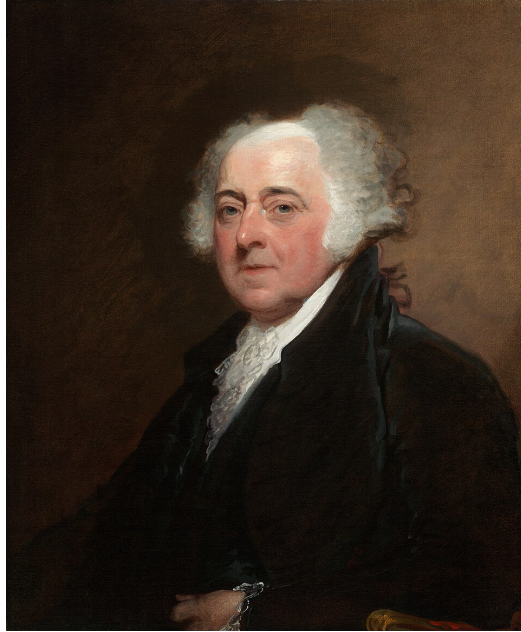




JOHN ADAMS

1735 to 1826

Second President; Champion of Independence

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Who Was John Adams?

John Adams was born in 1735 in Massachusetts. He became a lawyer known for his honesty and his belief in the rule of law. Early in his career he defended British soldiers after the Boston Massacre because he believed everyone deserves a fair trial, even when it was unpopular.

Adams became one of the strongest voices for American independence. At the Continental Congress he pushed hard for separation from Britain and helped persuade others to support the Declaration of Independence. He also recommended George Washington to lead the army.

He served the new nation as a diplomat in Europe, helping secure loans and the peace treaty with Britain. He became the first Vice President under Washington, then the second President of the United States in 1797.

Adams was known for his strong principles and his refusal to bend them for popularity. He and his wife Abigail wrote thousands of letters that still teach us about the founding era. He died on July 4, 1826, the same day as Thomas Jefferson.

Did You Know?

- He defended the British soldiers from the Boston Massacre in court because he believed in a fair trial for all.
- He was the first President to live in the White House.
- His son, John Quincy Adams, also became President of the United States.
- He and Jefferson were rivals who later became close friends through years of letters.
- He and Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826.

Timeline of His Life

Follow the life of one of independence's most determined champions.

1735	Born October 30 in Braintree, Massachusetts.
1755	Graduates from Harvard College.
1764	Marries Abigail Smith.
1770	Defends the British soldiers after the Boston Massacre.
1774	Serves in the First Continental Congress.
1776	Champions the Declaration of Independence.
1778	Serves as a diplomat in France and the Netherlands.
1783	Helps negotiate the Treaty of Paris.
1789	Becomes the first Vice President of the United States.
1797	Becomes the second President of the United States.
1826	Dies July 4 in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Quotes and Character Lessons

Adams believed in honesty, hard work, and standing firm for what is right. Read each quote together and talk about what it means.

"Facts are stubborn things."

Lesson: The truth stays true no matter what we wish or what others say. We must face facts honestly.

"Every problem is an opportunity in disguise."

Lesson: Hard situations often give us a chance to learn and grow if we look for it.

"Because power corrupts, society's demands for moral authority and character increase as the importance of the position increases."

Lesson: The more responsibility a person has, the more important it is that they have good character.

"Let us tenderly and kindly cherish, therefore, the means of knowledge."

Lesson: Learning and education are treasures worth protecting and valuing.

"I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy."

Lesson: People often work hard and sacrifice so the next generation can have better opportunities.

Talk About It: Adams defended soldiers he disagreed with because he believed in a fair trial for everyone. Why is it important to give fairness even to people we do not like?