

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams

Text A:

Both Jefferson and Adams were, appropriately for lawmakers, qualified lawyers, Adams qualifying in 1758, and Jefferson a few years later. The similarity in their careers can also be seen in the fact that both men were part of their colony's legislative process, Jefferson serving in the Virginia House of Burgesses and Adams in the Massachusetts Legislature. Both men also served as diplomats in France prior to becoming the President of their newly established country.

Jefferson, having been a delegate at the second Continental Congress, was one of the five men given the task of drafting the Declaration of Independence, and he actually wrote it. Jefferson and Adams were both candidates for the Presidency in 1796, an election that Jefferson lost. Jefferson became President in the election of 1800, and his election was something of a blow for the Federalists, as he was always suspicious of a central government with too much control. During his presidency the USA acquired new territory through the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, doubling the size of the country.

Text B:

Both Jefferson and Adams were, appropriately for lawmakers, qualified lawyers, Adams qualifying in 1758 and Jefferson in 1767. The similarity in their careers can also be seen by the fact that both men were part of their colony's legislative process, Jefferson in Virginia and Adams in Massachusetts. Both men also served as diplomats in France prior to becoming the President of their newly established country. Adams also spent some time as a diplomat in the Netherlands.

John Adams, a believer in the need to protect the innocent, had been the lawyer for the British soldiers accused of the Boston Massacre. Between 1785 and 1788 he was the first American minister to Great Britain. He became President in 1796 but failed to be re-elected in 1800. His son, John Quincy Adams, became the sixth President of the USA in 1825, serving until 1829.

Questions

- 1 In which year did Thomas Jefferson qualify as a lawyer?
Answer: _____
- 2 What was the name of the Virginia legislative institution?
Answer: _____
- 3 Besides France, in which other country did one of them serve as a diplomat?
Answer: _____
- 4 What process were both men part of?
Answer: _____
- 5 The two men stood as candidates in the presidential election of 1796. Who won?
Answer: _____
- 6 Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
Answer: _____
- 7 Why did one of them defend British soldiers in court?
Answer: _____
- 8 Who had a son who became President of the USA?
Answer: _____
- 9 Did Jefferson believe in a controlling central government?
Answer: _____
- 10 Which deal increased the size of the USA by 100 per cent?
Answer: _____

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Activity

Information gap

Aim

To ask and answer questions about the lives and careers of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams

Interaction

Pairs

Language focus

Variety of tenses including past simple and present simple passive, *ing* forms; question forms

Skills focus

Listening; speaking

Preparation

Photocopy one worksheet for each pair of students and cut it in half. Each student should have a section of text and a set of questions.

Time

20 minutes

Procedure

1 Ask the students to name some famous presidents of the USA. Elicit or provide John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Tell students that John Adams was the second president of the USA and Thomas Jefferson was the third. Ask the students to discuss in pairs what they know about them.

Get feedback in open class and put some of their ideas on the board. If they are not familiar with these presidents ask them to make a list of questions they could ask about them, focusing on their careers, e.g. When did they become president? What did they do before they were president?

2 Divide the class into two groups, A and B. Explain that both groups are going to read two very similar texts about the careers of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Students from group A will read text A: students from group B will read text B. However, text A contains some extra information that text B does not have. Text B contains some extra information that text A does not have. Students will each have an identical question and answer sheet to complete.

3 Tell students to read their texts and look at the questions. Allow them time to familiarise themselves with the texts.

4 Then tell students to find a partner from the other group. The students are to ask and answer the questions *together* sharing the information they have in their texts. Some of the information is duplicated across both texts. Monitor and help as required, ensuring that students communicate their answers by speaking, not by showing each other their texts!

5 When the students have finished asking and answering questions, ask them to compare their answers to make sure they are the same.

Key

Answer

1. Thomas Jefferson qualified in 1767.
2. the Virginia House of Burgesses
3. Adams also served as a diplomat in the Netherlands.
4. Both men were part of their colony's legislative process.
5. Adams won the presidential election of 1796.
6. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.
7. Adams wanted to defend the soldier because he believed in the need to protect the innocent.
8. John Adams's son became President of the USA.
9. No, he was suspicious of a controlling central government.
10. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803.

Answer found in text...

- A
B
B
A and B
B
A
B
B
A
A
A