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Brief Presidential Biographies

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THOMAS JEFFERSON

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Thomas Jefferson was not considered to be a great public speaker, but rather a great writer and philosopher.

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He was born in 1743 in what would become the state of Virginia. He was the third oldest among ten children.

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He inherited around 5,000 acres of land from his father, who was quite wealthy, and high social standing from his mother.

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He studied the violin, and the Greek and Latin languages, and enjoyed reading. He attended the second oldest college in the U.S., called William & Mary.

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He married a widow, Martha Wayles Skelton. He and Martha had six children, only two of which survived into adulthood. It is also widely believed, and backed by DNA evidence, that he also fathered children with one of his slaves, Sally Hemmings.

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His home and farm in Virginia was, and is now, known as Monticello.

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He is considered to have been the principal writer of the Declaration of Independence, and was assisted by John Adams and Benjamin

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Franklin.

185 As the principal writer of the Declaration of Independence, he wrote
199 “...all men are created equal,” yet he enslaved more than 600 people over
204 the course of his life.

215 He served as George Washington’s Secretary of State, and as Vice
227 President under John Adams, because he was runner up (second place) in
239 the election, and according to the Constitution at the time, the second
245 place candidate became the Vice President.

256 In 1786, he wrote a bill establishing religious freedom.

269 He served as the third President of the United States, and the second,
275 after Washington, to serve two terms.

284 He authorized the Louisiana Purchase from France, which included
297 land west of the Mississippi River, from the border with Canada down to
312 the Gulf of Mexico, nearly doubling the size of the U.S., paving the way
324 for the establishment of many more states, at the expense of Native
337 American Tribes who had lived on this land for hundreds of years. Native
350 Americans were forced off this land, and were given next to nothing in
351 compensation.

364 Thomas Jefferson appears on the U.S. two dollar bill, which is rarely
370 used these days, but do exist.

380 His likeness appears on Mount Rushmore, in South Dakota, along
388 with George Washington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln.