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## Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence

Thomas Jefferson was born in Virginia, on 13 April 1743. His father, Peter Jefferson, and his mother, Jane Randolph, both came from the most respected Virginian families. Young Thomas had a very good education, and he read law in the College of William and Mary. He was 25 when he was elected to the House of Burgesses, the first elected legislative assembly in the New World. Jefferson was greatly respected for his writing talent, though he was never a good speaker. At the same time Jefferson started a successful career as a professional lawyer and practised until 1774, when the courts were closed by the American Revolution.



But as you may know this was not the end of his political career; much later Thomas Jefferson was to become the third President of the USA. How did it happen? Let me tell you. From the beginning of the American War with the mother country, Jefferson stood with the most radical of the patriots. In 1775 he was chosen as a delegate from Virginia to the Second Continental Congress.

In 1776 the Congress decided that no further alliance with Great Britain was possible, and America had to become an independent country. Thomas Jefferson was chosen to write the official document which would inform the British king and the world about the decision of the Congress. Those of you who are good with figures have probably already realized that at that time Jefferson was only thirty-three years old.

Jefferson locked himself up in his study and started to write. He was always a good writer and soon the draft of the document



was ready. It took him only 17 days. In this document Jefferson expressed the ideas of freedom which were very dear to him. He wrote that all men have the same rights. Regardless of birth, wealth, or status everybody had the right to life, freedom and happiness. He also thought that the government is the servant, not the master, of human beings and that governments were created by people in order to protect their rights.

The Congress read Jefferson's document and, after some changes were made, it was signed by all the delegates from the thirteen colonies on July 4, 1776. The document was called the Declaration of Independence. That's how it started...

### THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

#### *The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America*

“We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

The Declaration of Independence became one of the most important documents for America because it declared American independence from Great Britain and actually started its history as a nation. In memory of this every year Americans celebrate July 4 as Independence Day.

The Declaration made Jefferson extremely popular, but he wanted to spend more time with his family and try to do more for his own state, so he left Congress and returned to Virginia, where three years later he was

