1804

Thomas Jefferson vs Charles C. Pinckney

A 20-minute lesson on the 1804 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA First Party System	ELECTORAL VOTES 176 total
WINNER Thomas Jefferson (Democratic-Republican) · 162 EV	RUNNER-UP Charles C. Pinckney (Federalist) · 14 EV
KEY ISSUE Louisiana Purchase and westward expansion; declining Federalist influence	TURNOUT 23.8%

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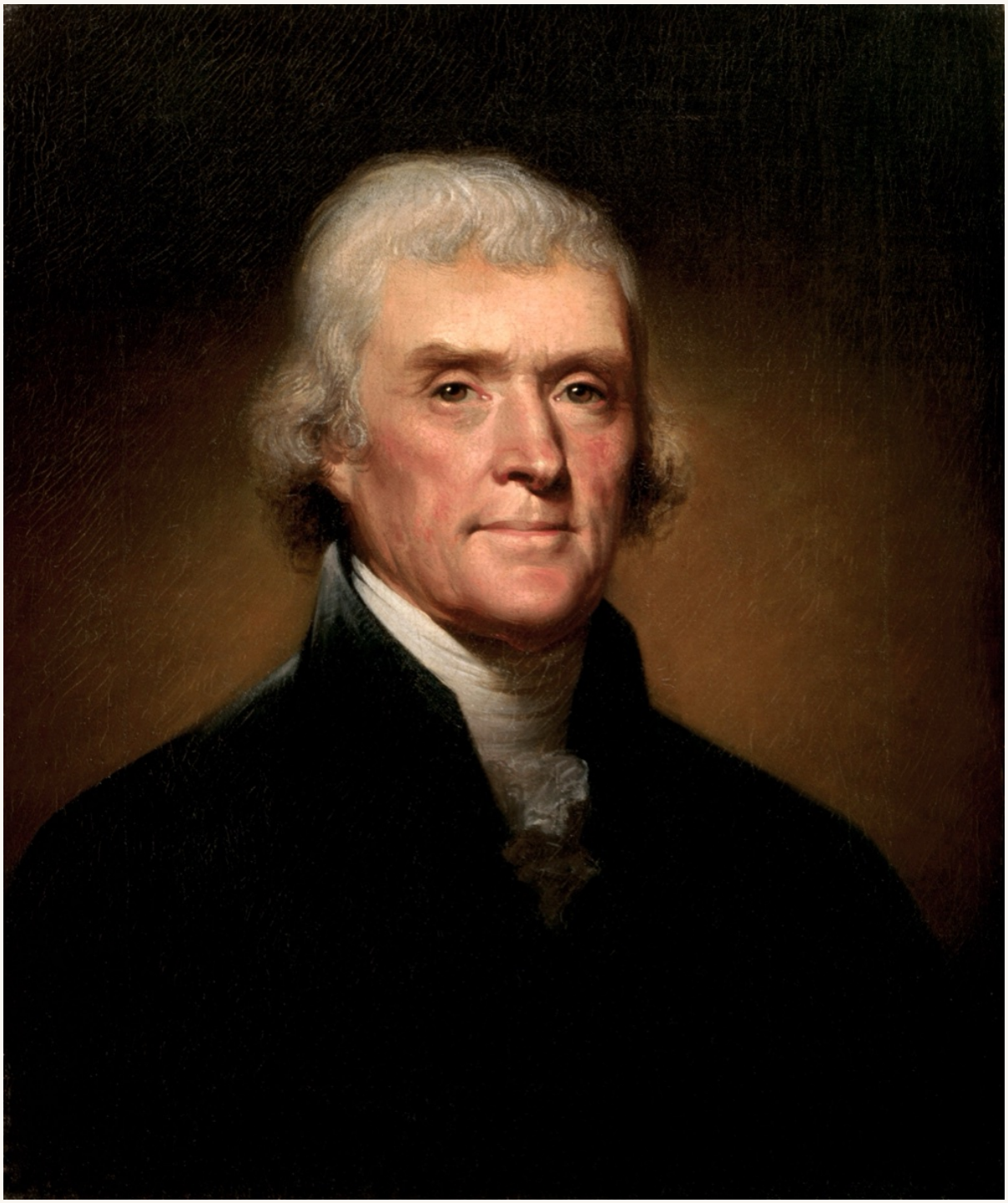
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Look at the picture. The man is Thomas Jefferson. He had become the third president in 1801. He was famous for many things. He had written the Declaration of Independence in 1776. He liked books, inventions, and gardens.

While he was president, something amazing happened. In 1803, the leader of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, offered to sell the United States a huge piece of land called Louisiana. President Jefferson said yes. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States overnight. The country went from 17 states to a much bigger country with room for many more.

In 1804 it was time for the country to vote again. Most Americans were proud of the Louisiana Purchase. They liked having more land to settle. So they voted for Thomas Jefferson again. He won by a huge amount. He got 162 electoral votes. The other man, Charles Pinckney, got only 14.

This was also the first election with new rules. The Twelfth Amendment had been added to the Constitution. Now electors voted for president and vice president on different ballots. Aaron Burr was no longer Jefferson's vice president. George Clinton from New York was the new vice president.



Thomas Jefferson, painted by Rembrandt Peale in 1800 - around the time he became the third U.S. president. He was re-elected in 1804.
REMBRANDT PEALE (1778-1860), VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Let's talk about the story

1.

Who won the 1804 presidential election?

2.

Name the big land deal that happened during Jefferson's first term.

3.

Why was 1804 a special election for the rules of voting?

Warm-up (5 min)

In 1804, the country had grown much bigger. The United States had bought a huge piece of land from France called the Louisiana Purchase. President Thomas Jefferson had run the country for four years and was running again.

Answer key

1.

Thomas Jefferson won the 1804 election. He was re-elected as the third president.

Jefferson won 162 electoral votes to Charles Pinckney's 14 - one of the biggest landslides in U.S. history.

2.

The Louisiana Purchase. In 1803, the United States bought a huge piece of land from France. It doubled the size of the country.

The Louisiana Purchase cost $15 million and added about 828,000 square miles of land. It is one of the largest land deals in history.

3.

It was the first election held under the new Twelfth Amendment. The rule said electors must vote for president and vice president on separate ballots. The old two-ballot rule was no longer used.

The Twelfth Amendment was ratified June 15, 1804. It was added because of the 1800 Jefferson-Burr tie. The 1804 election used the new rule for the first time.