

## **Unit of Study Overview: Who was the *real* Thomas Jefferson?**

**Aims of the Unit:** The aim of this unit is to introduce students to Thomas Jefferson, his main aims, achievements, important events and the defining episodes that position him as one of the most important figures in USA history. Throughout the unit of study, students will be encouraged to think critically in analysing the contributions he made throughout the course of his life, working towards reaching a judgement about who the 'real' Jefferson was. The unit has been designed to encourage students to see Jefferson as an excellent human being by building up a picture of his formidable achievements, before problematizing and challenging this through a focused examination of Jefferson as a plantation owner and slave holder. The following unit has been designed for delivery in the context of an English Secondary School Key Stage Three class (Year 8 or Year 9); however, it is my intention that elements from this will be appropriate to educational settings internationally with only a few minor adjustments. Where we all work from a different set of standards and curriculum constraints, when we look past the different state and national standards we are required to adhere to, good history is good history.

From the perspective of an English secondary school, this unit will position Jefferson in the context of Founding Father and help begin to allow students to develop an understanding of his role and status as an icon in United States history. However, this really does not fit in with the aims outlined in the KS3 National Curriculum and to some practitioners his place in many schools curriculum may appear limited. This is something I disagree with; indeed a focus on Jefferson creates an easy, interesting route for historians to explore the political, social and cultural richness of this period. Jefferson's contributions are indeed varied, wide-reaching and plentiful, thus regardless of inevitable curriculum changes we will all face Jefferson will almost certainly have a place within it. This unit has also been designed with a specific focus on developing a range of skills and aptitudes helping to develop creative, collaborative and confident historians. Throughout the unit there is a specific focus on collaborative learning, team working, developing independence and articulation; skills that are not only vital to developing historians but successful adults. Literacy and writing to demonstrate clear explanation will also be a key focus in order to establish solid foundations before students embark on their KS4 curriculum. I think Jefferson would approve.

Regardless of the English curriculum focus, it is my hope that teachers in different state and national contexts will find elements of this body of work useful. Teachers who focus in greater detail on Jefferson may choose to select specific lessons or lesson episodes from this unit to embed into their own practice and compliment already existing units of study.

**Assessment:** The assessment for this unit of study is an essay-based question that encourages students to create and build an argument before reaching and justifying their own judgement; it has been designed in order to prepare students for the GCSE history qualification.

<b>Objective/ Enquiry Question</b>	<b>Overview of the lesson</b>	<b>Suggested Pedagogy, Resources and Rational</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<p>'In matters of principle, stand like a rock': What inferences can we make about Thomas Jefferson's guiding principles?</p>	<p>Students should be introduced to Jefferson and the key issues and ideas that mark him out as a significant icon in US history.</p>	<p>This is highly dependent upon student's contextual knowledge of Jefferson and this period of US history. Practitioners may wish to start with a range of quotations on Jefferson to begin asking question.</p>	<p>In UK schools, attention will have to be given to the important of the Declaration and what this meant for the United States and their relationship with Britain. This will help to clarify Jefferson's role and importance.</p> <p>In Scottish schools, there are interesting links between the Declaration and the current debates around Scottish independence.</p>
	<p>Students will analyse three key pieces of evidence; his gravestone, the Declaration of Independence and his First Inaugural Address and make inferences around Jefferson's key principles.</p>	<p>This could lead to a 'Philosophy for Learning' style seminar; here students would work in small groups to analyse, unpick and connect these three documents and make clear inferences around Jefferson's principles, goals and ambitions. This will then lend itself to a whole class discussion and feedback and will be followed up by a written homework task.</p>	
<p>"I cannot live without books". How did Jefferson's 'enlightened' attitude towards education shape his guiding principles?</p>	<p>Peer assessment and feedback of homework activity.</p>	<p>This will serve to refresh and remind students of the key learning and inferences made in the lesson before this. It will also help to highlight some of the judgements that can be made about Jefferson through analysis of only a few key documents relating to them; these inferences will then be challenged as the unit unfolds and students begin to look more critically at Jefferson. Furthermore, it will facilitate a discussion around good explanatory writing and literacy skills,</p>	

		allowing students’ time to reflect on what makes this successful and how they can achieve the standard required of them.	
	Students conduct an ‘information hunt’ in which they will read a range of information posted on the classroom walls; they will think about these and record the important elements in an appropriate format and in their own words. Students should work collaboratively in small groups to complete this task.	Information is printed onto A3 paper and posted around the room; students will have to read, think, synthesise and process this information before they make their notes. Students will complete this in teams and feed back to each other. In doing this, students will have to discuss, question and clarify to make their own notes. In doing this, students explaining will develop and imbed their knowledge and understanding through discussion, whilst their peers will have to listen, think and question to ensure they have developed an appropriate level of understanding.	This method of learning helps to get students discussing and really thinking about the information they are presented with.
	Primary source analysis and critique of Sarah Randolph’s take on Jefferson and education.	Students will analyse content, consider source provenance and draw links between the source and their newly-acquired knowledge.	Randolph’s motives are interesting to discuss here; encourage students to think about how she would have wanted her grandfather to be remembered.
‘The wisdom of exchanging’: What did Jefferson achieve through Westward expansion?	Students will work in groups and conduct research into the events of the Lewis and Clark expedition.	Students could use the internet, watch a documentary or use information in the written format to complete this.	PBS.com is an excellent site to discover a wealth of information around the Lewis and Clark expedition. <a href="http://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/index.html">http://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/index.html</a>
	Reporting back to Jefferson; students will work in small groups and create a short report back to Jefferson, telling	Students can be given a choice of methods to complete this task – written report, journal entry, letter, short film or audio	

	him what they have discovered and the challenges they face at that point of the expedition.	recording. Students are required to link what they have learned with what they think Jefferson’s expectations were.	As homework, students should read the following article on the Monticello Classroom website entitled ‘Jefferson and Slavery: <a href="http://classroom.monticello.org/teachers/resources/profile/263/Jefferson-and-Slavery/">http://classroom.monticello.org/teachers/resources/profile/263/Jefferson-and-Slavery/</a>  There are significant opportunities for this lesson to become two; these opportunities are outlines on the lesson plan.
‘A more rational and humane plan’?: What would having Jefferson as a master have been like?	Students will work in groups and take on the role of a particular slave family on Mulberry Row.	Students will research using the Monticello.org website.	In the same vein as the lesson above, the opportunities for this to become a more in-depth longer investigation are clear.  Student investigations here are likely to bring up the debate around Sally Hemings and Jefferson.
	Using the research they have undertaken, students will present what their lives would have been like.	To do this, students could create a presentation using PowerPoint or Keynote, build a model or write and perform a role play.	
‘Bigotry is the disease of ignorance’: How does Jefferson’s relationship with the slave trade shape our perspectives?	Students will analyse a range of primary sources and answer questions based on these.	A PDF version of these sources is available with a selection of questions that examine issues of provenance, content analysis and linking sources to own knowledge. They deal with issues such as trust, usefulness and cross-referencing.	This lesson presents students with work of a challenging nature; parts of the lessons that have gone before will help students tackle the source they are presented with, and they are also required to draw

	Students will then peer-assess work, give positive feedback and constructive comments to help further develop answers.	Student will focus on the three key principles; answering the question clearly and explicitly, using the source and building in their own knowledge. Students will assign each component a colour and underline the appropriate aspects of their peers work.	extensively on their contextual knowledge acquired throughout the unit of study.
<p><b>Assessment:</b></p> <p>Students will complete a written response to the following question, drawing on all of the sources they have met over the course of the unit.</p> <p>The following quote encapsulates Jefferson’s guiding principles: “All men are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.</p>			