

# Louisiana Purchase Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**CHAPTER**  
**6**  
**Section 3**

**GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: REGION** *The Louisiana Purchase*

*Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.*

In 1973 the social critic John Keats looked back to 1801, noting that at that time "the United States was politically fragile, virtually without an army or a navy, without a friend in the world."

Indeed, President Thomas Jefferson was anxious. Foreign governments ruled the lands to the north, the entire Gulf of Mexico coastline, and the major western lands known as the Louisiana Territory. Also, in 1798, Spain had made things difficult for farmers by closing off the previously open Mississippi River to American boats carrying grain to New Orleans for export.

Then, in March of 1801, Jefferson heard a rumor that Spain had secretly given the Louisiana

Territory back to France, land that Spain had been given by France in 1762. Jefferson didn't want Spain ceding the region to anyone but the United States, but Spain would admit nothing. Finally, in 1803, Jefferson, still unsure who owned what, directed his ambassador in France to offer to buy Florida and New Orleans and sent James Madison to France to help in negotiations. Much to the men's surprise, the French suddenly proposed selling all of the Louisiana Territory to the United States, though the Florida territory was excluded, for it had remained Spanish territory. The men quickly took the offer and informed Jefferson of the unexpected bounty.



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**Louisiana Purchase worksheet** activities provide an engaging and educational way to delve into one of the most significant land acquisitions in American history. The Louisiana Purchase, completed in 1803, doubled the size of the United States and set the stage for westward expansion. In this article, we will explore what the Louisiana Purchase was, its historical significance, and how worksheets can facilitate learning about this pivotal event.

## Understanding the Louisiana Purchase

The Louisiana Purchase was an acquisition of territory by the United States from France. This deal, struck in 1803, involved the purchase of approximately 828,000 square miles of land, which stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. The territory encompassed parts of 15 present-day states, including Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, North Dakota,

South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.

## Historical Context

To fully grasp the importance of the Louisiana Purchase, it is crucial to understand the historical context surrounding it:

1. French Control: Initially, the land was under French control until it was ceded to Spain in 1762. France regained control in 1800 under Napoleon Bonaparte.
2. American Expansionism: As the country was beginning to establish itself, many leaders believed in the concept of Manifest Destiny, the idea that the U.S. was destined to expand across the continent.
3. Strategic Concerns: The United States was concerned about French control of the Mississippi River, which was vital for trade and transportation.

## The Negotiation Process

The negotiation for the Louisiana Purchase was not straightforward. The following points outline the key events leading up to the purchase:

- Initial Intentions: President Thomas Jefferson initially aimed to secure the port of New Orleans to guarantee American access to trade routes.
- Diplomatic Efforts: Jefferson sent James Monroe and Robert R. Livingston to France to negotiate the purchase of New Orleans and as much land as possible for \$10 million.
- Unexpected Offer: To their surprise, the French offered to sell the entire Louisiana Territory for \$15 million, a decision driven by France's need for funds for ongoing wars in Europe and the loss of interest in maintaining a North American empire.

## The Impact of the Louisiana Purchase

The Louisiana Purchase had profound effects on the United States, both immediately and in the long term.

## Geopolitical Changes

- Territorial Expansion: The acquisition effectively doubled the size of the United States, providing vast new territories for settlement and development.
- National Identity: The purchase fostered a sense of national identity and purpose, as the U.S. began to see itself as a continental power.

## Economic Growth

- Agricultural Development: The fertile lands of the Midwest became a vital agricultural hub, supporting the nation's economy.
- Trade Routes: Control of the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans

significantly boosted trade and commerce.

## Scientific Exploration

The territory acquired through the Louisiana Purchase also paved the way for exploration. The most notable expedition was led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, which provided valuable information about the geography, ecology, and indigenous peoples of the West.

## Creating a Louisiana Purchase Worksheet

A **Louisiana Purchase worksheet** can be an effective educational tool for students of various age groups. Such worksheets can include a variety of activities that promote critical thinking and engagement with the material. Below are some ideas for creating an effective worksheet.

### Components of the Worksheet

- Timeline Activities:** Include a timeline where students can place key events related to the Louisiana Purchase, such as:
  - The signing of the Treaty of San Ildefonso (1800)
  - The American delegation's negotiations in France (1803)
  - The formal signing of the Louisiana Purchase (April 30, 1803)
- Map Activities:** Provide a blank map of the United States and ask students to:
  - Shade in the territory acquired through the Louisiana Purchase.
  - Identify key geographical features such as the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.
- Short Answer Questions:** Encourage critical thinking with questions like:
  - What were the motivations behind the purchase?
  - How did the Louisiana Purchase affect relations with Native American tribes?
  - Describe the long-term effects of the purchase on the United States.
- Creative Writing Prompts:**
  - Ask students to write a diary entry from the perspective of Thomas Jefferson regarding the purchase.
  - Have students create a fictional letter from a settler moving to the newly acquired territory.

### Assessment Options

To assess students' understanding of the Louisiana Purchase, consider the following methods:

- **Quizzes:** Incorporate multiple-choice or true/false questions based on the worksheet content.
- **Group Projects:** Encourage collaboration by having students work in groups to present on various aspects of the Louisiana Purchase, such as the

negotiation process, the impact on Native Americans, or the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

- Class Discussions: Facilitate a discussion around the implications of the purchase, encouraging students to express their thoughts and opinions.

## **Conclusion**

The Louisiana Purchase was a landmark event in American history that not only expanded the nation's territory but also transformed its economic and cultural landscape. A well-designed **Louisiana Purchase worksheet** can serve as an invaluable tool in helping students understand the complexities of this historical event. Through activities such as timelines, map exercises, and creative writing prompts, educators can foster a deeper appreciation for the significance of the Louisiana Purchase and its lasting impact on the United States. As students engage with this topic, they will gain insights into the themes of exploration, expansion, and the ever-evolving identity of the nation.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What was the Louisiana Purchase and why was it significant?**

The Louisiana Purchase was a land deal between the United States and France in 1803, where the U.S. acquired approximately 827,000 square miles of territory west of the Mississippi River for \$15 million. It significantly doubled the size of the United States and opened up westward expansion.

### **What key events led to the Louisiana Purchase?**

Key events leading to the Louisiana Purchase included the Napoleonic Wars, France's struggle to maintain its colonies, and President Thomas Jefferson's desire for American expansion and control of the Mississippi River for trade.

### **How did the Louisiana Purchase impact Native American tribes?**

The Louisiana Purchase had a profound impact on Native American tribes, as it led to increased westward expansion by American settlers, resulting in the displacement of many tribes and conflicts over land and resources.

### **What were the constitutional debates surrounding the Louisiana Purchase?**

The constitutional debates centered around whether President Jefferson had the authority to acquire new territory without explicit congressional approval, as the Constitution did not specifically grant such power. Jefferson justified the purchase as a treaty under his executive powers.

### **What were the economic implications of the Louisiana**

## Purchase for the United States?

The Louisiana Purchase provided the United States with vast natural resources, fertile land for agriculture, and control over the Mississippi River, which facilitated trade and contributed to the economic growth of the nation.

## How is the Louisiana Purchase taught in schools today?

The Louisiana Purchase is often taught through worksheets that cover its historical context, key figures involved, maps showing the acquired territory, and its long-term effects on American history and geography.

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