have happened or been contrived to separate us, retains still for you the solid esteem of the moments when we were working for our independence, and sentiments of respect and affectionate attachment.

Th. Jefferson

Source: Printed in The Life of Thomas Jefferson. By Henry S. Randall. Volume 2. 1858

Document D3:

I. Jefferson to James Madison

Jan. 1. 97.

Yours of Dec. 19. has come safely. The event of the election has never been a matter of doubt in my mind. I knew that the Eastern states were disciplined in the schools of their town meetings to sacrifice differences of opinion to the great object of operating in phalanx, & that the more free & moral agency practiced in the other states would always make up the supplement of their weight. Indeed the vote comes much nearer an equality than I had expected. I know the difficulty of obtaining belief to one's declarations of a disinclination to honors, & that it is greatest with those who still remain in the world. But no arguments were wanting to reconcile me to a relinquishment of the first office or acquiescence under the second. As to the first it was impossible that a more solid unwillingness settled on full calculation, could have existed in any man's mind, short of the degree of absolute refusal. The only view on which I would have gone into it for awhile was to put our vessel on her republican tack before she should be thrown too much to leeward of her true principles. As to the second, it is the only office in the world about which I am unable to decide in my own mind whether I had rather have it or not have it. Pride does not enter into the estimate ; for I think with the Romans that the general of today should be a soldier tomorrow if necessary. I can particularly have no feelings which would revolt at a secondary position to Mr. Adams. I am his junior in life, was his junior in Congress, his junior in the diplomatic line, his junior lately in the civil government. Before the receipt of your letter I had written the enclosed one to him. I had intended it some time, but had deferred it from time to time under the discouragement of a despair of making him believe I could be sincere in it. The papers by the last post not rendering it necessary to change anything in the letter I enclose it open for your perusal, not only that you may possess the actual state of dispositions between us, but that if anything should render the delivery of it ineligible in your opinion, you may return it to me. If Mr. Adams can be induced to administer the government on its true principles, & to relinquish his bias to an English constitution, it is to be considered whether it would not be on the whole for the public good to come to a good understanding with him as to his future elections. He is perhaps the only sure barrier against Hamilton's getting in.....

Source: The Writings of Thomas Jefferson. Paul Leicester Ford, ed. Volume VII. 1896.

Document D4:

From James Madison to Jefferson

Dear Sir

Philada. Jany. 15. 1797.

The last mail brought me your favor of Jany. 1. inclosing an unsealed one for Mr. A. and submitting to my discretion the eligibility of delivering it. In exercising this delicate trust I have felt no small anxiety, arising by no means however from an apprehension that a free exercise of it could be in collision with your real purpose, but from a want of confidence in myself, and the importance of a wrong judgment in the case. After the best consideration I have been able to bestow, I have been led to suspend the delivery of the letter, till you should have an opportunity of deciding on the sufficiency or insufficiency of the following reasons. 1. It is certain that Mr. Adams, on his coming to this place, expressed to different persons a respectful cordiality towards you, and manifested a sensibility to the candid manner in which your friends had in general conducted the opposition to him. And it is equally known that your sentiments towards him personally have found their way to him in the most conciliating form. This being the state of things between you, it deserves to be considered whether the idea of bettering it is not outweighed by the possibility of changing it for the worse. 2. There is perhaps a general air on the letter which betrays the difficulty of your situation in writing it, and it is uncertain what the impression might be resulting from this appearance. 3 It is certain that Mr. A. is fully apprized of the trick aimed at by his pseudo-friends of N.Y: and there may be danger of his suspecting in memento's on that subject, a wish to make his resentment an instrument for avenging that of others. A hint of this kind was some time ago dropped by a judicious and sound man who lives under the same roof, with a wish that even the Newspapers might be Silent on that point. 4. May not what is said of "the sublime delights of riding in the storm &c." be misconstrued into a reflexion on those who have no distaste to the helm at the present crisis? You know the temper of Mr. A. better than I do: but I have always conceived it to be rather a ticklish one. 5. The tenderness due to the zealous and active promoters of your election, makes it doubtful whether their anxieties and exertions ought to be depreciated by any thing implying the unreasonableness of them. I know that some individuals who have deeply committed themselves, and probably incurred the political enmity at least of the P. elect, are already sore on this head. 6. Considering the probability that Mr. A.s course of administration may force an opposition to it from the Republican quarter, and the general uncertainty of the posture which our affairs may take, there may be real embarrassments from giving written possession to him, of the degree of compliment and confidence which your personal delicacy and friendship have suggested.

I have ventured to make these observations, because I am sure you will equally appreciate the motive and the matter of them; and because I do not view them as inconsistent with the duty and policy of cultivating Mr. Adam's favorable dispositions, and giving a fair start to his Executive career. As you have, no doubt, retained a copy of the letter I do not send it back as you request. It occurs however that, if the subject should not be changed in your view of it, by the reasons which influence mine, and the delivery of the letter be accordingly judged expedient, it may not be amiss to alter the date of it; either by writing the whole over again, or authorizing me to correct that part of it.

Letter Available in: *The Writings of James Madison, comprising his Public Papers and his Private Correspondence, including his numerous letters and documents now for the first time printed*, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900). Vol. 6