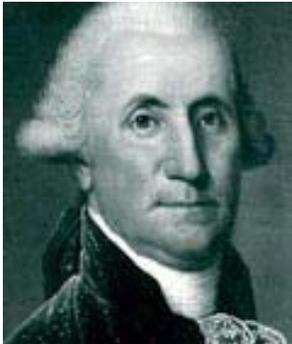


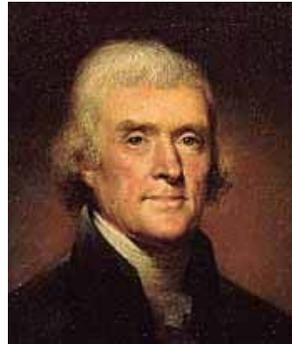
Major Accomplishments of the First Five U.S. Presidents



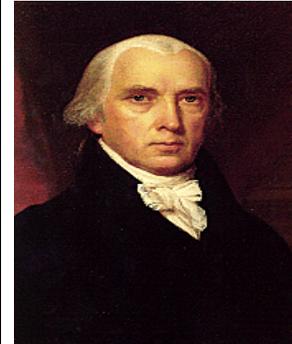
**George
Washington**



John Adams



**Thomas
Jefferson**



**James
Madison**



**James
Monroe**

Make a hot dog fold with a 2" tab uncovered along the side. Cut the overlapping section to make 5 flaps. Glue the title in the 2" tab. Glue the 5 presidents on flaps, one per section. Students use the biographies to write more details to describe the accomplishments of each.

Images from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs: www.loc.gov/pictures/

Biographies from www.Whitehouse.gov/presidents

George Washington

On April 30, 1789, George Washington, standing on the balcony of Federal Hall on Wall Street in New York, took his oath of office as the first President of the United States. "As the first of everything, in our situation will serve to establish a Precedent," he wrote James Madison, "it is devoutly wished on my part, that these precedents may be fixed on true principles."

Born in 1732 into a Virginia planter family, he learned the morals, manners, and body of knowledge requisite for an 18th century Virginia gentleman.

He pursued two intertwined interests: military arts and western expansion. At 16 he helped survey Shenandoah lands for Thomas, Lord Fairfax. Commissioned a lieutenant colonel in 1754, he fought the first skirmishes of what grew into the French and Indian War. The next year, as an aide to Gen. Edward Braddock, he escaped injury although four bullets ripped his coat and two horses were shot from under him.

From 1759 to the outbreak of the American Revolution, Washington managed his lands around Mount Vernon and served in the Virginia House of Burgesses. Married to a widow, Martha Dandridge Custis, he devoted himself to a busy and happy life. But like his fellow planters, Washington felt himself exploited by British merchants and hampered by British regulations. As the quarrel with the mother country grew acute, he moderately but firmly voiced his resistance to the restrictions.

When the Second Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia in May 1775, Washington, one of the Virginia delegates, was elected Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. On July 3, 1775, at Cambridge, Massachusetts, he took command of his ill-trained troops and embarked upon a war that was to last six grueling years.

He realized early that the best strategy was to harass the British. He reported to Congress, "we should on all Occasions avoid a general Action, or put anything to the Risque, unless compelled by a necessity, into which we ought never to be drawn." Ensuing battles saw him fall back slowly, then strike unexpectedly. Finally in 1781 with the aid of French allies--he forced the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Washington longed to retire to his fields at Mount Vernon. But he soon realized that the Nation under its Articles of Confederation was not functioning well, so he became a prime mover in the steps leading to the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia in 1787. When the new Constitution was ratified, the Electoral College unanimously elected Washington President.

He did not infringe upon the policy making powers that he felt the Constitution gave Congress. But the determination of foreign policy became preponderantly a Presidential concern. When the French Revolution led to a major war between France and England, Washington refused to accept entirely the recommendations of either his Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, who was pro-French, or his Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, who was pro-British. Rather, he insisted upon a neutral course until the United States could grow stronger.

To his disappointment, two parties were developing by the end of his first term. Wearied of politics, feeling old, he retired at the end of his second. In his Farewell Address, he urged his countrymen to forswear excessive party spirit and geographical distinctions. In foreign affairs, he warned against long-term alliances.

Washington enjoyed less than three years of retirement at Mount Vernon, for he died of a throat infection December 14, 1799. For months the Nation mourned him.

John Adams

Learned and thoughtful, John Adams was more remarkable as a political philosopher than as a politician. "People and nations are forged in the fires of adversity," he said, doubtless thinking of his own as well as the American experience.

Adams was born in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1735. A Harvard-educated lawyer, he early became identified with the patriot cause; a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses, he led in the movement for independence.

During the Revolutionary War he served in France and Holland in diplomatic roles, and helped negotiate the treaty of peace. From 1785 to 1788 he was minister to the Court of St. James's, returning to be elected Vice President under George Washington.

Adams' two terms as Vice President were frustrating experiences for a man of his vigor, intellect, and vanity. He complained to his wife Abigail, "My country has in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived."

When Adams became President, the war between the French and British was causing great difficulties for the United States on the high seas and intense partisanship among contending factions within the Nation.

His administration focused on France, where the Directory, the ruling group, had refused to receive the American envoy and had suspended commercial relations.

Adams sent three commissioners to France, but in the spring of 1798 word arrived that the French Foreign Minister Talleyrand and the Directory had refused to negotiate with them unless they would first pay a substantial bribe. Adams reported the insult to Congress, and the Senate printed the correspondence, in which the Frenchmen were referred to only as "X, Y, and Z."

The Nation broke out into what Jefferson called "the X. Y. Z. fever," increased in intensity by Adams's exhortations. The populace cheered itself hoarse wherever the President appeared. Never had the Federalists been so popular.

Congress appropriated money to complete three new frigates and to build additional ships, and authorized the raising of a provisional army. It also passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, intended to frighten foreign agents out of the country and to stifle the attacks of Republican editors.

President Adams did not call for a declaration of war, but hostilities began at sea. At first, American shipping was almost defenseless against French privateers, but by 1800 armed merchantmen and U.S. warships were clearing the sea-lanes.

Despite several brilliant naval victories, war fever subsided. Word came to Adams that France also had no stomach for war and would receive an envoy with respect. Long negotiations ended the quasi war.

Sending a peace mission to France brought the full fury of the Hamiltonians against Adams. In the campaign of 1800 the Republicans were united and effective, the Federalists badly divided. Nevertheless, Adams polled only a few less electoral votes than Jefferson, who became President.

On November 1, 1800, just before the election, Adams arrived in the new Capital City to take up his residence in the White House. On his second evening in its damp, unfinished rooms, he wrote his wife, "Before I end my letter, I pray Heaven to bestow the best of Blessings on this House and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise Men ever rule under this roof."

Adams retired to his farm in Quincy. Here he penned his elaborate letters to Thomas Jefferson. Here on July 4, 1826, he whispered his last words: "Thomas Jefferson survives." But Jefferson had died at Monticello a few hours earlier.

Thomas Jefferson

In the thick of party conflict in 1800, Thomas Jefferson wrote in a private letter, "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

This powerful advocate of liberty was born in 1743 in Albemarle County, Virginia, inheriting from his father, a planter and surveyor, some 5,000 acres of land, and from his mother, a Randolph, high social standing. He studied at the College of William and Mary, then read law. In 1772 he married Martha Wayles Skelton, a widow, and took her to live in his partly constructed mountaintop home, Monticello.

Freckled and sandy-haired, rather tall and awkward, Jefferson was eloquent as a correspondent, but he was no public speaker. In the Virginia House of Burgesses and the Continental Congress, he contributed his pen rather than his voice to the patriot cause. As the "silent member" of the Congress, Jefferson, at 33, drafted the Declaration of Independence. In years following he labored to make its words a reality in Virginia. Most notably, he wrote a bill establishing religious freedom, enacted in 1786.

Jefferson succeeded Benjamin Franklin as minister to France in 1785. His sympathy for the French Revolution led him into conflict with Alexander Hamilton when Jefferson was Secretary of State in President Washington's Cabinet. He resigned in 1793.

Sharp political conflict developed, and two separate parties, the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans, began to form. Jefferson gradually assumed leadership of the Republicans, who sympathized with the revolutionary cause in France. Attacking Federalist policies, he opposed a strong centralized Government and championed the rights of states.

As a reluctant candidate for President in 1796, Jefferson came within three votes of election. Through a flaw in the Constitution, he became Vice President, although an opponent of President Adams. In 1800 the defect caused a more serious problem. Republican electors, attempting to name both a President and a Vice President from their own party, cast a tie vote between Jefferson and Aaron Burr. The House of Representatives settled the tie. Hamilton, disliking both Jefferson and Burr, nevertheless urged Jefferson's election.

When Jefferson assumed the Presidency, the crisis in France had passed. He slashed Army and Navy expenditures, cut the budget, eliminated the tax on whiskey so unpopular in the West, yet reduced the national debt by a third. He also sent a naval squadron to fight the Barbary pirates, who were harassing American commerce in the Mediterranean. Further, although the Constitution made no provision for the acquisition of new land, Jefferson suppressed his qualms over constitutionality when he had the opportunity to acquire the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon in 1803.

During Jefferson's second term, he was increasingly preoccupied with keeping the Nation from involvement in the Napoleonic wars, though both England and France interfered with the neutral rights of American merchantmen. Jefferson's attempted solution, an embargo upon American shipping, worked badly and was unpopular.

Jefferson retired to Monticello to ponder such projects as his grand designs for the University of Virginia. A French nobleman observed that he had placed his house and his mind "on an elevated situation, from which he might contemplate the universe."

He died on July 4, 1826.

James Madison

At his inauguration, James Madison, a small, wizened man, appeared old and worn; Washington Irving described him as "but a withered little apple-John." But whatever his deficiencies in charm, Madison's buxom wife Dolley compensated for them with her warmth and gaiety. She was the toast of Washington.

Born in 1751, Madison was brought up in Orange County, Virginia, and attended Princeton (then called the College of New Jersey). A student of history and government, well-read in law, he participated in the framing of the Virginia Constitution in 1776, served in the Continental Congress, and was a leader in the Virginia Assembly.

When delegates to the Constitutional Convention assembled at Philadelphia, the 36-year-old Madison took frequent and emphatic part in the debates.

Madison made a major contribution to the ratification of the Constitution by writing, with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, the Federalist essays. In later years, when he was referred to as the "Father of the Constitution," Madison protested that the document was not "the off-spring of a single brain," but "the work of many heads and many hands."

In Congress, he helped frame the Bill of Rights and enact the first revenue legislation. Out of his leadership in opposition to Hamilton's financial proposals, which he felt would unduly bestow wealth and power upon northern financiers, came the development of the Republican, or Jeffersonian, Party.

As President Jefferson's Secretary of State, Madison protested to warring France and Britain that their seizure of American ships was contrary to international law. The protests, John Randolph acidly commented, had the effect of "a shilling pamphlet hurled against eight hundred ships of war."

Despite the unpopular Embargo Act of 1807, which did not make the belligerent nations change their ways but did cause a depression in the United States, Madison was elected President in 1808. Before he took office the Embargo Act was repealed.

During the first year of Madison's Administration, the United States prohibited trade with both Britain and France; then in May, 1810, Congress authorized trade with both, directing the President, if either would accept America's view of neutral rights, to forbid trade with the other nation.

Napoleon pretended to comply. Late in 1810, Madison proclaimed non-intercourse with Great Britain. In Congress a young group including Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun, the "War Hawks," pressed the President for a more militant policy.

The British impressment of American seamen and the seizure of cargoes impelled Madison to give in to the pressure. On June 1, 1812, he asked Congress to declare war.

The young Nation was not prepared to fight; its forces took a severe trouncing. The British entered Washington and set fire to the White House and the Capitol.

But a few notable naval and military victories, climaxed by Gen. Andrew Jackson's triumph at New Orleans, convinced Americans that the War of 1812 had been gloriously successful. An upsurge of nationalism resulted. The New England Federalists who had opposed the war--and who had even talked secession--were so thoroughly repudiated that Federalism disappeared as a national party.

In retirement at Montpelier, his estate in Orange County, Virginia, Madison spoke out against the disruptive states' rights influences that by the 1830's threatened to shatter the Federal Union. In a note opened after his death in 1836, he stated, "The advice nearest to my heart and deepest in my convictions is that the Union of the States be cherished and perpetuated."

James Monroe

On New Year's Day, 1825, at the last of his annual White House receptions, President James Monroe made a pleasing impression upon a Virginia lady who shook his hand:

"He is tall and well formed. His dress plain and in the old style.... His manner was quiet and dignified. From the frank, honest expression of his eye ... I think he well deserves the encomium passed upon him by the great Jefferson, who said, 'Monroe was so honest that if you turned his soul inside out there would not be a spot on it.' "

Born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, in 1758, Monroe attended the College of William and Mary, fought with distinction in the Continental Army, and practiced law in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

As a youthful politician, he joined the anti-Federalists in the Virginia Convention which ratified the Constitution, and in 1790, an advocate of Jeffersonian policies, was elected United States Senator. As Minister to France in 1794-1796, he displayed strong sympathies for the French cause; later, with Robert R. Livingston, he helped negotiate the Louisiana Purchase.

His ambition and energy, together with the backing of President Madison, made him the Republican choice for the Presidency in 1816. With little Federalist opposition, he easily won re-election in 1820.

Monroe made unusually strong Cabinet choices, naming a Southerner, John C. Calhoun, as Secretary of War, and a northerner, John Quincy Adams, as Secretary of State. Only Henry Clay's refusal kept Monroe from adding an outstanding Westerner.

Early in his administration, Monroe undertook a goodwill tour. At Boston, his visit was hailed as the beginning of an "Era of Good Feelings." Unfortunately these "good feelings" did not endure, although Monroe, his popularity undiminished, followed nationalist policies.

Across the facade of nationalism, ugly sectional cracks appeared. A painful economic depression undoubtedly increased the dismay of the people of the Missouri Territory in 1819 when their application for admission to the Union as a slave state failed. An amended bill for gradually eliminating slavery in Missouri precipitated two years of bitter debate in Congress.

The Missouri Compromise bill resolved the struggle, pairing Missouri as a slave state with Maine, a free state, and barring slavery north and west of Missouri forever.

In foreign affairs Monroe proclaimed the fundamental policy that bears his name, responding to the threat that the more conservative governments in Europe might try to aid Spain in winning back her former Latin American colonies. Monroe did not begin formally to recognize the young sister republics until 1822, after ascertaining that Congress would vote appropriations for diplomatic missions. He and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams wished to avoid trouble with Spain until it had ceded the Floridas, as was done in 1821.

Great Britain, with its powerful navy, also opposed reconquest of Latin America and suggested that the United States join in proclaiming "hands off." Ex-Presidents Jefferson and Madison counseled Monroe to accept the offer, but Secretary Adams advised, "It would be more candid ... to avow our principles explicitly to Russia and France, than to come in as a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war."

Monroe accepted Adams's advice. Not only must Latin America be left alone, he warned, but also Russia must not encroach southward on the Pacific coast. ". . . the American continents," he stated, "by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Power." Some 20 years after Monroe died in 1831, this became known as the Monroe Doctrine.