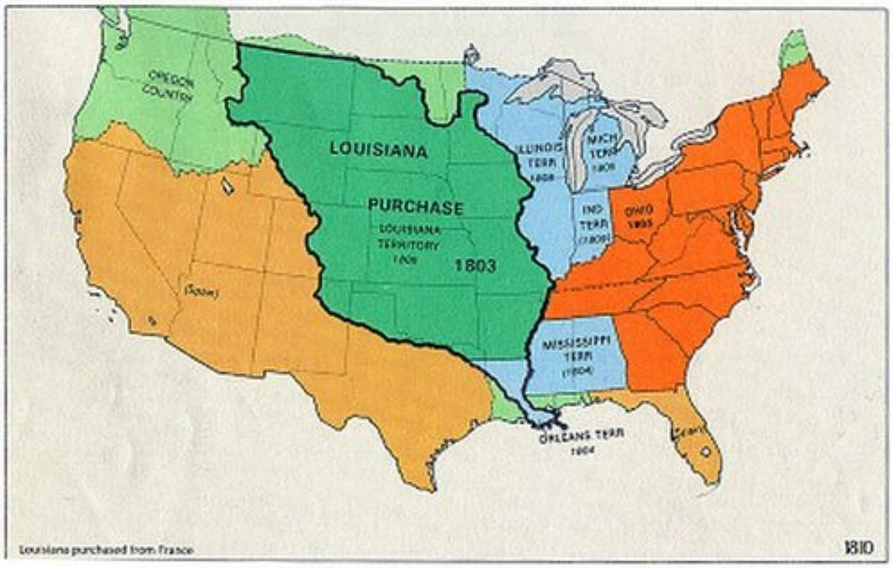
Westward Expansion - Introduction to Westward Expansion

by ReadWorks



The Louisiana Purchase

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson bought a huge portion of land west of the Mississippi. He bought this land from France. The territory he bought was called the Louisiana Purchase. It more than doubled the size of the United States! The Louisiana Purchase cost 15 million dollars total. That amounts to about three cents an acre! The purchase included 828,000 square miles of land.

The land Jefferson bought from the French was not empty. It had long been the homeland of many different Native tribes. These Native peoples had been on the land for generations. But the French, and then the United States, did not pay attention to the tribes' right to the land.

Soon, white Americans would head west to explore the huge continent and the land that was new to them. The age of Westward Expansion was about to start.

Manifest Destiny

By the 1840s, Americans envisioned a nation that spread "from sea to shining sea." They felt that it was their duty to spread out across the land. Their belief in young democracy was so strong that Americans wanted to spread it across the entire continent. They did not care about the Native peoples who had long since cultivated the area and called it home. To these Americans, exploring and cultivating the territory was the **destiny** of the young country and its citizens. Soon, the phrase "Manifest **Destiny**" was echoing in newspapers and political speeches. At the time, the west was the embodiment of American **optimism**. Many American adventurers would go west to seek their **fortunes**.

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. Who did Thomas Jefferson buy the Louisiana Purchase from?

A. France

B. Spain

C. Native tribes

D. Mexico

2. How does the text describe the territory Thomas Jefferson bought west of the Mississippi?

A. a small portion of land where many white Americans lived

B. a huge portion of land where many French people lived

C. a huge portion of land where many different Native tribes lived

D. an empty portion of land that American adventurers avoided

3. Read the following sentences from the text.

"To these Americans, exploring and cultivating the territory was the destiny of the young country and its citizens. Soon, the phrase 'Manifest Destiny' was echoing in newspapers and political speeches. At the time, the west was the embodiment of American optimism. Many American adventurers would go west to seek their fortunes."

What conclusion can you draw from this evidence?

A. Most Americans wanted to keep the land bought in the Louisiana Purchase empty.

B. The ideas of "Manifest Destiny" became very popular among many Americans.

C. Politicians avoided speaking about Westward expansion since it was controversial.

D. During this time, newspapers dropped in popularity as more people moved west.

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4. Based on the text, why was the west considered the embodiment of American optimism in the 1840s?

A. The west was already fully developed and had many cities where Americans could work.

B. The west did not have any dangers, making it a safe place for Americans to settle.

C. The west represented new opportunities and adventure for many white Americans.

D. The west had the same climate as the east, making it easy for settlers to adapt.

5. What is the main idea of the text?

A. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States and began the era of Westward Expansion by white Americans who did not pay attention to the Native tribes already living there.

B. Thomas Jefferson was the United States president who bought 828,000 square miles of land from the French in the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and only spent three cents an acre on this huge territory.

C. Many different Native American tribes lived in the territory bought by Thomas Jefferson from the French and each of these tribes had their own language, culture, identity, and religious practices.

D. Many white Americans in the 1840s believed that the young United States democracy was very strong and shared these beliefs with others in political speeches and newspaper articles.

6. Read the following sentences.

"By the 1840s, Americans envisioned a nation that spread '**from sea to shining sea**.' They felt that it was their duty to spread out across the land. "

In this text, what does the phrase "**from sea to shining sea"** most closely mean?

A. across the continent

B. up and down one coast

C. along the bottom of the ocean

D. across the entire world

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7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Many American adventurers would go west _____ they could seek their fortune there.

A. but

B. although

C. so

D. once

8. What did many white Americans believe was the destiny of the young country and its citizens?

9. How did the Louisiana Purchase lead to the belief in Manifest Destiny?

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