

# Louisiana Purchase

Read the article on the Louisiana Purchase. Complete the QR questions on lined paper.

In 1803 the area of the United States was much smaller than it is today. In that year, however, the country bought the Louisiana Territory from France. The territory stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, and from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States.

## Historical Background

A French explorer named La Salle had claimed Louisiana for France in 1682. He named the territory after the French king Louis XIV. It originally included land on both sides of the Mississippi River.

In 1762 France gave the part of Louisiana west of the Mississippi to Spain. The rest they gave to Great Britain. It became part of the United States after the American Revolution. In the late 1700s settlers from the eastern part of the United States started moving into the area. Spain allowed them to use the Mississippi River and the port city of New Orleans, near the river's mouth.

In 1801 the powerful French leader Napoleon got the territory back. This worried the U.S. settlers. They were afraid that France might try to interfere with traffic on the river.

## The Purchase

President Thomas Jefferson first tried to buy just New Orleans. Napoleon ignored him until Jefferson threatened to join forces with Great Britain, France's worst enemy. Napoleon also needed money to pay for the many wars he was fighting. For these reasons, he offered to sell the entire Louisiana Territory. The price was about \$15 million. This amounted to only three cents per acre.

The Louisiana Purchase added 828,000 square miles (2,144,520 square kilometers) to the United States. In 1804 the Lewis and Clark Expedition set out to explore the new territory. The expedition lasted two years and provided much information about the land, plants, animals, and people of the western lands. The country eventually carved 13 states, either in whole or in part, from the Louisiana Territory. These states were Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

## Cite

While every effort has been made to follow citation style rules, there may be some discrepancies. Please refer to the appropriate style manual or other sources if you have any questions.

"Louisiana Purchase." *Britannica School*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 8 Feb. 2020. [school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Louisiana-Purchase/353399](https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Louisiana-Purchase/353399). Accessed 17 Mar. 2020.

Right There  
Who did the United States purchase the Louisiana Territory from?

Think and Search  
Summarize the historical background of the Louisiana Purchase.

Author and You  
Predict what could have happened if the U.S. didn't buy this land.

On my own  
Why do you think Jefferson wanted to purchase the territory?