



John Adams | Lesson Plan

What should we know about John Adams?



Students learn how Founding Father John Adams never feared doing what was right, even when it was unpopular, and helped make the United States a strong, independent nation.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify John Adams as the 2nd President of the United States as well as the first Vice President.
- Recognize John Adams fought for the approval of the Declaration of Independence.
- Appreciate John Adams earned a reputation for being a brilliant and fair attorney.
- Recognize Adams was opposed to slavery and never owned slaves.
- Understand John Adams contributions to the founding of America including the signing of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War.
- Identify his son became the 6th President of the United States.
- Differentiate Adams from other men of his day in that he highly respected the political opinions of his wife, Abigail, and sought her advice throughout his career.

Key Vocabulary:

- New England: the northeastern region of the United States, consisting of the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
- Clergyman: A formal leader in a church who often performs religious services.
- Provoke: To purposefully cause someone else to become angry or excited.
- Diplomat: A person who represents his or her country in other countries or in an international organization.
- Deter: to prevent something, such as a military attack, often by the threat of force.

Educational Standards: U.S. History, U.S. Presidents, American Values, biography, reading comprehension, presentation skills, research project

What You'll Need

- Magazine: Presidents of the United States: John Adams ([Download PDF](#)) ([Purchase](#))
- Video: [Guess or Mess? John Adams](#)



Scan to watch video.

- Alternate video for older students: The U.S. Presidents 5-Minute Video: John Adams
 - <https://www.prageru.com/video/john-adams-american-founder-and-second-president>

Lesson Plan (25-50 in mins.)

Note: This lesson plan is designed as a group research project and presentation to take place over several weeks while students prepare their assignment at home. Alternate lessons are also provided below.

Prep:

- Assign each student a different president to research and prepare a presentation. You may choose to have students work in pairs or groups.
- Provide students with printed or digital version of magazine for their research.
- Give students 2-4 weeks to research and prepare their presentation.
- Schedule presentations – may opt to do one president per week for a select number of weeks.
- Teachers may choose to have each student keep a “President Portfolio,” a dedicated notebook where they will take notes during each presentation.

Day of lesson:

Warm-Up: What do you know about John Adams? (5 mins.)

1. Ask the class: *Who was John Adams? What is John Adams known for? What can we learn from John Adams?*
2. Say: “Great start, let’s find out if you’re right and what else we should know about John Adams. Today’s presentation will be given by (assigned student’s names.)”

Listen, Take Notes, and Watch: (30 mins.)

1. Students listen to presentation, practice active listening, and take notes in their “President Portfolio.” (10 Minutes)
2. Watch: Guess or Mess: John Adams (20 minutes)

Wrap Up: (10 mins.)

1. Distribute to class: Printed Magazine: *Presidents of the United States: John Adams*
2. Have students answer questions in the back of the magazine for use for individual assessment, or as a class. Teachers may opt to use it as a take home assignment.

Alternate lessons:

ELA Option - Read and Complete: (50 mins.)

1. Students can take turns reading aloud in class, in small reading groups, in pairs, or quietly to themselves.
2. Check for understanding: Have students put magazines away and answer the questions at the end of the magazine (duplicated on page 3-4 of this document).
3. Collect as formative assessment or discuss in class.

Short lesson option: Don't have time for the full lesson or don't need to complete ELA Standard? (20 mins.)

1. Distribute the worksheet (page 3-4 of this document)
2. Watch: Guess or Mess
3. Allow students to complete worksheets while they follow along with the video.

Name _____ Date _____

Match the Man (This page is also found in magazine)

Washington, Adams, and Jefferson were very important in the founding of the nation. Match the Founding Father to his accomplishments.

George Washington	1st President
	2nd President
	3rd President
John Adams	Wrote the Declaration of Independence.
	Led the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.
Thomas Jefferson	Nominated the man who served as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army.
	Nominated the man who wrote the Declaration of Independence.

True or False

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T | F | John Adams was the first president to live in the White House. |
| T | F | Adams wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence. |
| T | F | Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were friends until the end of their lives. |
| T | F | John Adams is the only president whose son also served as president as well. |
| T | F | Adams graduated from Harvard and became a lawyer. |
| T | F | During George Washington's Presidency, John Adams served as Vice President. |

Name _____

Date _____

Guess or Mess (Questions from game show)

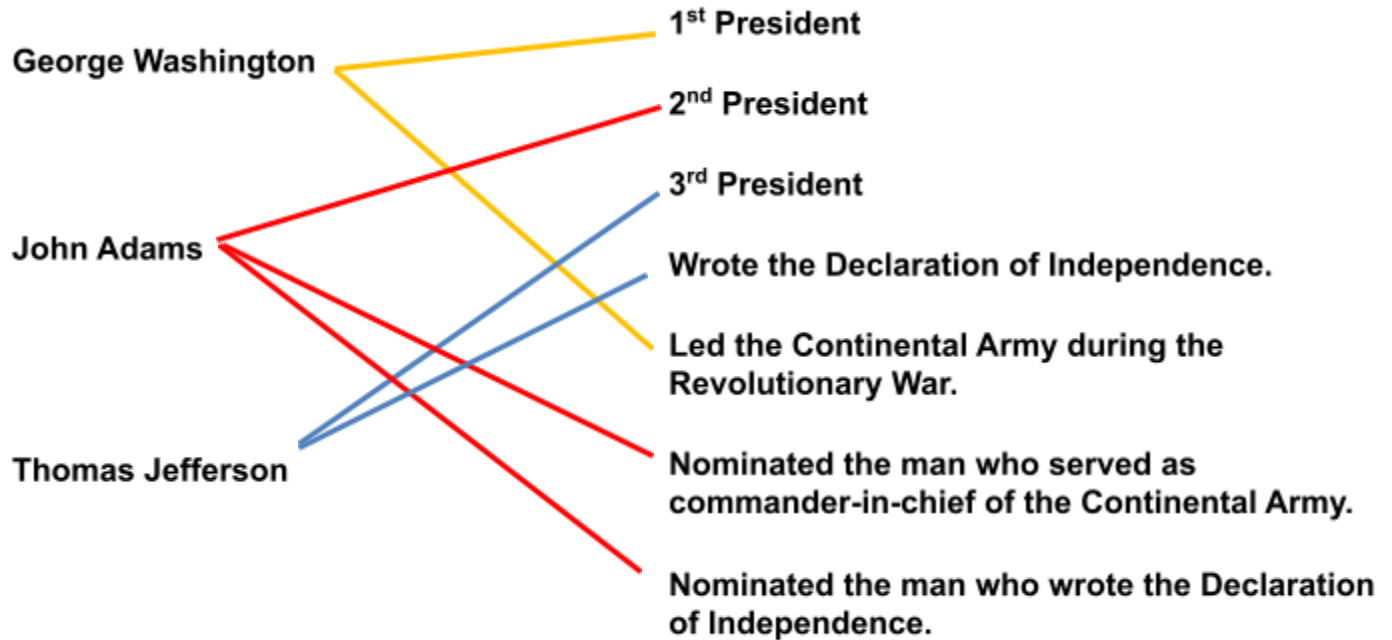
1. The son of a clergyman and a smart young man, John Adams was admitted to Harvard College at the age of 15. After graduation, he became a successful _____?
 - A.) Teacher
 - B.) Attorney
 - C.) Clergyman
2. What was the first name of John Adams's wife?
3. In 1783, during the American Revolution, John Adams negotiated an agreement that ended the war with Great Britain. What was the name of this treaty?
4. While Vice President under President Washington, two political parties formed. What were these new parties called?
 - A.) Federalists and Democratic-Republicans
 - B.) Republicans and Democrats
 - C.) Washingtons and Jeffersons
5. John Adams was elected America's second President in 1796. But, he was the *first* President to live in which building?
 - A) Independence Hall
 - B) Boston Courthouse
 - C) The White House
6. During his presidency, what country did Adams sign a treaty with?
 - A) Great Britain
 - B) France
 - C) Russia
7. Adams was the first President who had a son who did what?
 - A) Visited Alaska
 - B) Landed on the moon
 - C) Became President
8. John Adams died on the 50th anniversary of which event?
 - A) Mayflower's arrival
 - B) Declaration of Independence
 - C) Pearl Harbor attack

Bonus points –Pop Quiz!

1. Who wrote the words of the U.S. national anthem, the Star-Spangled Banner?
 - A) Francis Scott Key
 - B) Paul Revere
 - C) George Washington
2. What is the smallest state in the United States?

Match the Man – Answer Key

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True or False

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Guess or Mess – **Answer Key**

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- C.) Clergyman

2. What was the first name of John Adams's wife?

Answer: Abigail

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Answer: Treaty of Paris

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Answer: Rhode Island