

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S
Poplar Forest



250th Anniversary
Educational Kit

Ideas That Shaped a Nation

History is more than a collection of dates and famous names. It is the story of people, ideas, and events that continue to influence our lives today. Few individuals have had a greater impact on the United States than Thomas Jefferson. He was the primary author of one of the nation's most important documents, the Declaration of Independence. He designed remarkable buildings, promoted education, and believed that ideas could improve society.

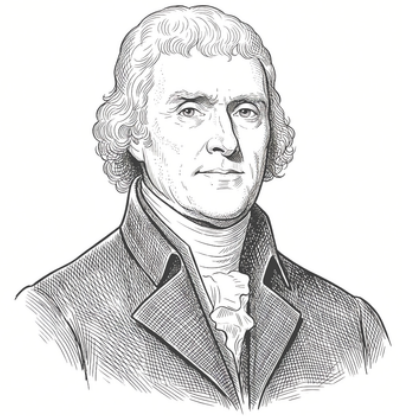
This booklet explores Thomas Jefferson and one of his favorite places, his retreat home, Poplar Forest. Along the way, you'll learn about the Declaration of Independence and why we are celebrating its 250th Anniversary.



A Question to Ask:

How can one person's ideas continue to shape a country more than 250 years later?

Meet Thomas Jefferson



Thomas Jefferson was born on April 13, 1743, in Shadwell, Virginia. As a young boy, Jefferson enjoyed reading, exploring nature, learning the violin, and asking questions about the world around him.

Education became one of the most important parts of his life. Jefferson studied mathematics, science, history, languages, philosophy, and law. He believed that learning never ends.

Throughout his lifetime, Jefferson served in many different roles. He was a lawyer, a member of the Continental Congress, Governor of Virginia, Secretary of State, Vice President, and the third President of the United States.

Jefferson was fascinated by architecture, farming, engineering, gardening, and invention. He kept notebooks that reveal he was always observing, measuring, sketching, and thinking of new ideas.

Did You Know?



Did you know Thomas Jefferson had a secret retreat home? In 1806, Jefferson designed and started building Poplar Forest! It was America's first octagonal (eight-sided) home. Jefferson believed that buildings should be beautiful and practical. He carefully considered sunlight, room arrangement, and mathematical proportions as he designed his ideal retreat. He often went to Poplar Forest after his presidency to relax, read, spend time with his grandchildren, and think freely in total peace.

Words to Know:

- **Sanctuary:** A place of safety, privacy, or quiet.
- **Octagon:** A geometric shape with eight sides and eight angles.
- **Retreat:** A private place used for rest and reflection.

Thomas Jefferson considered the octagon a perfect shape for a house. He used geometry to design the layout, ensuring that every room was filled with sunlight throughout the day. Poplar Forest was Jefferson's sanctuary, a quiet place to spend time reading books, writing letters, observing nature, and developing new ideas.

Poplar Forest was a highly profitable tobacco plantation. While Jefferson used the villa to relax, the thousands of acres surrounding it were used to grow crops. It was one of the most successful and profitable pieces of land he owned.

Poplar Forest Plantation

While Thomas Jefferson used Poplar Forest as his personal retreat, it was also a working plantation. The octagonal house, the earthen mounds, the sunken lawn and the surrounding fields were constructed and maintained by a community of over 90 enslaved African Americans. Craftsmen like John Hemmings did the intricate woodwork inside the home, and other enslaved men and women performed a variety of jobs, including farming the land, cooking, brickmaking, blacksmithing, woodworking, carpentry, masonry, weaving, spinning and domestic service.

Today, archaeologists at Poplar Forest continue to uncover the stories of the plantation, ensuring these contributions are not forgotten.

Words to Know:

- **Plantation:** A very large estate or farm where crops are tended and grown to sell.
- **Archaeology:** the study of things that people made, used, and left behind.
- **Craftsman:** A worker skilled in a craft or trade.



Poplar Forest was built as America's first octagonal home. Jefferson loved geometric shapes. He designed the house with eight sides, and even the brick outhouses (privies) on the property are miniature octagons.

Uncovering History

Even after two centuries, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest continues to reveal new stories. Today, archaeologists carefully excavate the ground to uncover objects buried in the soil. They help us understand how people lived, worked, and interacted with each other.

Items found at Poplar Forest include:

- Pottery fragments
- Glass bottles
- Buttons
- Animal bones
- Children's toys
- Coins
- Nails & tools

While these objects may seem ordinary, together they tell extraordinary stories. Archaeologists work to answer questions that written documents may not.



Archaeologists use tools of the present to locate clues of the past

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence when he was just 33 years old. He was chosen to write the first draft because he was known as the best writer in the Continental Congress.



Writing The Declaration

Thomas Jefferson was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence. By the mid-1770s, tensions between Great Britain and the American colonies had grown stronger. Colonists disagreed with British taxes and were unhappy with many other things. They believed they should have more control over their own government.

In June 1776, Thomas Jefferson was selected to write a declaration explaining why the colonies wished to become independent.

Jefferson worked carefully, drafting what would become the Declaration of Independence. Other members of Congress suggested changes before the final version was approved on July 4, 1776. This became the "birthday" of the United States.

There are 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence. They represented the original 13 colonies.



Signers of The Declaration

- John Adams — Massachusetts | Age: 40 | Born: Braintree, MA | Occupation: Lawyer
- Samuel Adams — Massachusetts | Age: 53 | Born: Boston, MA | Occupation: Merchant, Politician
- Josiah Bartlett — New Hampshire | Age: 46 | Born: Amesbury, MA | Occupation: Physician
- Carter Braxton — Virginia | Age: 39 | Born: Newington, VA | Occupation: Merchant, Planter
- Charles Carroll — Maryland | Age: 38 | Born: Annapolis, MD | Occupation: Planter
- Samuel Chase — Maryland | Age: 35 | Born: Somerset County, MD | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- Abraham Clark — New Jersey | Age: 50 | Born: Elizabethtown, NJ | Occupation: Lawyer, Surveyor
- George Clymer — Pennsylvania | Age: 37 | Born: Philadelphia, PA | Occupation: Merchant
- William Ellery — Rhode Island | Age: 48 | Born: Newport, RI | Occupation: Lawyer
- William Floyd — New York | Age: 41 | Born: Brookhaven, NY | Occupation: Farmer, Soldier
- Benjamin Franklin — Pennsylvania | Age: 70 | Born: Boston, MA | Occupation: Printer, Scientist, Diplomat
- Elbridge Gerry — Massachusetts | Age: 32 | Born: Marblehead, MA | Occupation: Merchant
- Button Gwinnett — Georgia | Age: 41 | Born: Gloucestershire, England | Occupation: Merchant, Planter
- Lyman Hall — Georgia | Age: 52 | Born: Wallingford, CT | Occupation: Physician
- John Hancock — Massachusetts | Age: 39 | Born: Braintree, MA | Occupation: Merchant
- Benjamin Harrison — Virginia | Age: 50 | Born: Berkeley, VA | Occupation: Planter
- John Hart — New Jersey | Age: 63 | Born: Hopewell, NJ | Occupation: Farmer
- Joseph Hewes — North Carolina | Age: 46 | Born: Kingston, NJ | Occupation: Merchant
- Thomas Heyward Jr. — South Carolina | Age: 30 | Born: St. Luke's Parish, SC | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- William Hooper — North Carolina | Age: 34 | Born: Boston, MA | Occupation: Lawyer
- Stephen Hopkins — Rhode Island | Age: 69 | Born: Providence, RI | Occupation: Merchant, Public Official
- Francis Hopkinson — New Jersey | Age: 38 | Born: Philadelphia, PA | Occupation: Lawyer, Writer, Judge
- Samuel Huntington — Connecticut | Age: 45 | Born: Windham, CT | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- Thomas Jefferson — Virginia | Age: 33 | Born: Shadwell, VA | Occupation: Lawyer, Planter
- Francis Lightfoot Lee — Virginia | Age: 41 | Born: Westmoreland County, VA | Occupation: Planter
- Richard Henry Lee — Virginia | Age: 44 | Born: Westmoreland County, VA | Occupation: Planter
- Francis Lewis — New York | Age: 63 | Born: Llandaff, Wales | Occupation: Merchant
- Philip Livingston — New York | Age: 60 | Born: Albany, NY | Occupation: Merchant

Signers of The Declaration

- Thomas Lynch Jr. — South Carolina | Age: 26 | Born: Prince George's Parish, SC | Occupation: Lawyer, Planter
- Thomas McKean — Delaware | Age: 42 | Born: New London, PA | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- Arthur Middleton — South Carolina | Age: 34 | Born: Middleton Place, SC | Occupation: Planter
- Lewis Morris — New York | Age: 50 | Born: Morrisania, NY | Occupation: Farmer, Planter
- Robert Morris — Pennsylvania | Age: 42 | Born: Liverpool, England | Occupation: Merchant
- John Morton — Pennsylvania | Age: 51 | Born: Ridley, PA | Occupation: Surveyor, Jurist
- Thomas Nelson Jr. — Virginia | Age: 37 | Born: Yorktown, VA | Occupation: Merchant, Planter
- William Paca — Maryland | Age: 35 | Born: Abingdon, MD | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- Robert Treat Paine — Massachusetts | Age: 45 | Born: Boston, MA | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- John Penn — North Carolina | Age: 35 | Born: Caroline County, VA | Occupation: Lawyer
- George Read — Delaware | Age: 42 | Born: Cecil County, MD | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- Caesar Rodney — Delaware | Age: 47 | Born: Dover, DE | Occupation: Lawyer, Politician, Soldier
- George Ross — Pennsylvania | Age: 46 | Born: New Castle, DE | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- Benjamin Rush — Pennsylvania | Age: 30 | Born: Byberry, PA | Occupation: Physician
- Edward Rutledge — South Carolina | Age: 26 | Born: Charleston, SC | Occupation: Lawyer
- Roger Sherman — Connecticut | Age: 55 | Born: Newton, MA | Occupation: Lawyer, Merchant
- James Smith — Pennsylvania | Age: 57 | Born: Ireland | Occupation: Lawyer
- Richard Stockton — New Jersey | Age: 45 | Born: Princeton, NJ | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist
- Thomas Stone — Maryland | Age: 33 | Born: Charles County, MD | Occupation: Lawyer
- George Taylor — Pennsylvania | Age: 60 | Born: Ireland | Occupation: Ironmaster
- Matthew Thornton — New Hampshire | Age: 62 | Born: Ireland | Occupation: Physician
- George Walton — Georgia | Age: 27 | Born: Cumberland County, VA | Occupation: Lawyer
- William Whipple — New Hampshire | Age: 46 | Born: Kittery, ME | Occupation: Merchant, Sea Captain
- William Williams — Connecticut | Age: 45 | Born: Lebanon, CT | Occupation: Merchant
- James Wilson — Pennsylvania | Age: 33 | Born: Carskerdo, Scotland | Occupation: Lawyer
- John Witherspoon — New Jersey | Age: 53 | Born: Gifford, Scotland | Occupation: Minister, Educator
- Oliver Wolcott — Connecticut | Age: 49 | Born: Windsor, CT | Occupation: Lawyer, Jurist, Soldier
- George Wythe — Virginia | Age: 50 | Born: Elizabeth City County, VA | Occupation: Lawyer, Scholar

Signers List Activities

History is more than dates on a timeline, it is a story made by real people! Here are some additional activities based on the Signers List. We invite you to try these interactive activities with your students.



Demographic Detectives:

Have kids find the average, youngest, and oldest ages of the signers. They can make a quick graph to see how young many of the founders actually were.

Geographic Matchmaker:

Grab a map and have kids mark where the signers were born. It's a great way to see which areas had the most influence back in 1776.

Career Day 1776:

Assign each student a job from the list, like a lawyer, merchant, or printer. Have them give a quick speech on why someone with that job might want to break away from a king.

Time Travel Journal:

Kids pick one signer and write a diary entry about July 4, 1776. They just need to use their person's real age, hometown, and job to make the story come alive.

WHO AM I ?

Signers of the Declaration Scavenger Hunt & Guessing Game



Turn reading into a fast- paced scavenger hunt! Read the clues out loud and let students race to scan their Signers of the Declaration sheets to find the right answer.

Clues:

1. I represented Pennsylvania and was 70 years old. I was born in Boston, MA, and my occupations are listed as printer, scientist, and diplomat.
Who am I?
2. I was a 33-year-old lawyer born in Shadwell, Virginia. I am famous for writing the very first draft of the Declaration.
Who am I?
3. I represented New Jersey and was 53 years old. I was born in Gifford, Scotland, and worked as a minister and educator.
Who am I?
4. I represented New Hampshire and was 46 years old. I was born in Kittery, ME, and worked as a merchant and sea captain.
Who am I?
5. I represented Pennsylvania and was 60 years old. I was born in Ireland, and my occupation was an ironmaster.
Who am I?

WHO AM I ?

Scavenger Hunt & Guessing Game



6. I represented Massachusetts and was 40 years old. I was born in Braintree, MA, and worked as a lawyer.
Who am I?
7. I represented Georgia and was 27 years old. I was born in Cumberland County, VA, and worked as a lawyer.
Who am I?
8. I represented South Carolina and was 26 years old. I was born in Charleston, SC, and worked as a lawyer.
Who am I?
9. I represented Georgia and was 41 years old. I was born in Gloucestershire, England, and worked as a merchant and planter.
Who am I?
10. I represented Rhode Island and was 69 years old. I was born in Providence, RI, and worked as a merchant and public official.
Who am I?

Answer Key

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Benjamin Franklin | 6. John Adams |
| 2. Thomas Jefferson | 7. George Walton |
| 3. John Witherspoon | 8. Edward Rutledge |
| 4. William Whipple | 9. Button Gwinnett |
| 5. George Taylor | 10. Stephen Hopkins |



Fun Facts

About the Declaration of Independence



The Declaration of Independence was created in 1776 by representatives from the original thirteen colonies to declare independence from Britain. To celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2026, we've listed some fun facts.

1

The Colonies actually declared their independence on July 2, and not the 4th of July. They approved the Declaration of Independence on July 4th.

2

Not all the signers signed the Declaration of Independence on the same day. Most signed the document on August 2nd and some even signed it several days later.

3

Eight delegates never signed the Declaration of Independence, out of the 50 who were thought to be present during the voting on independence in early July 1776. They were: John Alsop, George Clinton, John Dickinson, Charles Humphreys, Robert R. Livingston, John Rogers, Thomas Willing, and Henry Wisner.

4

The youngest member to sign the declaration was Edward Rutledge at the age of 26.

5

Four of the "Founding Fathers" that did not sign the Declaration of Independence were George Washington, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison.

6

Eight of the signers were born in Britain, and the other signers were born in the Colonies.

7

There is something written on the back of the document. As far as anyone can tell, it is not a secret code leading to hidden treasure. It says, "Original Declaration of Independence dated 4th of July 1776."





Fun Facts

About the Declaration of Independence



8

When General George Washington had the Declaration read to his troops in New York City, British forces were already landing in New York Harbor. General Washington's audience was so inspired, it tore down a statue of King George III, which was transported to Connecticut and later melted it into 42,000 musket balls.

9

At the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, about 2.5 million people lived in the Thirteen Colonies.

10

During World War II (1941-1945) the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were hidden in Fort Knox, the gold depository in Kentucky, which is named after Henry Knox, the 1st US Secretary of War and a major general during the Revolutionary War.

11

John Hancock, as President of the Congress, signed the document first. His was the first signature, and the biggest, symbolizing his commitment to American independence and became an iconic symbol of American patriotism.

12

Thomas Jefferson wrote the original draft. However, it was edited by other members of the Congress. They took out about one-fourth of the original material.

13

It took Thomas Jefferson from June 11 until June 28, 1776 to draft it, about 17 days, and it took 3 days (from July 2-July 4) for Congress to make changes. The official document that everyone signed took Timothy Matlack, a scribe, 15 days to write by hand on parchment.



Did You Know?

- Thomas Jefferson owned thousands of books and believed reading was essential to lifelong learning.
- Poplar Forest's house is based on an octagonal design, making it one of the most unusual homes in early America.
- Jefferson wrote many letters throughout his lifetime and many survive today.
- Archaeologists continue to make discoveries at Poplar Forest every year.
- The Declaration of Independence inspired freedom movements around the world.
- The word "Semiquincentennial" means 250th anniversary.
- Many original bricks, artifacts, and architectural features from Poplar Forest have been preserved or restored.

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, a famous document stating that all people “are created equal” and have the right to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

In 2026, the United States commemorates and celebrates its Semiquincentennial, the 250 Anniversary of our freedom and ideals.

Words can go in any direction
Words can share letters as they cross over each other

Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest

Word Search

Y	N	T	V	R	V	S	E	B	M	U	Z	K	F	V
R	O	C	E	E	I	S	S	C	R	F	H	I	R	N
J	I	E	R	T	R	P	B	E	V	I	N	Q	O	O
D	T	T	X	R	G	Z	Y	E	R	D	T	G	N	D
H	U	I	F	E	I	R	T	C	E	G	A	A	I	S
M	L	H	O	A	N	G	R	P	I	T	N	I	I	Z
D	O	C	U	T	I	N	E	H	C	T	Y	O	V	N
E	V	R	N	G	A	N	B	O	Y	T	I	O	C	J
M	E	A	D	J	D	U	I	Y	I	E	J	Z	K	Y
O	R	V	I	E	Y	A	L	L	N	G	B	T	E	A
C	Q	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	A	L	C	E	D	N
R	T	C	G	S	L	U	F	R	E	E	D	O	M	K
A	E	E	M	U	Q	C	O	L	O	N	I	E	S	K
C	J	T	N	E	D	I	S	E	R	P	X	Z	G	F
Y	N	O	I	T	U	T	I	T	S	N	O	C	O	Z

Architect
Colonies
Declaration
Founding
Liberty
Retreat

Britain
Congress
Democracy
Freedom
Octagon
Revolution

Citizen
Constitution
Equality
Independence
President
Virginia

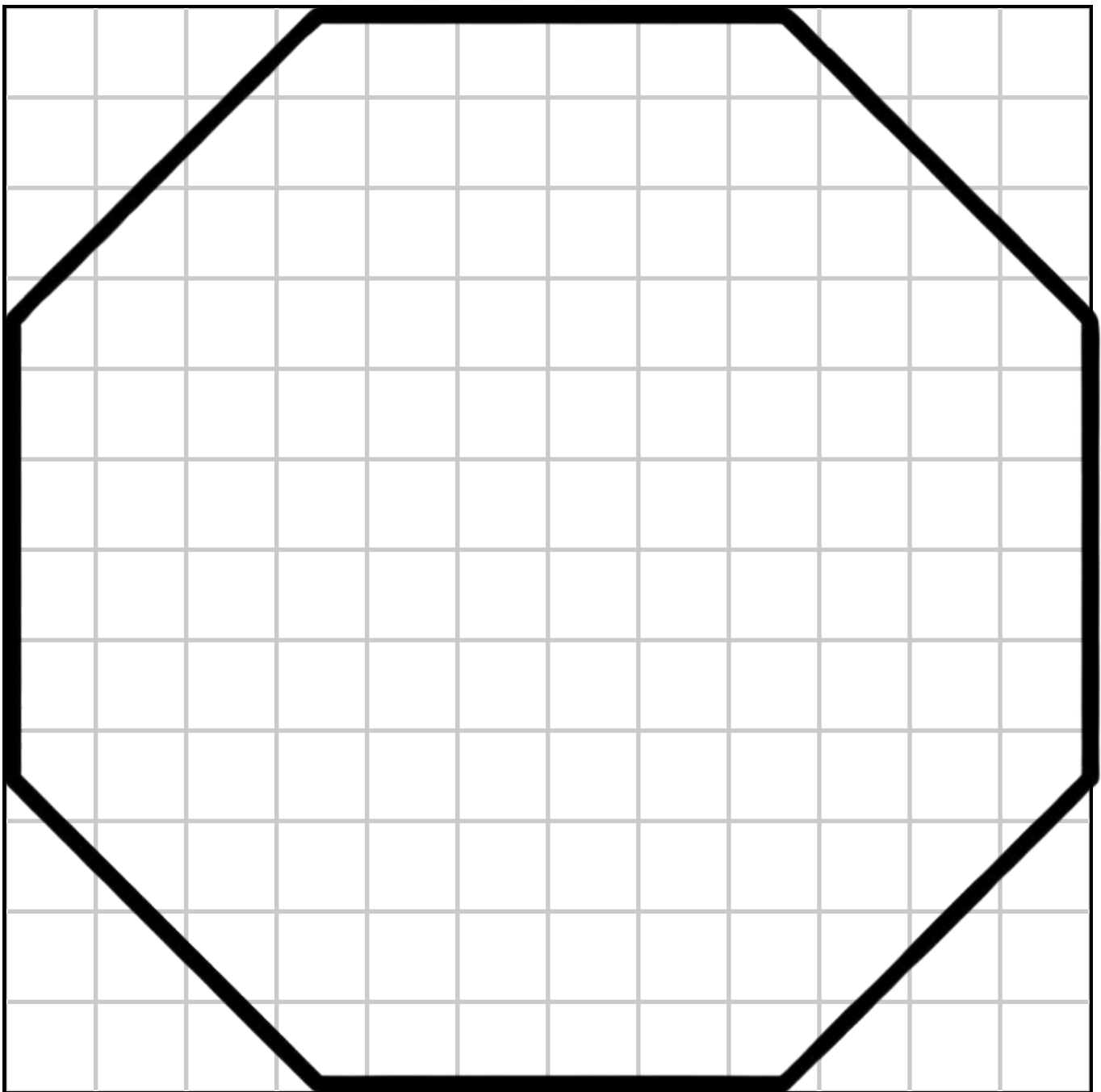
Jefferson's Poplar Forest Word Search

Answer Key

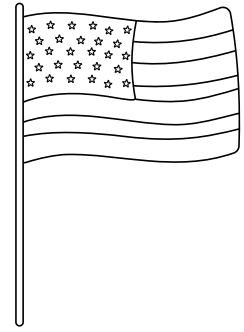
Y	N	T	V	R	V	S	E	B	M	U	Z	K	F	V
R	O	C	E	E	I	S	S	C	P	F	H	I	R	N
J	I	E	R	T	R	P	B	E	V	I	N	Q	O	O
D	T	T	X	R	G	Z	Y	E	R	D	T	G	N	D
H	U	I	F	E	I	R	T	C	E	G	A	A	I	S
M	L	H	O	A	N	G	R	P	I	T	N	I	I	Z
D	O	C	U	T	I	N	E	H	C	T	Y	O	V	N
E	V	R	N	G	A	N	B	O	Y	T	I	O	C	J
M	E	A	D	J	D	U	I	Y	I	E	J	Z	K	Y
O	R	V	I	E	Y	A	L	L	N	G	B	T	E	A
C	Q	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	A	L	C	E	D	N
R	T	C	G	S	L	U	F	R	E	E	D	O	M	K
A	E	E	M	U	Q	C	O	L	O	N	I	E	S	K
C	J	T	N	E	D	I	S	E	R	P	X	Z	G	F
Y	N	O	I	T	U	T	I	T	S	N	O	C	O	Z

Design Your Own Retreat House

1. Using the grid below, draw a floor plan for your own retreat house.
2. Include at least one octagon or one square room.
3. Label where your doors, windows and rooms will be!



Make Your Own Flag



How to Make Your Own Flag

The American flag is symbolic of our country and depicts the original thirteen colonies using the red and white stripes. The stars on the blue background represent the 50 states in the United States of America. Every state has a flag with specific elements to represent something about their state.

If you were given the task to create a flag for a new country, what would you include? Not all flags are rectangular, or square, some may be triangular in shape. Use your imagination to create a flag.

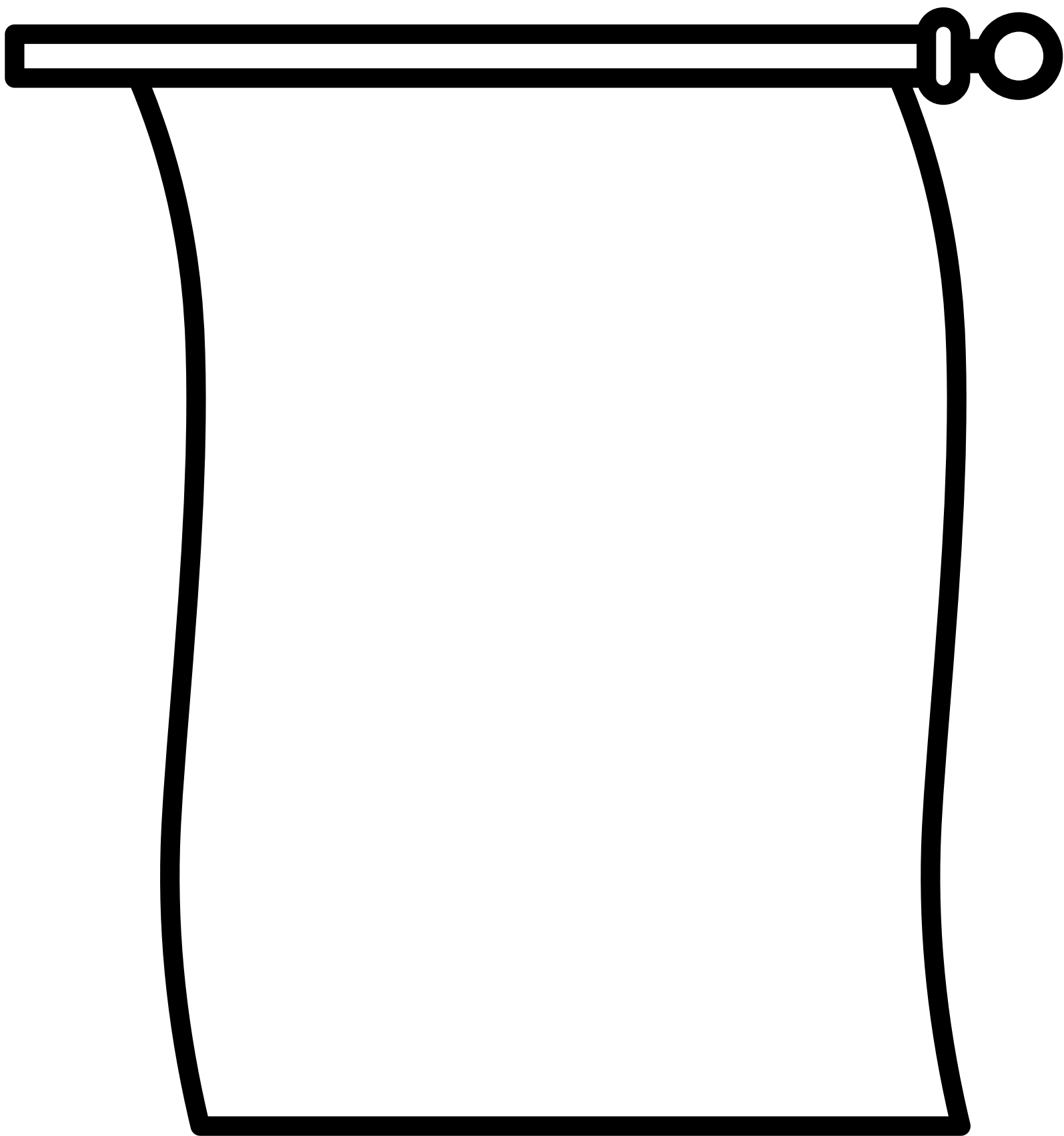
You can use the outlines on the next pages or you can use construction paper to create your own shape.

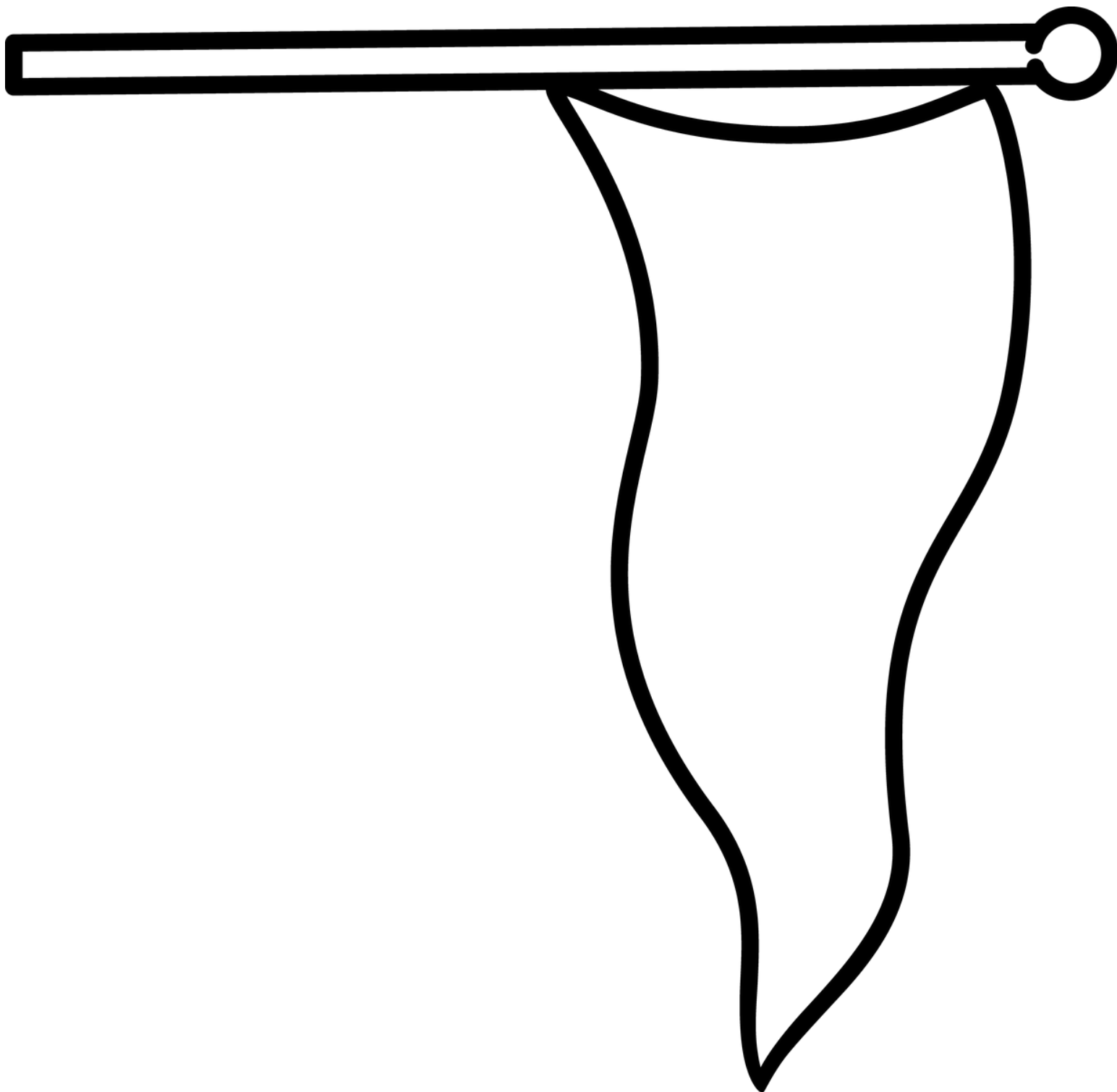
Supplies Needed:

Construction paper

Colored pencils, markers, crayons

Scissors





Poplar Forest Activities:



Activity 1:

Innovations and Inventions

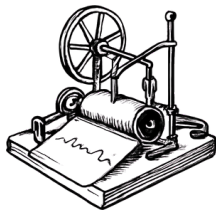
Thomas Jefferson loved to see new ideas and make them better. He was a true innovator! For example, he saw skylights when he was in Europe, and he built the largest one in America at that time right here at Poplar Forest. He would also see a problem and try to solve it like he did when he invented the moldboard of least resistance to improve upon plowing done with horses.

Thinking like Jefferson did - always trying to improve things - what is something you'd like to be innovative with and improve? How would you improve it? Draw your innovation.

If you could show Jefferson one modern invention, what would you show him and why? Draw that invention.

Activity 2:

Letter Writing



Thomas Jefferson wrote almost 20,000 letters in his lifetime, and we have copies of most of those letters because Jefferson used a polygraph machine to create copies for his own records. If you could write a letter to Thomas Jefferson, what would you write to him and why?

Recommended Resources

Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest: www.poplarforest.org

Monticello: <https://www.monticello.org/for-educators/digital-offerings>

Teaching American History
<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/collections/the-american-founding>

The Liberty Trail: <https://thelibertytrail.org>

PragerU Kids Playlists: <https://www.prageru.com/kids-playlists>

Be Washington game from Mt Vernon: <https://play.bewashington.org>

Benjamin Franklin's Guide to the US Government: <https://bensguide.gpo.gov>

Tuttle Twins: <https://www.angel.com/watch/tuttle-twins>

Learning Activity about the Declaration from the American Philosophical Society: <https://www.amphilsoc.org/editing-declaration>

Road to Revolution (interactive map):
<https://civilwartrails.org/road-to-revolution/>

The Great Experiment VR experience from Shenandoah University:
<https://www.su.edu/scil/projects/the-great-experiment/>

Year in Revolution from The Society of the Cincinnati (video series):
<https://www.americanrevolutioninstitute.org/year-in-revolution/>

Virtual tours to historic sites from Hull Film: <https://hullfilm.com/>

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S POPLAR FOREST

250th Anniversary Educational Kit

Virginia Standards of Learning Alignment Guide

Teacher Reference • Grades 4–5

This guide provides a quick-reference map between the activities and content in the Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest 250th Anniversary Educational Kit and Virginia's History and Social Science Standards of Learning. Page numbers below refer to the pages of the educational kit itself.

Primary Standards Alignment

SOL	Standard Connection	Kit Pages	Where Students Encounter It
VS Skills	Historical inquiry, source analysis, maps, data, evidence, and communication	pp. 6, 8–12, 16–18, 22	Archaeology; Signers List; Demographic Detectives; Geographic Matchmaker; Time Travel Journal; Scavenger Hunt; Word Search; Retreat House; Innovation and Letter Writing
VS.4	Colonial Virginia: agriculture, diverse cultures, and experiences of enslaved and free people	p. 5	Poplar Forest Plantation: enslaved African Americans, agriculture, skilled trades, domestic work, and archaeology
VS.5	Virginia and the American Revolution	pp. 3, 7–15	Jefferson, the Declaration of Independence, Virginia signers, independence, revolutionary ideas, and historical figures
VS.5a	Principles and events leading colonists to declare independence; ideas expressed in the Declaration	pp. 7, 13–15	Writing the Declaration; Declaration facts; independence, liberty, and founding ideals
VS.5b	Contributions, leadership, and experiences of Virginians during the Revolution	pp. 3, 7–12	Jefferson biography; Virginia signers; Signers List; Who Am I? Scavenger Hunt
VS.6	Development of the new United States and contributions/ideas of important Virginians	pp. 3–4, 15, 22	Jefferson's life and ideas; Poplar Forest; architecture; innovation; education; founding ideals
USI Skills	Historical and geographic investigation and communication	pp. 6, 8–12, 16–18, 22	Artifact analysis; mapping; demographic analysis; historical writing; design and creative response
USI.5	Colonial America and the experiences of different groups	p. 5	Poplar Forest Plantation; enslaved labor; occupations and skilled trades; agriculture and daily work
USI.6	Causes, ideas, events, and consequences of the American Revolution	pp. 7–15	Colonial grievances; Declaration; Jefferson; signers; independence; revolutionary ideas
USI.6b–d	Causes/issues of the Revolution; Declaration ideas; Revolutionary leaders	pp. 7–15	Writing the Declaration; Signers List; Who Am I?; Jefferson biography; Declaration activities

Page-by-Page Standards Map

Kit Page(s)	Section/Activity	SOL Connections	Teacher Use
2	Introduction: Jefferson, Poplar Forest & the 250th Anniversary	VS Skills; VS.5; USI.6	Historical significance; Jefferson; Declaration; 250th Anniversary Jefferson's Virginia identity,
3	Meet Thomas Jefferson	VS.5b; VS.6	roles, interests, and contributions
4	Poplar Forest	VS Skills; VS.6	Architecture, design, observation, measurement, and Jefferson's retreat
5	Poplar Forest Plantation	VS.4; USI.5	Enslaved community, agriculture, skilled trades, and plantation life

6	Uncovering History	VS Skills; USI Skills	Archaeology, artifacts, evidence, and reconstructing past lives
7	Writing the Declaration	VS.5a; USI.6	Colonial grievances, independence, Jefferson, Congress, and the Declaration
8–9	Signers of the Declaration	VS.5b; USI.6d; USI Skills	Revolutionary-era people, Virginia signers, occupations, geography, and biographical evidence
10	Signers List Activities	VS Skills; USI Skills	Data analysis, graphing, mapping, occupations, and historical writing
11–12	Who Am I? Scavenger Hunt	VS.5b; USI.6d; USI Skills	Identifying historical figures from biographical evidence
13–14	Fun Facts About the Declaration	VS.5a; USI.6	Declaration chronology, signers, Congress, Jefferson’s drafting process, and Revolutionary context
15	Thomas Jefferson & Poplar Forest / 250th Anniversary	VS.5; VS.6; USI.6	Jefferson, founding ideals, Poplar Forest, preservation, and the Semiquincentennial
16–17	Word Search	VS.5; VS.6; USI.6	Vocabulary: liberty, independence, Revolution, Congress, colonies, Jefferson, Virginia, etc.
18	Design Your Own Retreat House	VS Skills; VS.6	Architecture, spatial reasoning, design, and application of historical knowledge
19–21	Make Your Own Flag	VS Skills; civic connections	National symbols, representation, design, and interpretation
22	Poplar Forest Activities: Innovations & Inventions; Letter Writing	VS Skills; VS.6; USI Skills	Innovation, problem solving, Jefferson’s correspondence, and historical response
23	Recommended Resources	Supports extension of VS/USI inquiry	Additional resources for further investigation and classroom extension

Recommended Grade-Level Use

Grade 4 • Virginia Studies Use the kit to support Virginia history, colonial Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, archaeology, Poplar Forest, and the experiences of people who lived and worked in Virginia.

Grade 5 • United States History to 1865 Use the kit as a supplemental resource for colonial America, the causes and ideas of the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary leaders, and the founding of the United States.

Grades 6–8 • Supplemental Use Individual activities can extend historical inquiry, source analysis, geography, research, writing, and review of the American founding. The kit may be paired with grade-specific standards and classroom materials.

History & Social Science Skills in Action

- Analyze historical evidence through artifacts, archaeology, documents, biographies, and lists of signers.
- Interpret geographic information by locating signers’ birthplaces and considering geographic patterns.
- Analyze data by examining the ages, occupations, and locations of Declaration signers.
- Construct historical narratives through the Time Travel Journal and letter-writing activities.
- Use evidence to answer questions about Jefferson, Poplar Forest, the Revolution, and the Declaration.
- Apply historical knowledge through architecture, flag design, innovation, and other creative activities.
- Consider multiple perspectives by examining the people and labor associated with Poplar Forest.

Teacher Note

The page references in this guide correspond to the 23-page educational kit reviewed for this alignment. Standards are presented as primary instructional connections; individual activities may support additional skills or standards depending on how a teacher implements them. Teachers should use the current Virginia Department of Education standards and local curriculum pacing documents when planning instruction.