

# **Thomas Jefferson - America's Philosopher President**

(Adapted from The Great Book of American Heroes by Bill O'neill)

Thomas Jefferson was a man who enjoyed learning, which began not long after he was born in Virginia in 1743 and continued until he died in 1826. Born into a wealthy planter family, young Thomas had the advantage of plenty of books and tutors, but unlike many of his contemporaries, he also received a formal education.

He was admitted to the College of William and Mary at the age of 16 and, by that time, he was already quite academically skilled. Jefferson could already speak and write French and Greek as well as Latin. By his mid-20s, Jefferson was evolving into a regular Renaissance man. Besides his linguistic and writing skills, he was adept with several musical instruments and knew about nature and biology.

Jefferson was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, the nation's third president, and more than any of the early presidents, a true visionary. Thomas Jefferson may have never led armies into battle, but he proved that you can win a war with ideas.