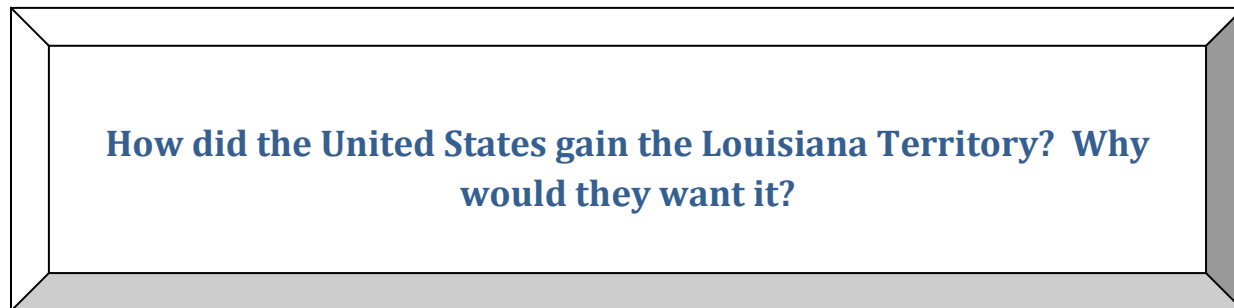


Name: _____

Date: _____

History: _____

The Louisiana Purchase



Do Now:

1.) Why would the United States want to expand to the West?

Read the story below and answer the questions that follow.

Your friend Ben Jarvus owns an incredibly successful record label. It has some of the most popular artists in the world signed, is constantly putting out the most popular hits in the country, and shows no signs of stopping. Recently though, Ben Jarvus has decided that there are more important things in the world than music and has offered to sell you his company for \$100. You would get everything. The buildings, the contracts with stars, and the promise of continued profits like none you have ever received before.

2.) What would you do when Ben Jarvus made this offer to you?

3.) Why would you probably be incredibly excited?

Name: _____

Date: _____

History: _____

Background Info

America's first opportunity for expansion during the early nineteenth century involved the vast territory to the west of the Mississippi River, then known as Louisiana. The United States wanted the port city of New Orleans, near the mouth of the Mississippi River. By 1800, thousands of farmers were settling the land to the west of the Appalachian Mountains. To get their crops to market, they floated them down the Mississippi to New Orleans. There they loaded the crops onto ships bound to Europe or for cities on the East Coast.

The farmers depended on being able to move their crops freely along this route. "The Mississippi," wrote James Madison, "is to them everything."

- 1.) What affect would gaining the city of New Orleans have on farmers in the United States?

Louisiana

Across the Mississippi lay the unexplored territory of Louisiana. This immense region stretched from Canada south to Texas. From the Mississippi, it reached west all the way to the Rocky Mountains. First claimed by France, Louisiana was given to Spain after the French and Indian War. In 1800, the French ruler Napoleon Bonaparte convinced Spain to return Louisiana to France.

Napoleon had plans for Louisiana. He hoped to settle the territory with thousands of French farmers. These farmers would raise food for slaves who toiled on France's sugar plantations in the Caribbean. Napoleon's plans alarmed frontier farmers. New Orleans was part of Louisiana. If Napoleon closed the port to American goods, farmers would have no way to get their crops to market.

- 2.) Predict: What would happen if Napoleon stopped allowing Americans to use New Orleans?

Whose interests were and were not served by westward expansion? What did it mean to be, and who was considered an "American" during the era of Westward Expansion?

Name: _____

Date: _____

History: _____

“A Noble Bargain”

President Thomas Jefferson understood the concerns of American farmers. So, in 1803, he sent James Monroe to France with an offer to buy New Orleans for \$7.5 million. By the time Monroe reached France, Napoleon had changed his plans. A few years earlier, a slave named Toussaint L’Ouverture had led a slave revolt in the French Caribbean colony known today as Haiti. The former slaves defeated the French troops who tried to take back the colony. As a result, Napoleon no longer needed Louisiana.

In addition, France and Britain were on the brink of war. Napoleon knew that he might lose Louisiana to the British. Rather than lose Louisiana, it made sense to sell it to the United States.

Napoleon’s offer to sell all of Louisiana stunned James Monroe. Instead of a city, suddenly the United States had the opportunity to buy an area as big as itself!

It didn’t take long for Monroe to agree. On April 30, 1803, he signed a treaty giving Louisiana to the United States in exchange for \$15 million. Said the French foreign minister, “You have made a noble bargain for yourselves, and I suppose you will make the most of it.”

3.) Why did Napoleon’s plans for Louisiana change?

4.) Madison offered \$7.5 million for New Orleans but paid \$15 million for Louisiana? Why would he be willing to pay so much?

The Purchase Debate

To most Americans, the Louisiana Purchase looked like the greatest land deal in history. The new territory would double the country’s size at a bargain price of just 2 to 3 cents an acre!

Whose interests were and were not served by westward expansion? What did it mean to be, and who was considered an “American” during the era of Westward Expansion?

Name: _____

Date: _____

History: _____

Still, not everyone approved. Some people worried that such a large country would be impossible to govern. Politicians in the East fretted that they would lose power. Sooner or later, they warned, Louisiana would be carved into enough new states to outvote the eastern states in Congress.

Others fussed about the \$15 million price tag. "We are to give money of which we have too little," wrote a Boston critic, "for land of which we already have too much."

Opponents also accused Jefferson of "tearing the Constitution to tatters." They said that they Constitution made no provision for purchasing foreign territory.

Jefferson was troubled by the argument that the purchase was unconstitutional. Still, he believed that it was better to stretch the Constitution than to lose a historic opportunity.

Late in 1803, the Senate voted to ratify the Louisiana Purchase treaty. Frontier farmers cheered the news. "You have secured us the free navigation of the Mississippi," a grateful westerner wrote Jefferson. "You have procured an immense and fertile country: and all these great blessings are obtained without war and bloodshed."

5.) Why would Jefferson be worried about the constitutionality of the Louisiana Purchase?

Independent Writing

Directions: Pretend you are one of Jefferson's close advisors. He has asked your opinion on whether or not he should purchase Louisiana from France. Write him your FORMAL recommendation below. Be sure to give specific reasons AND address the counterarguments.

Dear Mr. President,

Whose interests were and were not served by westward expansion? What did it mean to be, and who was considered an "American" during the era of Westward Expansion?

Name: _____

Date: _____

History: _____

Exit Ticket

___/6

1.) Why did the United States want New Orleans/the Louisiana Territory?

2.) How did the United States gain the Louisiana Territory?
