



## WHEN THE BORDER VANISHES



# Face to Face: A Conversation Between Thomas Jefferson & Alexander von Humboldt

### Standard:

- I. Culture
- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- III. People, Places, and Environments
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
- IX. Global Connections

Grade Level: 7–12

### Objectives:

The student will:

- Examine the connections between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander von Humboldt
- Determine the ideas that captured the imaginations of these two great men
- Analyze primary documents to create a conversation between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander von Humboldt

Time: 1–2 class periods

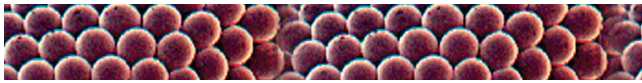
### Materials:

*Handout #1: Primary Documents: von Humboldt in America*

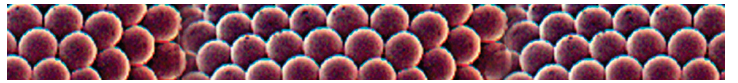
*Handout #2: A Conversation Between Jefferson and von Humboldt*

### Procedures:

1. Provide background information about Thomas Jefferson and Alexander von Humboldt.  
<http://www.macroevolution.net/alexander-von-humboldt.html>  
<http://www.macroevolution.net/alexander-von-humboldt.html>  
<http://www.monticello.org/jefferson/biography.html>  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/thomasjefferson/>
2. Explain to students that Thomas Jefferson and Alexander von Humboldt did meet several times in 1804 while Humboldt visited the United States. They continued to communicate by letter after Humboldt's departure. It was a meeting of two intellects with much in common, including boundless enthusiasm for learning.
3. Provide students with the primary documents generated while Humboldt visited the United States (*Handout #1*). They should read these documents to collect information about Jefferson's and Humboldt's thoughts and actions during this period of time. Allow time to read and collect information.
4. Distribute *Handout #2: A Conversation Between Jefferson and von Humboldt*. Students should take information accumulated from the primary documents and write a conversation between the two men. Thoughts and ideas expressed to and by others should be woven into the conversation. Since no daily transcripts exist from the conversations between Jefferson and Humboldt, the students are creating such a document.
5. Have students volunteer to read portions of their conversations. What do the conversations reveal about Jefferson and Humboldt? What similarities exist in the students' documents? Are there any significant differences? Determine which of the students' writings best captures the nature of the relationship between these men.



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#### Extension Activities:

1. Have students play the game, *Alexander von Humboldt's Journey to the Americas*, that is included in this CD-ROM. ■