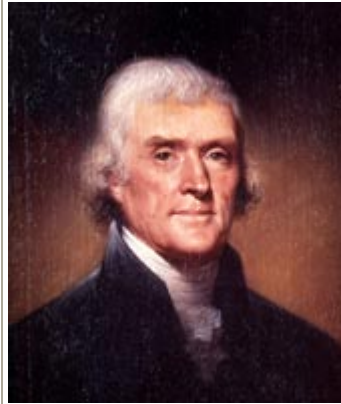




**2002 Shaping the World: Conversation on Democracy  
A Conversation with Thomas Jefferson and Marquis de Lafayette**

**Section I: Jefferson and Lafayette**



**Biography of  
Thomas Jefferson**

1800 by Rembrandt Peale

White House Collection  
White House Historical Association

Thomas Jefferson's record of public service is extraordinary: he was author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, governor of Virginia, minister to France, first secretary of state, second vice president, and third president of the United States. In his retirement, he founded the University of Virginia. He is best known for writing the Declaration of Independence, a document so enduring that it continues to be invoked around the world by people striving for liberty, equality, and the right to self-government. In his time out of the public spotlight, Jefferson pursued an astonishing array of interests, from math and the natural sciences to classical history and Native American culture. Not truly an inventor, he loved new technologies and often improved on items already in existence, such as the copying machine known as the polygraph. He read in six languages besides English, including Greek and Latin, and amassed one of early America's greatest libraries. He was a talented architect and avid gardener. He considered himself a farmer by profession and was continually searching for more progressive ways to work his plantations.



**Biography of  
Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de  
Lafayette**

1779 by Charles Willson Peale

Washington-Curtis-Lee Collection,  
Washington and Lee University,  
Lexington, Va.

The Marquis de Lafayette, a French nobleman, arrived in Philadelphia in July of 1777 and volunteered his services to the Continental Army. Lafayette would distinguished himself on the battlefield and play an important role in convincing King Louis XVI to send the much needed military support which would help

secure the American victory over British forces. Commissioned a Major General by Congress, Lafayette served as a member of George Washington's staff, fighting in the Battle of Brandywine, Battle of Monmouth and commanding forces at Yorktown during the campaign against Cornwallis. Lafayette would use his own funds to help alleviate some of the harsh winter conditions of the army at Valley Forge.

During the final year of the war, Lafayette met Thomas Jefferson, then Governor of Virginia, developing a friendship that would last almost fifty years. During Jefferson's tenure as the Minister to France, Lafayette provided valuable assistance in economic and political matters. In drafting the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, Lafayette would turn to Jefferson for advice. In France, Lafayette sought liberty and self-government for his countrymen and served in governmental and military roles to that end. Following the Reign of Terror in France, Lafayette found his political importance nearly vanished, his fortunes ruined, and many members of his family guillotined.

**You have been asked to introduce Thomas Jefferson and Marquis de Lafayette to an assembly of students. Gather background information and prepare your introductory remarks. Your remarks should be approximately 10 minutes. Deliver your remarks to your classmates.**

**Mr. Jefferson and the Marquis de Lafayette are being honored at a banquet and you have been asked to deliver a toast (words honoring a person). Prepare your toast on each and deliver to your classmates.**

**Jefferson and Lafayette have answered your advertisement for the position of Director of the Center for Democracy. After reviewing their qualifications and checking references, which one will you hire and why? [Students should develop a job description for the position.]**

**Jefferson and Lafayette have answered your advertisement for the position of Chief of Security. After reviewing their qualifications and checking references, which one will you hire and why? [Students should develop a job description for the position.]**

Thomas Jefferson and the Marquis de Lafayette had admirers as well as critics. French author Joseph Delteil (1894-1978) wrote in 1928 about Lafayette: "In short he was a poet and a child. His real crime, his great crime was imagination. He never perceived or felt reality, he never believed in it. He lived in an unreal world and once rational and iridescent, in a surrealist [correct spelling: surrealist] world... He lived in a fayettiste" world, enclosed in glass. Unfortunately life is not "fayettiset"."

[Mirabeau](#) (French politician, writer, and orator, 1749-1791) called him "a man of indecision, a wimp, incapable and harmful, a helpless buffoon."

### **Mirabeau, Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de (Count of)** 1749 -- 1791

Revolutionary politician and orator, born in Bignon, France. At 17 he entered a cavalry regiment, but was imprisoned on several occasions for his disorderly behaviour. While hiding in Amsterdam, having eloped with a young married woman, he wrote the sensational *Essai sur le despotisme* (Essay on Despotism). Sentenced to death, he was imprisoned at Vincennes in 1777 for over three years, where he wrote his famous *Essai sur les lettres de cachet* (2 vols, 1782). Elected to the Estates General by the Third Estate of Marseilles (1780), his political acumen made him a force in the National Assembly, while his audacity and eloquence endeared him to the people. He advocated a constitutional monarchy on the English model, but failed to convince Louis XVI. As the popular movement progressed, his views were also rejected by the revolutionaries. He was nonetheless elected president of the Assembly in 1791, but died soon afterwards.

[Napoleon Bonaparte](#) (Emperor of France, 1769-1821) said of him: "Lafayette was yet another simpleton, he was in no way cut out for the great part he wanted to play. His good-naturedness in politics meant that he was forever being fooled by men and circumstances."

### **Napoleon I (Napoleon Bonaparte)** 1769 – 1821

Emperor of France. Born Napoleon Buonaparte (the spelling change was made after 1796) on August 15, 1769, in the Corsican city of Ajaccio. He was the fourth of 11 children of Carlo Buonaparte and Letizia Romolino. His father derived from the lesser Corsican nobility. Following the annexation of Corsica by France in 1769, Carlo was granted the same rights and privileges as the French nobility. After an elementary education at a boys' school in Ajaccio, young Napoleon was sent in January 1779 with his older brother Joseph to the College of Autun in the duchy of Burgundy. In May of the same year he was transferred to the more fashionable College of Brienne, another military school, while his brother remained at Autun. Here Napoleon's small stature earned him the nickname of the "Little Corporal."

At Brienne, Napoleon received an excellent military and academic education, and in October 1784 he earned an appointment to the *École Militaire* of Paris. The royal military school of Paris was the finest in Europe in the years before the Revolution, and Napoleon entered the service of Louis XVI in 1785 with a formal education that had prepared him for his future role in French history. Napoleon joined an artillery unit at Valence, where he again received superior training.

#### **First Military Assignments**

Now a second lieutenant, Napoleon continued his education on his own, but he was distracted by Corsica. Until 1793 his thoughts, desires, and ambitions centered on the island of his birth. Following the death of his father, in 1786 he received an extended leave to return to Corsica to settle his family's affairs. After rejoining his regiment at Auxonne, he again spent more than a year on his native island (1789-1790), during which time he was influential in introducing the changes brought about by the Revolution. Returning to France, Napoleon was transferred to Valence in June 1791. But by October he had returned to Corsica, where he remained for seven months. He spent the critical summer of 1792 in Paris and then returned to Corsica for one last episode in October. On this visit he took part in the power struggle between the forces supporting Pasquale Paoli and those supported by the French Republic. After Paoli was victorious, Napoleon and the Bonaparte family were forced to flee to the mainland, and the young officer then turned his attention to a career in the French army.

The Revolution of 1789 did not have a major effect upon Bonaparte in its early years. He did not sympathize with the royalists. Nor did he take an active part in French politics, as his thoughts were still taken up with affairs in Corsica. Napoleon was in Paris when the monarchy was overthrown in August 1792, but no evidence indicates that he was a

republican. Upon his return from Corsica in the spring of 1793, Capt. Bonaparte was given a command with the republican army that was attempting to regain control of southern France from the proroyalist forces. He took part in the siege of Avignon, and then while on his way to join the French Army of Italy Napoleon was offered command of the artillery besieging the port of Toulon.

### **National Acclaim**

The siege of Toulon provided Napoleon with his first opportunity to display his ability as an artillery officer and brought him national recognition. France had gone to war with Prussia and Austria in 1792. England, having joined the struggle in 1793, had gained control of Toulon. After his distinguished part in dislodging the British, Napoleon was promoted to the rank of brigadier general. He also made the acquaintance of Augustin Robespierre, the younger brother of the powerful Maximilien, and though Napoleon was not politically a Jacobin, he derived benefits from his association with influential party members. The overthrow of the Jacobin regime on 9 Thermidor (July 1794) led to Napoleon's imprisonment in Fort Carré on August 9. When no evidence could be found linking him to the British, Napoleon was released after 10 days of confinement.

Throughout the winter of 1794-1795 Napoleon was employed in the defense of the Mediterranean coast. Then, in April 1795, he was ordered to Paris, and in June he was assigned to the Army of the West. He refused this position, pleading poor health. This refusal almost brought an end to his military career, and he was assigned to the Bureau of Topography of the Committee of Public Safety. While serving in this capacity, he sought unsuccessfully to have himself transferred to Constantinople. Thus Napoleon was in Paris when the royalists attempted to overthrow the Directory on October 5, 1795.

Gen. Paul Barras had been placed in command of the defense of Paris by the government, and he called upon Gen. Bonaparte to defend the Tuileries. Napoleon put down the uprising of 13 Vendémiaire by unhesitatingly turning his artillery on the attackers, dispersing the mob with what he called "a whiff of grapeshot." In gratitude he was appointed commander of the Army of the Interior and instructed to disarm Paris.

### **Marriage and Italian Campaign**

In the winter of 1795 Napoleon met Josephine de Beauharnais, the former Mademoiselle Tascher de La Pagerie. Born on the island of Martinique, she had been married to Alexandre de Beauharnais at the age of 16 and had borne him two children, Eugène and Hortense, before separating from him. Alexandre, a nobleman from Orléans, was executed in the last days of the Terror in 1794, leaving Josephine free to marry Napoleon. Their civil ceremony took place on March 9, 1796. Within a few days Napoleon left his bride behind in Paris and took up his new command at the head of the Army of Italy.

On March 26 Napoleon reached his headquarters at Nice, and on March 31 he issued the first orders for the invasion of Italy. The campaign opened on April 12, and within several weeks he had forced Piedmont out of the war. In May, Napoleon marched across northern Italy, reaching Verona on June 3. The campaign was then bogged down by the Austrian defense of Mantua, which lasted 18 months. During this period Napoleon beat back Austrian attempts to relieve the fortified city at Castiglione, Arcole, and Rivoli. Finally, in the spring of 1797, Napoleon advanced on Vienna and forced the Austrians to sign the Treaty of Campoformio on October 17, 1797. The treaty gave France the territory west of the Rhine and control of Italy.

After spending the summer and fall at the palace of Monbello, where he established with Josephine what in reality was the court of Italy, Napoleon returned to Paris the hero of the hour. He was the man who could make war and peace. Napoleon was given command of the Army of England after drawing up a plan to invade that island. However, after a brief visit to the English Channel he abandoned any hope of crossing that turbulent body of water with the available French fleet. Returning to Paris, he gave up his command.

### **Egyptian Campaign**

Napoleon did not wish to remain idle in Paris; nor did the government wish to see a popular general in the capital without a command to occupy him. Thus, when an expedition to Egypt was proposed, probably by Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, both the general and his government gave it their support. Strategically, the expedition would extend French influence into the Mediterranean and threaten British control in India. Napoleon sailed from Toulon on May 19, 1798, with an army of 35,000 men. On June 11-12 he captured Malta, and on June 30 the task force reached Alexandria, Egypt. The city was taken, and Napoleon's army marched up the west branch of the Nile to Cairo. In sight of the city and of the Pyramids, the first major battle took place. With minimal losses the French drove the Mamluks back into the desert in the Battle of the Pyramids, and all of lower Egypt came under Napoleon's control.

Napoleon reorganized the government, the postal service, and the system for collecting taxes; introduced the first printing presses; created a health department; built new hospitals for the poor in Cairo; and founded the Institut

d'Egypte. During the French occupation the Rosetta Stone was discovered, and the Nile was explored as far south as Aswan. But the military aspect of Napoleon's Egyptian venture was not so rewarding. On August 1, 1798, Horatio Nelson destroyed the French fleet in Aboukir Bay, leaving the French army cut off from France. Then Napoleon's Syrian campaign ended in the unsuccessful siege of Acre (April 1799) and a return to the Nile. After throwing a Turkish army back into the sea at Aboukir (July 1799), Napoleon left the army under the command of Gen. Jean Baptiste Kléber and returned to France with a handful of officers.

### **The Consulate**

Landing at Fréjus on October 9, 1799, Napoleon went directly to Paris, where the political situation was ripe for a coup d'état. France had become weary of the Directory, and in collaboration with Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, Joseph Fouché, and Talleyrand, Napoleon overthrew the government on 18 Brumaire (November 9-10, 1799). The Constitution of the Year VIII provided for the Consulate. Napoleon was named first consul and given virtually dictatorial powers. The trappings of the republic remained--there were two legislative bodies, the Tribune and the Corps Legislatif--but real power rested in the hands of the first consul.

Napoleon began at once to solve the problems that faced France at the turn of the century. With mailed fist and velvet glove he ended the civil war in the Vendée. He then personally led an army over the Grand-Saint-Bernard Pass into Italy and defeated the Austrians, who had declared war on France while Napoleon was in Egypt, at the Battle of Marengo (June 14, 1800). This victory, which Napoleon always considered one of his greatest, again brought Italy under French control.

After a truce that lasted into December, French armies forced Austria out of the war for the second time. The Treaty of Lunéville (February 9, 1801) reconfirmed the Treaty of Campoformio. It was followed on March 25, 1802, by the Treaty of Amiens, which ended, or at least interrupted, the war with England. The Concordat that Napoleon signed with Pope Pius VII in 1801 restored harmony between Rome and Paris, and it ended the internal religious split that had originated in the Revolution. Napoleon also reformed France's legal system with the Code Napoleon.

### **The Empire**

By 1802 Napoleon was the most popular dictator France had ever known, and he was given the position of first consul for life with the right to name his successor. The establishment of the Empire on May 18, 1804 thus changed little except the name of the government. The Constitution of the Year VIII was altered only to provide for an imperial government; its spirit was not changed. The Emperor of the French created a new nobility, set up a court, and changed the titles of government officials; but the average Frenchman noticed little difference.

The Treaty of Amiens proved to be no more than a truce, and in May 1803 the war with England was renewed. The Emperor planned to invade the island kingdom in the summer of 1805, but his naval operations went amiss. In September, Napoleon turned his back on the Channel and marched against Austria, who together with Russia had formed the Third Coalition. At Ulm (October 14) and Austerlitz (December 2) Napoleon inflicted disastrous defeats upon the Allies, forcing Alexander I of Russia to retreat behind the Neman and compelling Austria to make peace. At the Battle of Austerlitz, Napoleon reached the height of his military career. The Treaty of Pressburg (December 27, 1805) deprived Austria of additional lands and further humiliated the once mighty Hapsburg State.

### **Victory throughout the Continent**

The year 1806 was marked by war with Prussia over increased French influence in Germany. The overconfident Prussian army sang as it marched to total destruction at the battles of Jena and Auerstädt (October 14, 1806), and Napoleon entered Berlin in triumph. Prussia was reduced to a second-rate power, and the fighting moved eastward into Poland as the Russians belatedly came to the aid of their defeated ally. Although at the Battle of Eylau (Feb. 8, 1807) the French were brought to a standstill, on June 14 at Friedland the Emperor drove the Russian army from the field. Alexander I made peace at Tilsit on June 25, 1807. This understanding between the two emperors divided Europe. Alexander was to have a free hand in the east to take Finland and Bessarabia, while Napoleon was free to reshape western and central Europe as he pleased. The most significant result was the creation of the grand duchy of Warsaw (1807). Sweden was defeated in 1808 with Russia's help. Napoleon was now master of the Continent. Only England remained in the field.

### **Problems with England and Spain**

On October 21, 1805, Adm. Horatio Nelson had destroyed the combined Franco-Spanish fleet off Cape Trafalgar, Spain. This loss made it virtually impossible for Napoleon to invade England. He, therefore, introduced the Continental system, or blockade, designed to exclude all British goods from Europe. In this manner he hoped to ruin the British economy and to force the "nation of shopkeepers" to make peace on French terms. His plan did not work, and it led Napoleon into conflicts with Spain, the papacy, and Russia, and it undoubtedly formed a major cause for

the downfall of the Empire.

In Spain in 1808 French interference led to the removal of the Bourbon dynasty and to the placement of Joseph Bonaparte as king. But the Spanish people refused to accept this Napoleonic dictate and, with aid from Great Britain, kept 250,000 French troops occupied in the Peninsular War (1808-1814). The refusal of Pope Pius VII to cooperate with Napoleon and the blockade led to the Pope's imprisonment and a French take-over of the Papal States. In the case of Russia refusal proved even more serious. Alexander's refusal to close Russian ports to British ships led to Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812, which was highlighted by the Battle of Borodino (September 7) and the occupation of Moscow (September 14-October 19). However, the ultimate result of this Russian campaign was the destruction of the Grand Army of 500,000 troops.

### **Fall from Glory**

The Napoleonic system now began to break up rapidly. At its height three of the Emperor's brothers and his brother-in-law sat on European thrones. Napoleon had also secured an annulment of his marriage to Josephine and then married Marie Louise, the daughter of Emperor Francis II of Austria, in March 1810. Despite this union, Napoleon's father-in-law declared war on him in 1813. Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig (Oct. 16-18, 1813) forced him behind the Rhine, where he waged a brilliant, but futile, campaign during the first 3 months of 1814. Paris fell to the Allies on March 31, 1814, and the hopelessness of the military situation led the Emperor to abdicate at Fontainebleau (April 4, 1814) in favor of his son Napoleon II. However, the Allies refused to recognize the 3-year-old boy, and Louis XVIII was placed on the French throne.

Napoleon was exiled to the island of Elba, where he was sovereign ruler for 10 months. But as the alliance of the Great Powers broke down during the Congress of Vienna and the French people became dissatisfied with the restored royalists, Napoleon made plans to return to power. Sailing from Elba on February 26, 1815, with 1,050 soldiers, Napoleon landed in southern France and marched unopposed to Paris, where he reinstated himself on March 21. Louis XVIII fled, and thus began Napoleon's new reign: the Hundred Days. The French did not wish to renew their struggle against Europe. Nevertheless, as the Allies closed ranks, Napoleon was forced to renew the war if he was to remain on the throne of France.

The Waterloo campaign (June 12-18) was short and decisive. After a victory over the Prussian army at Ligny, Napoleon was defeated by the combined British and Prussian armies under the Duke of Wellington and Gebhard von Blücher at Waterloo on June 18, 1815. He returned to Paris and abdicated for a second time, on June 22.

Napoleon at first hoped to reach America; however, he surrendered to the commander of the British blockade at Rochefort on July 3, hoping to obtain asylum in England. Instead, he was sent into exile on the island of St. Helena. There he spent his remaining years, quarreling with the British governor, Sir Hudson Lowe, and dictating his memoirs. He died on St. Helena, after long suffering from cancer, on May 5, 1821.

[Choiseul](#) (French statesman and minister of Louis XV, 1719-1785) nick-named Lafayette "Gilles César" (playing on the name [Julius Caesar](#), Founder of the Roman Empire, 63 BC - 14AD and "Gilles" who was at the time a comedy character [simpleton]).

### **Choiseul(-Amboise), Etienne François, duc de (Duke of) 1719 -- 1785**

French statesman and minister of Louis XV, born in Lorraine, France. He served with credit in the Austrian Wars of Succession, and became Duc de Choiseul and foreign minister in 1758. He arranged the alliance between France and Austria against Frederick the Great (1756), and obtained good terms for France at the end of the Seven Years' War (1763). He improved the army and navy, and developed trade and industry. Madame du Barry alienated Louis from his able minister, who retired in 1770.

### **Augustus, (Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus) 63BC -- 14AD**

Founder of the Roman Empire, the son of Gaius Octavius, senator and praetor, and great nephew (through his mother, Atia) of Julius Caesar. On Caesar's assassination (44 BC), he abandoned student life in Illyricum and

returned to Italy where, using Caesar's money and name (he had acquired both under his will), he raised an army, defeated Antony, and extorted a wholly unconstitutional consulship from the Senate (43 BC). When Antony returned in force from Gaul later that year with Lepidus, Octavian made a deal with his former enemies, joining the so-called Second Triumvirate with them, and taking Africa, Sardinia, and Sicily as his province. A later redivision of power gave him the entire western half of the Roman world, and Antony the eastern. While Antony was distracted there by his military schemes against Parthia, and his liaison with Cleopatra, Octavian consistently undermined him at home. Matters came to a head in 31 BC, and the Battle of Actium followed, Octavian emerging victorious as the sole ruler of the Roman world. Though taking the inoffensive title princeps ('first citizen'), he was in all but name an absolute monarch. His new name, Augustus ('exalted'), had historical and religious overtones, and was deliberately chosen to enhance his prestige. His long reign (27 BC--AD 14) was a time of peace and reconstruction at home, sound administration and steady conquest abroad. In gratitude the Romans awarded him the title Pater Patriae ('Father of his Country') in 2 BC, and on his death made him a god (divus Augustus).

**Take on the role of a historian and research the life of Lafayette, then write an argument for or against each assessment of Lafayette based on your investigation.**

**You have been asked to give a presentation about Thomas Jefferson:**

**--as an admirer, make a list of bullet points for your talk**

**--as a critic, make a list of bullet points for your talk**

**How did Jefferson handle his critics?** Examine his letter to Noah Webster.

Thomas Jefferson wrote to [Noah Webster](#) from Paris in 1790:

*"In mentioning me in your Essays, and canvassing my opinions, you have done what everyman has a right to do, and it is for the good of society that that right should be freely exercised. No republic is more real than that of letters, and I am the last in principles, as I am the least in pretensions, to any dictatorship in it. Had I other dispositions, the philosophical and dispassionate spirit with which you have expressed your own opinions in opposition to mine, would still have commanded my approbation."*

### **Webster, Noah**

**1758 -- 1843**

Lexicographer, born in West Hartford, Connecticut, USA. The son of a dairy farmer, he graduated from Yale College in 1778 and served under his father as a private in the American Revolution. He was admitted to the bar in 1781, but earned his living for some years as a teacher. In 1783 he published the first volume of A Grammatical Institute of the English Language. This small volume, in later editions titled The American Spelling Book, became widely known as The Blue-Backed Speller. It was immensely popular and continued in use in schools throughout the country well into the 20th century. Webster was an ardent patriot and Federalist and entered into his speller many of those spelling forms that continue to distinguish American from British writing. He also worked for the passage of the first US copyright law in 1790. For ten years he served as editor for Federalist newspapers in New York City, but from 1803 he devoted himself largely to the study of language. A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language (1806) established his reputation as a lexicographer, but it was the appearance of a much expanded work in 1828, An American Dictionary of the English Language, that assured his preeminence in the field. As even the title hints, Webster recognized in his dictionary American contributions to the language in both new vocabulary and the development of new meanings. Although the dictionary was his main occupation for over 20 years, he also found time for other interests, including writing works on diseases, agriculture, and scientific subjects. During a ten-year residency in Amherst, Mass (1812--22), he helped to found Amherst College (1821) and he served two terms in the Massachusetts legislature. In his later years he continued to revise his dictionaries, campaign for unified copyright laws, and write essays. In 1833 he published a somewhat expurgated revision of the Authorized Version of the Bible. After his death, Webster's dictionary was seen through subsequent editions by his son-in-law, Chauncey Allen Goodrich.

**What is Jefferson telling Webster in the above quote? How does this reflect Jefferson's thoughts in the Declaration of Independence? Compare [Webster's essay on education](#) with [Jefferson's views on education](#). How do they agree? How do they disagree? Looking at education today, have any of Webster's ideas or Jefferson's ideas become a reality?**

**Write an essay outlining your thoughts on your education experience. Are there changes you would recommend to improve the quality of public education? List them. Draw up a Resolution for these improvements to be presented to the Superintendent of your school division.**