Standard 8.41 Lesson

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8.41 Explain the major events of Thomas Jefferson’s presidency, including his election in 1800, Louisiana Purchase, the defeat of the Barbary pirates, and the Embargo Act. (E,G,H)

Figure 1.1

3.
Thomas Jefferson 1801-1809

Figure 1.2

Thomas Jefferson from Biography.com

http://www.biography.com/people/thomas-jefferson-9353715
The Election of 1800

The ELECTION OF 1800 between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson was an emotional and hard-fought campaign. Each side believed that victory by the other would ruin the nation.

Federalists attacked Jefferson as an un-Christian deist whose sympathy for the French Revolution would bring similar bloodshed and chaos to the United States. On the other side, the Democratic-Republicans denounced the strong centralization of federal power under Adams’s presidency. Republicans’ specifically objected to the expansion of
the U.S. army and navy, the attack on individual rights in the Alien and Sedition Acts, and new taxes and deficit spending used to support broadened federal action.

Overall, the Federalists wanted strong federal authority to restrain the excesses of popular majorities, while the Democratic-Republicans wanted to reduce national authority so that the people could rule more directly through state governments.

The election’s outcome brought a dramatic victory for Democratic-Republicans who swept both houses of Congress, including a decisive 65 to 39 majority in the House of Representatives. The presidential decision in the electoral college was somewhat closer, but the most intriguing aspect of the presidential vote stemmed from an outdated Constitutional provision whereby the Republican candidates for president and vice president actually ended up tied with one another.

Votes for President and Vice President were not listed on separate ballots. Although, during the election of 1800, Federalists cast Thomas Jefferson as an infidel because of his strict advocacy for the separation of Church and State.

Adams ran as Jefferson’s main opponent, running mates Jefferson and AARON BURR received the same number of electoral votes. The election was decided in the House of Representatives where each state wielded a single vote. Interestingly, the old Federalist Congress would make the decision, since the newly elected Republicans had not yet taken office. Most Federalists preferred Burr, and, once again, Alexander Hamilton shaped an unpredictable outcome. After numerous blocked ballots, Hamilton helped to secure the presidency for Jefferson, the man he felt was the lesser of two evils. Ten state delegations voted for Jefferson, 4 supported Burr, and 2 made no choice.

One might be tempted to see the opposing sides in 1800 as a repeat of the Federalist and Anti-Federalist divisions during the ratification debates of 1788-1789. The core groups supporting each side paralleled the earlier division. Merchants and manufacturers were still leading Federalists, while states’ rights advocates filled the Republican ranks just as they had the earlier Anti-Federalists.

( Pictured Above: Support for Thomas Jefferson throughout the entire Western frontier assured his victory over John Adams in the presidential election 1800.)

But a great deal had changed in the intervening decade. The Democratic-Republicans had significantly broadened the old Anti-Federalist coalition. Most importantly, urban workers and artisans who had supported the Constitution during ratification and who had mostly supported Adams in 1796 now joined the Jeffersonians. Also, key leaders like James Madison had changed his political stance by 1800. Previously the main figure shaping the Constitution, Madison now emerged as the ablest party organizer among the Republicans. At base the Democratic-Republicans believed that government needed to be broadly accountable to the people. Their coalition and ideals would dominate American politics well into the nineteenth century.
As the first peaceful transition of political power between opposing parties in U.S. history, however, the election of 1800 had far-reaching significance. Jefferson appreciated the momentous change and his inaugural address called for reconciliation by declaring that, "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."

**Jeffersonian America: A Second Revolution?**

!) Pictured Above: Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence as well as a slaveholder, was a man of many contradictions.

**The Election of 1800**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQmtEc-6E-Y

The harsh public antagonism of the 1790s largely came to an end with the victory of the Democratic-Republicans in the 1800 election. "THE REVOLUTION OF 1800," as Jefferson described his party’s successful election many years later, was "as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776 was in its form."

To Jefferson and his supporters, the defeat of the Federalists ended their attempt to lead America on a more conservative and less democratic course. Since the Federalists never again played a national political role after the defeat in 1800, it seems that most American voters of the era shared Jefferson’s view.

!) Pictured Above: James Madison continued the line of Virginian presidents by succeeding Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson’s election inaugurated a "VIRGINIA DYNASTY" that held the presidency from 1801 to 1825. After Jefferson’s two terms as president, he was followed by two other two-term Democratic-Republicans from Virginia, James Madison and James Monroe. Regular Democratic-Republican majorities in Congress supported their long rule. Political leaders and parties played a pivotal role shaping the new nation because they could serve as outlets for large numbers of people to express their opinions about issues of public significance. For Jefferson, the election of 1800 stands as a second revolution that protected and extended the gains achieved in the Revolution of 1776.

Jefferson and his values serve as a useful organizing tool to think about the changes that America experienced in the first decade of the nineteenth century. JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY refers to an American ideal as well as to a remarkably successful political movement. At the heart of both meanings of the term lies the household farm worked by ordinary families. Jeffersonian America marked a victory for common farmers as both the ideal embodiment of the American citizen and as a practical reality of who voted. As a result Jeffersonian America required that new western farmlands be cultivated as an absolute necessity for the future of the republic.
Although Jeffersonian Democracy remains a greatly celebrated American ideal, it is important to recall that in its own day, as well as today, it drew intense criticism. Federalists never again controlled national politics like they had in the 1790s, but they remained an important force in American life and offered deep criticism of many Jeffersonian developments. The federal government itself embraced this ongoing disagreement. The CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT throughout the JEFFERSONIAN ERA, JOHN MARSHALL, was an ardent Federalist. Even while his political opponents controlled elected national office, Marshall consistently supported the supremacy of national power over the states. He led the court in establishing legal precedents to support this view.

The most serious flaw in the "SECOND REVOLUTION" of Jeffersonian America, however, came from its embrace of slavery. The party’s national leaders were slave-owning elites who had no intention of including African-Americans in their broadened commitment to democracy. Jefferson probed the fundamental contradiction between slavery and democracy more eloquently than any American of the day. This led him to conclusions that were far less than revolutionary. Jefferson repeatedly acknowledged that slavery was wrong, but he never saw a way to eliminate the institution.
To Jefferson, slavery meant holding "a wolf by the ears." It was a danger that could never be released. Most disturbingly of all, Jefferson could not imagine America as a place where free blacks and whites could live together. To him, a biracial society of equality would "produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of one or the other race."

JEFFERSONIAN AMERICA is a term that helps us enter the contested and deeply contradictory nature of the United States at the start of the 19th century. Grappling fully with its meaning requires the use of sophisticated analytical skills that assess both its strengths and its weaknesses. To merely celebrate or condemn, seeing one side, but not the other, is to judge without attempting to understand.

Seeing how the best and the worst of Jeffersonian America were deeply intermixed, and continue to inform American life in our transformed circumstances of the 21st century, is among the most important purposes of historical inquiry.

Jeffersonian Ideology

( Pictured Above: A marble mosaic of Greek goddess Minerva in the Library of Congress symbolizes the preservation of civilization as well as the promotion of the arts and sciences.)

Inventions of Thomas Jefferson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhMjMQb-zzs
Jefferson’s lasting significance in American history stems from his remarkably varied talents. He made major contributions as a politician, statesman, diplomat, intellectual, writer, scientist, and philosopher. No other figure among the Founding Fathers shared the depth and breadth of his wide-ranging intelligence.
His presidential vision impressively combined philosophic principles with pragmatic effectiveness as a politician. Jefferson’s most fundamental political belief was an "absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority." Stemming from his deep optimism in human reason, Jefferson believed that the will of the people, expressed through elections, provided the most appropriate guidance for directing the republic’s course.

Jefferson also felt that the central government should be "rigorously frugal and simple." As president he reduced the size and scope of the federal government by ending internal taxes, reducing the size of the army and navy, and paying off the government’s debt. Limiting the federal government flowed from his strict interpretation of the Constitution.

Finally, Jefferson also committed his presidency to the protection of civil liberties and minority rights. As he explained in his inaugural address in 1801, "though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate would be oppression." Jefferson’s experience of Federalist repression in the late 1790s led him to more clearly define a central concept of American democracy.

Jefferson’s stature as the most profound thinker in the American political tradition stems beyond his specific policies as president. His crucial sense of what mattered most in life grew from a deep appreciation of farming, in his mind the most virtuous and meaningful human activity. As he explained in his NOTES ON THE STATE OF VIRGINIA (1785), "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God." Since farmers were an overwhelming majority in the American republic, one can see how his belief in the value of agriculture reinforced his commitment to democracy.

( Pictured Above: Completed in 1943, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial stands in Washington D.C. as a testament to one of the great American political philosophers.)

Jefferson’s thinking, however, was not merely celebratory, for he saw two dangerous threats to his ideal AGRARIAN DEMOCRACY. To him, financial speculation and the development of urban industry both threatened to rob men of the independence that they maintained as farmers. Debt, on the one hand, and factory work, on the other, could rob men of the economic autonomy essential for republican citizens.

Jefferson’s vision was not anti-modern, for he had too brilliant a scientific mind to fear technological change. He supported international commerce to benefit farmers and wanted to see new technology widely incorporated into ordinary farms and households to make them more productive.

Jefferson pinpointed a deeply troubling problem. How could REPUBLICAN LIBERTY and DEMOCRATIC EQUALITY be reconciled with social changes that threatened to increase inequality? The awful working conditions in early
industrial England loomed as a terrifying example. For Jefferson, western expansion provided an escape from the British model. As long as hard working farmers could acquire land at reasonable prices, then America could prosper as a republic of equal and independent citizens. Jefferson’s ideas helped to inspire a mass political movement that achieved many key aspects of his plan.

In spite of the success and importance of Jeffersonian Democracy, dark flaws limited even Jefferson’s grand vision. First, his hopes for the incorporation of technology at the household level failed to grasp how poverty often pushed women and children to the forefront of the new industrial labor. Second, an equal place for Native Americans could not be accommodated within his plans for an agrarian republic. Third, Jefferson’s celebration of agriculture disturbingly ignored the fact that slaves worked the richest farmland in the United States. Slavery was obviously incompatible with true democratic values. Jefferson’s explanation of slaves within the republic argued that African Americans’ racial inferiority barred them from becoming full and equal citizens.

Our final assessment of Jeffersonian Democracy rests on a profound contradiction. Jefferson was the single most powerful individual leading the struggle to enhance the rights of ordinary people in the early republic. Furthermore, his Declaration of Independence had eloquently expressed America’s statement of purpose "that all men are created equal." Still, he owned slaves all his life and, unlike Washington, never set them free.

For all his greatness, Jefferson did not transcend the pervasive racism of his day.

Westward Expansion: The Louisiana Purchase

What was the Louisiana Purchase?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WIMJOhOGKQ
School House Rock - Elbow Room

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bs2w41wQRtc

( Pictured Above: One of the first colored illustrations to be put into print, John H.B. Latrobe’s The Balise. Mississippi River captures the haunting image of a navigation station under a full moon at the mouth of the Mississippi River.)

Full Text of The Louisiana Purchase

http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/louisiana/text.html
Jefferson’s plans for the nation depended upon western expansion and access to international markets for American farm products. This vision was threatened, however, when France regained control of Louisiana. NAPOLEON, who had now risen to power in the French Revolution, threatened to block American access to the important port of New Orleans on the Mississippi River. New American settlements west of the Appalachian Mountains depended upon river transport to get their goods to market since overland trade to the east was expensive and impractical.

Blocking American access to New Orleans was such a grave threat to American interests that President Jefferson considered changing his traditional foreign policy stance to an anti-French alliance with the British. At the same time that he sent diplomats to France to bargain for continued trade access along the Mississippi, he also sent diplomats to Britain to pursue other policy options. James Monroe, the top person negotiating in Paris, was empowered to purchase New Orleans and West Florida for between two and ten million dollars.

Surprisingly, however, Napoleon offered much more. He was militarily overextended and needing money to continue his war against Britain. Knowing full well that he could not force Americans out of the land France possessed in North America, Napoleon offered all of LOUISIANA to the U.S. for 15 million dollars. The massive territory stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and more than doubled the size of the United States. Napoleon’s asking price worked out to be about four cents an acre.

( Pictured Above: Napoleon with the King of Rome (Napoleon III) sitting on his lap. The elder Napoleon was crowned Emperor of France by Pope Pius VII in 1804.)

The deal was struck in April 1803, but it brought a good deal of controversy. While American development in the 19th century depended on WESTERN EXPANSION, it also raised controversial issues that might lead to the disunion of the United States. Some New England Federalists, for example, began to talk of seceding from the U.S. since their political power was dramatically reduced by the purchase.

Further, Jefferson had clearly not followed his own strict interpretation of the Constitution. Federalist critics howled that the Constitution nowhere permitted the federal government to purchase new land. Jefferson was troubled by the inconsistency, but in the end decided that the Constitution’s treaty-making provisions allowed him room to act.

Most of the Senate agreed and the LOUISIANA PURCHASE easily passed 26 to 6. The dramatic expansion also contradicted Jefferson's commitment to reduce the national debt as swiftly as possible. Although 15 million dollars was a relatively small sum for such a large amount of land, it was still an enormous price tag for the modest federal budget of the day.
The Louisiana Purchase demonstrates Jefferson’s ability to make pragmatic political decisions. Although contrary to some of his central principles, guaranteeing western expansion was so important to Jefferson’s overall vision that he took bold action. The gains were dramatic, as the territory acquired would in time add 13 new states to the union. In 1812, Louisiana became the first state to join the union from land bought in the purchase. Louisiana was allowed to enter the United States with its French legal traditions largely in place. Even today, Louisiana’s legal code retains many elements that do not follow English common law traditions. The federal system could be remarkably flexible.

**Barbary Pirates**
President Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ui8OClZsWGw

In 1804, Thomas Jefferson’s presidency faced the problem of piracy. Trade with European nations were crucial to the growth of the U.S. economy. The United States continued to trade with the European nations of France, England, and nations in the Mediterranean sea. After the American Revolution, a group of countries called, Barbary States, began to attack American trade ships in the Mediterranean sea. The Barbary states included the countries of Morocco, Algiers, Tunisia, and Tripoli in North Africa. Barbary pirates would take American ship, cargo, and then enslave sailors. Thomas Jefferson had 2 courses of action he could take. First, he could pay the pirates tribute (money paid by one country to another in return for protection), or second, he could take military action. For a time, the United States decided to pay tribute, but in 1805 President Jefferson sent 600 American marines to capture the capital of Tripoli. After marching 600 miles, the marines were able to capture Tripoli and force the piracy to come to an end. The actions of the small force is still capture in the Marine Corps Anthem,- “to the shores of Tripoli.”
The Embargo Act

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTaAfzDQU8U

The Embargo Act was passed in 1807. Thomas Jefferson convinced Congress to pass this law, which did not allow trade between the United States and foreign countries. He also closed the US ports to British ships. Jefferson was trying to keep ships from being attacked by British ships. He also thought this ban on trade would cut off supplies needed by Britain and France.

The Embargo Act hurt the American economy and Britain and France. U.S. businesses were unable to sell their goods overseas. The New England merchants suffered the most. Merchants began smuggling goods and breaking the trade laws. Jefferson had to call in federal troops to enforce the embargo. Before his presidency ended, Jefferson signed an Act to repeal the Embargo Act. Congress then passed the Nonintercourse Act, which allowed the US to trade with all foreign countries except France and Britain.

http://www.ducksters.com/biography/uspresidents/thomasjefferson.php

Thomas Jefferson - Our 3rd President

http://mrnussbaum.com/presidents/thomas-jefferson/