

## Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

After George Washington and John Adams, Thomas Jefferson was the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the USA, from 1801 to 1809. He is remembered as a great President and the chief writer of the Declaration of Independence.

He grew up in Virginia and belonged to the rich society of landowners. He studied law and practised for some time before devoting himself completely to public service. Before becoming President of the USA, he was Governor of Virginia and Secretary of State. He died on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1826, exactly fifty years after the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Jefferson was a learned man with many interests, from architecture to music, from philosophy to science, from law to religion. He founded the University of Virginia, and his excellent library became the nucleus of the Congress Library. He was also one of the best architects of his time, leader of the neo-classic movement which came to the country after the revolution.

He designed the Capitol of Richmond, Virginia (1785), which was to influence Washington's capitol, the University of Virginia at Charlottesville (1818), his own home at Monticello, and helped design Washington, D.C.



1. Capitol of Richmond, Virginia. (Dave Newman/Shutterstock)

### 1. READING

Read the text above and underline the correct information (more than one alternative can be correct).

1. He was a lawyer / an architect / a doctor.
2. He was a farmer / a landowner / a businessman.
3. He wrote the US Constitution / the Declaration of Independence.
4. He was Governor / Minister of Arts / Secretary of State.
5. He was President of the USA for 4 / 5 / 8 years.
6. He designed the US Capitol of Washington / Richmond / Charlottesville.
7. He loved music / animals / books.

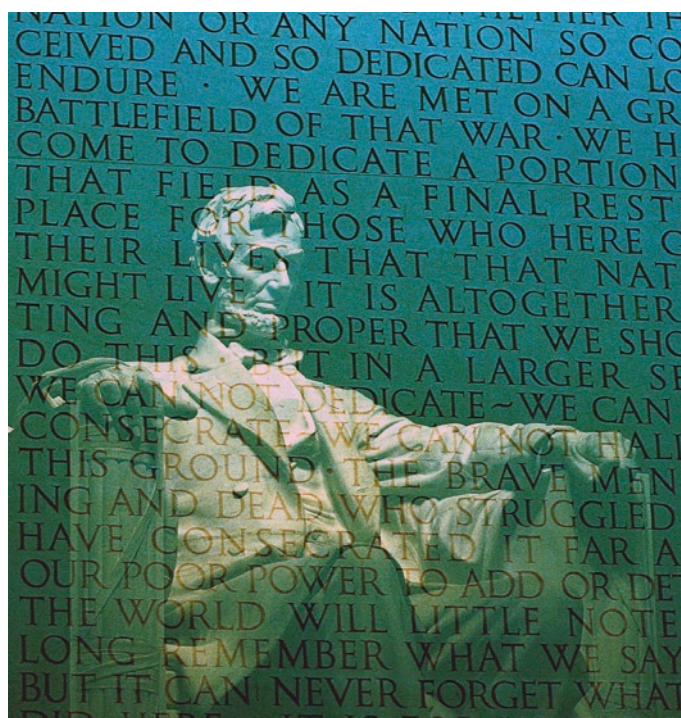
### 2. READING

Read the text below and fill in the blanks with the words.

Bible • democracy • education • elected • England • farmers • free • honesty • humble • killed • law • lawyers • leader • life • living • Massachusetts • moved • success • slavery • won

## Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky into a family of (1) ... His ancestors had originally come from (2) ... and settled in (3) ... about the time of the Pilgrim Fathers. The family then (4) ... to Indiana and later to Illinois. He grew up on the wild frontier, (5) ... at first in a log cabin, working hard and receiving no formal (6) ... The (7) ... was probably the only book the family owned. Between 1834 and 1836 Lincoln studied (8) ... and later became one of the leading (9) ... of Illinois. This enabled him to live a modest but comfortable (10) ... In 1846 he was (11) ... to Congress and fourteen years later he (12) ... the presidential election, becoming the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the USA. As a President, Lincoln was the (13) ... of the North during the Civil War and he never doubted that the North would triumph. Unfortunately he was (14) ... by a southern fanatic soon after the end of the war. Lincoln was admired for his (15) ... and moral strength. Moreover the fact that he had risen from (16) ... origins to the nation's highest office was seen as proof that (17) ... offers opportunity to all men. His two main battles were for the abolition of (18) ... and for the preservation of the Union. His efforts were crowned with (19) ... and essential to making the USA a (20) ... and powerful nation.



2. Abraham Lincoln. (Digital Stock, Washington D.C., Solana Beach, CA, 1996)

### 3. WRITING

**PAIRWORK.** Read the text below and write ten questions about President Roosevelt for your partner to answer. Then exchange your questions and write the answers.

## Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945)

**F**ranklin Delano Roosevelt was the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the USA and the only one to be elected four times. He was the central figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during a time of serious economic crisis and world war.

In October 1929, the **Wall Street Crash** caused the most serious economic depression in the history of the USA. Many banks and factories were compelled to close, industrial production was cut in half and one out of four workers lost their jobs.

The recovery from the **Great Depression** came with the new policy of the Democrat President, F. D. Roosevelt, elected in 1932. A lot of money was invested in public works such as the construction of roads, hospitals, and public buildings.

This produced a lot of jobs for the people, who had then more money to spend on consumer goods. And this enabled the factories to increase their production and create new jobs.

He called his economic and social program 'a new deal for American people'. The '**New Deal**' policies created the conditions for economic growth, gave a new optimism to businessmen to invest, improved the life of ordinary working people and introduced laws to create a more just society.

President Roosevelt also took the first steps towards the Welfare State. One of his greatest achievements was the 1935 **Social Security Act**, which gave pensions to the aged and the disabled and provided insurance against sickness and old age for workers.

During World War II, he made the USA the principal arms supplier and financier of the Allies. He planned the creation of the **United Nations (UN)**, 'a universal organization in which all peace-loving nations will finally have a chance to join', which came into existence in 1945. He also contributed to shape the post-war world when meeting the Premier of the Soviet Union Jozef Stalin and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in **Yalta**, on the Black Sea, in 1945.

## John F. Kennedy (1917-1963)

**I**n 1960 the Democratic Senator of Massachusetts John Fitzgerald Kennedy became the 35<sup>th</sup> (and the youngest ever) President of the USA. The grandson of Irish immigrants, he was the first Roman Catholic to be elected and he aroused great expectations with his progressive program of advancement for black Americans and aid to the poor. He promised an end to racial discrimination and proposed what would become the **Civil Rights Act** of 1964.

His commitment to politics, his aspirations and his ideals inspired a new generation of Americans to work for change and to devote themselves to the cause of social justice. He called his domestic program the '**New Frontier**' and in his inaugural speech he appealed to the patriotic ideals of his people: 'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country', he said.

He also created the **Peace Corps** that sent thousands of young volunteers to the underdeveloped countries in order to help in the fields of farming, education and health.

His program met strong opposition from the world of big business and the conservatives who controlled Congress. They blocked his measures for cutting taxes, increasing civil rights and extending welfare benefits. In November 1963 President Kennedy was murdered in the streets of Dallas, Texas. It was one of the most shocking events in US history and it violently affected world opinion.

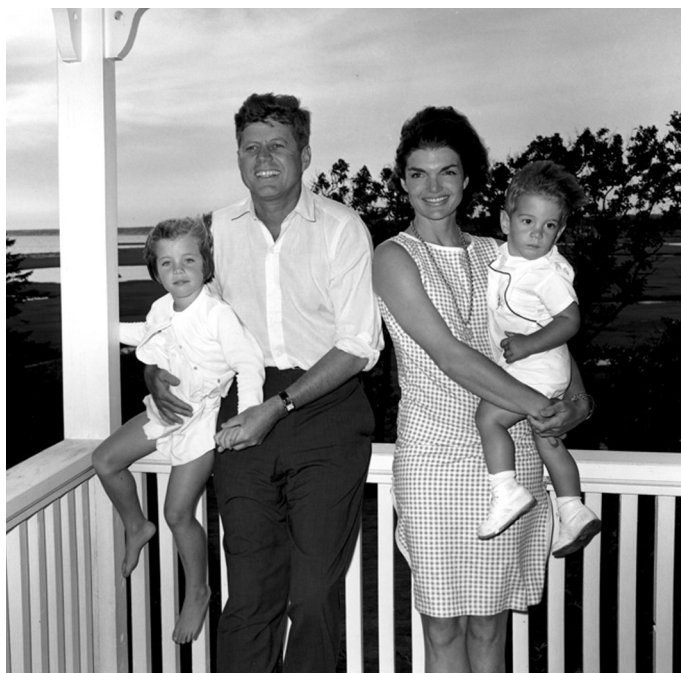
John Fitzgerald Kennedy is buried in Arlington National Cemetery and his two brothers are buried nearby: Robert (Bob) Kennedy, a Democratic senator and civil rights activist who was assassinated in 1968 while campaigning for the presidency, and Edward (Ted) Kennedy, democratic senator of Massachusetts for 47 years, who died in 2009.

### 4. READING

Read the text above and take notes on John F. Kennedy's origin and religion, political career, ideals, program and death.



3. Franklin D. Roosevelt with wife Eleanor and son . (Corbis UK Ltd)



4. President John F. Kennedy with his family at Hyannis Port, 1962. (Cecil Stoughton)