*AP U.S. History*

**Socratic Seminar:**

**Discussing the Strengths and Weaknesses of Thomas Jefferson**

**Background:**

From the period before the Revolution until the end of his second term in office in 1809, Thomas Jefferson had a profound impact on the direction of the nation. Throughout his political life Jefferson made many important decisions some of which stirred controversy in the nation. For this activity you will be assigned one of three questions to read about and research. Once you have completed your preparation you will participate in a round table discussion with the other members of the class that were assigned the same question. By participating in and listening to discussion about the merits and faults of some of Thomas Jefferson’s major political decisions you will be able to analyze his presidency in a more sophisticated manner. Follow the directions to ensure successful completion of this assignment.

**Directions:**

* Read your assigned question and look over the corresponding terms.
* Consider what you already know about the question and the terms
* Then read and annotate your assigned documents
* Be prepared to participate in a round table discussion answering your question.

Questions:

**1) To what extent did Jefferson undermine the power of the federal government while he was Vice President?**

Document 1: The Virginia Legislature Protests

Document 2: Jefferson Deplores Undue Force

*Issues/events to discuss:* Virginia & Kentucky Resolutions, Compact Theory, Strict vs. Loose Construction, Implied vs. Enumerated Powers, Whiskey Rebellion, Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist philosophy, Alien and Sedition Acts

**2) To what extent did Jefferson illegally expand the powers of the executive branch without the approval of Congress while President?**

Document 1: Representative Roger Griswold is Unhappy

Document 2: Senator John Breckenridge Supports the Purchase

*Issues/events to discuss:* Louisiana Purchase, Patronage, Washington's Farewell Address,

Implied Powers, Strict Constructionist, "Velvet Revolution" of 1800, Marbury v. Madison & "Midnight Judges."

**3) To what extent did Jefferson undermine the United States economy by ill-advised and politically motivated actions?**

Document 1: A Federalist Attacks the Embargo

Document 2: A Jeffersonian Upholds the Embargo

*Issues/events to discuss:* Neutral Rights, Embargo Act, Non-Intercourse Act, Economic Coercion, Farms vs. Factories, Regional Differences, Rivalry with Alexander Hamilton, Bank of the United States, Relations with France and England

**Evaluation:** Your grade for this assignment will be based on the following:

* Your active participation in your discussion (both speaking and listening)
* Your ability to integrate the terms and documents into the discussion
* Your ability to draw out reticent participants—asking thoughtful questions of an individual

**During and After the Discussions:**

Select one of the questions that you were not assigned and type a one-page answer based on the notes that you take during the discussion. Be sure that your paper includes the following:

* An introduction that establishes the context for your paper
* A strong thesis that guides your paper
* Specific supporting details that you gleaned from the discussion