



# JEFFERSON AND THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

A re-creation of President Jefferson's critical decision making  
about purchasing the Louisiana territory in 1803

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## PURPOSE

The Louisiana Purchase was a critical decision in the early history of our national government, for it dealt not only with the physical and social growth of the new nation but also with serious questions about the limits of constitutional authority and presidential power. This activity re-creates the conditions, pressures, viewpoints, and feelings that President Thomas Jefferson and his contemporaries contended with while determining the constitutionality of the Louisiana Purchase. Through participating in this re-creation, students should be able to accomplish the following:

### **Knowledge**

1. Identifying the Louisiana territory on an early map of the United States
2. Explaining the social, political, and economic importance of the Louisiana Purchase for the early United States
3. Understanding the sequence of events which led to the purchase
4. Recognizing the constitutional issues Jefferson faced in acquiring the Louisiana territory
5. Comparing the pro and con arguments Jefferson had to consider while deciding whether to acquire the territory

### **Attitudes**

1. Realizing the necessity of weighing all points of view in decision-making
2. Understanding the complexity of decision-making
3. Expressing appreciation for the difficulties in having to make presidential decisions

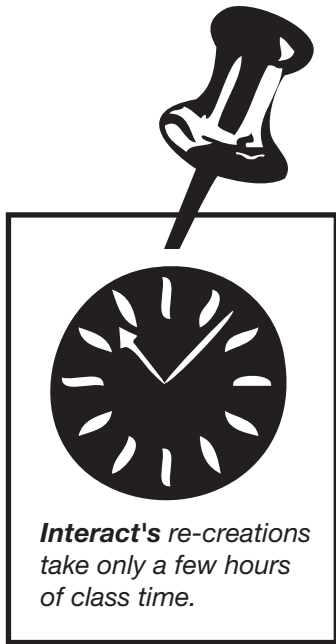
### **Skills**

1. Writing paragraphs comparing points of view
2. Defending opinions and question conflicting ideas orally
3. Listening to, analyzing, and then writing the components of a decision

***Students will analyze the arguments Jefferson weighed while choosing whether or not to purchase the Louisiana territory.***



## OVERVIEW



In approximately three days of classroom instruction, students are introduced to the 1803 situation, they experience the re-creation of a meeting in the presidential office, and they conduct a debriefing on Jefferson's decision.

### Day 1

You, as teacher, motivate the re-creation, have students read the Purpose and Background Essay in the Student Guide, and assign roles/responsibilities for the actual re-creation.

### Day 2

Students playing moderator, president, plus three advisers and one critic meet in Jefferson's office and discuss whether he should submit the Louisiana Treaty to the Senate. The day ends with students asking questions of the president and receiving an overnight assignment preparing them for Day 3's testing and debriefing.

### Day 3

Within activity groups students use their notes while examining a 24-item objective test. The groups then dissolve into individuals who take the test. A debriefing case study on a possible United States Moon Acquisition Treaty reunifies the activity groups, which discuss and reach a conclusion about the treaty.

## SETUP DIRECTIONS - 1



**Note:** You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for Interact has given you different colored handouts for those students playing roles. If you choose to give the UNIT TEST—an optional activity—you will have to duplicate it. All other necessary items are in the Student Guide.

1. **Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
  - MODERATOR HANDOUT (one: two pages, back to back)
  - PRESIDENT THOMAS JEFFERSON HANDOUT (one: three pages, back to back)
  - JAMES MADISON HANDOUT (one: three pages, back to back)
  - ROBERT LIVINGSTON HANDOUT (one: two pages, back to back)
  - ALBERT GALLATIN HANDOUT (one: two pages, back to back)
  - SENATOR TIMOTHY PICKERING HANDOUT (one: two pages, back to back)

**Optional:**

- \* UNIT TEST (class set: three pages, back to back)

2. **Assigning roles** Only six real roles exist in this re-creation—five if you decide to assume the moderator role yourself. *Remember:* Our hope and expectation at Interact is that you and your students will use other re-creations. Consequently, each of your students, regardless of ability, should have had the opportunity to have played at least one speaking role during the school year.

Of course, randomly assigning roles is not recommended. Key roles must have capable students. Roles with lesser demands, however, can certainly be filled by less capable students whom either you or their classmates help along the way. One of the real satisfactions in using Interact's participatory materials, we believe, is that students grow as persons as well as historians!

*Helping students grow...*

*as persons  
as well as  
historians ...*

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Henry, *History of the United States, Jefferson and Madison*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1963. A thorough description of the negotiations process and the Republicans' constitutional dilemma. Adams delights in pointing out inconsistencies between Republican preaching about limited construction of the Constitution and Republican practice of same.

Brown, E.E.S., *Constitutional History of the Louisiana Purchase*, Augustus M. Kelly, New Jersey, 1920. An authoritative analysis of the entire constitutional problem related both to the acquisition of the territory and to the citizenship of the area's inhabitants. Quotes several fine primary sources and covers all facets of the question.

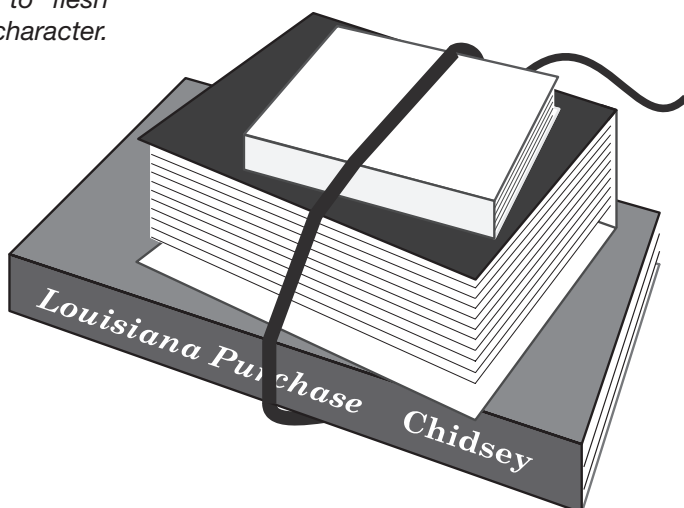
Chidsey, Donald Barr, *Louisiana Purchase*, Crown, New York, 1972. A detailed history of the Louisiana territory plus a complete description of the negotiations to obtain the area. A very readable book, it has several interesting anecdotes of personalities connected with the area.

De Conde, Alexander, *This Affair of Louisiana*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1976. A scholarly study of the entire Louisiana issue advancing the theory that the strong expansionist interests of early Americans were more influential than most historians have previously described.

Malone, Dumas, *Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1970. Malone, a noted Jefferson biographer, clearly describes Jefferson's role in the negotiations and the advice offered him about the constitutionality question.

Consider seeing your friendly school librarian so that she/he will set up a JEFFERSON AND LOUISIANA RESERVE SHELF just for your class.

Certain students—the one playing Jefferson for example—just might go to scholarly works such as Donald Barr Chidsey's anecdotal work in order to “flesh out” his/her character.



## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



*Be certain you have carefully planned how to integrate this re-creation with the Jeffersonian history chapters you have had your students read in their textbooks.*

### Before Day 1

Be sure you have thoroughly examined this Teacher Guide, the Student Guide, and the various handouts.

### Day 1

1. Introduce the topic with an interest catcher. This will sensitize students to the overall theme and to the tasks at hand. Use a filmstrip, a movie, a lecture, or the following brief role-play, which has worked well for the author.
  - a. Assign two students to play western farmers.
  - b. Give them bulky “produce” (tables, chairs, wastebaskets?) to ship to eastern markets.
  - c. Arrange a stacking of desks to represent the Appalachian Mountains.
  - d. Instruct the farmers to transport their “crops” across the mountains to an eastern city.
  - e. Discuss the difficulties western farmers had in shipping bulky goods across mountains in the early 1800s.
  - f. Ask, “By the time our farmers manage to get these crops across the mountains to market, what will have happened to their produce? Why?”
  - g. Using a map of the United States in 1800, ask students to find a quicker way to transport agricultural goods to the east.
  - h. Have farmers “ship” crops down the “Mississippi” (a pre-arranged line) to New Orleans. Then ship to an eastern city.
  - i. Ask, “In 1800 who owned New Orleans? Who controlled the Mississippi? Was this advantageous to the United States? How would westerners feel if New Orleans were ever closed to them?”
2. Link your interest catcher with the re-creation by handing out the Student Guide. Have students read the Purpose and Background Essay.
3. Assign the five or six roles. (If you are planning to use other Interact re-creations, point out that all students will eventually get to play major speaking roles.)
4. Make certain all students understand their tasks.
  - a. Give the role players their special handouts and send the advisers and critic, president, and moderator to one side of the classroom, to an enclosed portion of the classroom, or to a separate classroom to prepare.
  - b. Have the audience prepare both sides of their note-taking sheet (see pages 6-7 in the Student Guide).

## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



*Encourage your students to speak passionately. Work to get them truly involved in their characterizations.*

*If you have a quality class and you are considering using this re-creation next year, videotape the presidential decision so that you can show portions next year to stimulate students' performance. (Such a video is also useful for open house when you want parents to see the participatory nature of your instruction.)*



- c. Stop and help the role players. Make certain they understand their roles and the tasks required of them.
5. For homework instruct students to finish reading the Student Guide and to read their history textbook on the Louisiana Purchase.
6. Remind advisers and critic that they are to write paragraphs explaining their viewpoints and that these should be ready by the beginning of Day 2.

### Day 2

1. Day 2 begins with the moderator setting the scene physically. Assist him/her by insuring that the desk arrangement will promote discussion among the president and his group and will enable the audience to easily view their interaction.
2. If you have time, review the moderator's introductory paragraph to see that he/she has included all necessary points and that these are clearly presented.
3. The moderator seats the five key roles and begins the re-creation by reading his/her introductory paragraph.
4. The re-creation follows the sequence found in the President Jefferson's handout.
  - a. The president opens the meeting by reviewing the events leading to the Louisiana Purchase with James Madison and Robert Livingston.
  - b. The group discusses America's feelings about American westward expansion. (4a and 4b are included so the class has a background against which they can analyze the ratification problem. If the role-players bog down here, signal the president to press on so that sufficient time is available to discuss the constitutional alternatives.)
  - c. The president describes the constitutional issue he faces, and then discusses the issue with Albert Gallatin and Timothy Pickering. Each advances his own point of view.
  - d. Using the five alternatives in the Student Guide, the group identifies the strong and weak points of each.
  - e. After the discussion, the president makes and announces his decision to the class, explaining his reasons for making his choice.
  - f. The audience, with the moderator as chairperson, asks questions of the president, probing for explanations or challenging his position.



## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3



*Having students speak about the activity they have experienced will intensify their learning. Such speaking experiences also help students' personal growth.*

**Note:** Only their notes and the test sheets may be on their desks. Allow no pencils or pens.

- g. In the final few minutes, the moderator conducts a reaction to the president's decision. One optional choice, if time permits, is described in the moderator's handout: an on-the-spot interview of one adviser, the critic, and one audience member, calling for their individual reactions to the president's choice. The other option involves polling class members for their approval/disapproval of the decision by having students group themselves along a "classroom floor continuum" (i.e., those who *strongly agree* with the president next to the left wall, *agree* next to them, *not sure* in the middle, *disagree* near the right wall, *strongly disagree* next to the right wall). This stand-up poll provides an initial point from which students can work during the following day.
  - h. The moderator explains the homework assignments for all and collects the paragraphs from the advisers and the critic.
5. Your teacher role throughout Day 2 should be as laissez-faire as possible. Check any desire to leap Lone-Ranger style into the discussion if it is going poorly. If the students understand their tasks and have prepared thoroughly, the re-creation will run itself. However, if this is your students' first role-playing or re-creation experience, don't expect perfection. The goal is growth.
  6. Your key active role is watching the clock to be certain that all stages of the discussion get adequate time. (You may want to have prearranged some signals with the president to slow down, speed up, ask for more explanation, etc.)
  7. Before Day 2 ends, tell the students what you expect them to do for Day 3. Possible options:
    - **Option 1:** Review notes for tomorrow's objective exam.
    - **Option 2:** Have students review their notes plus write down every argument they can think of for and against the president submitting a Moon Acquisition Treaty to the Senate.
    - **Option 3:** Give your students no overnight assignment.

### Day 3

1. Divide your class into activity groups of about five to six members each. Insure that the students who played the key roles are split equally among the groups.



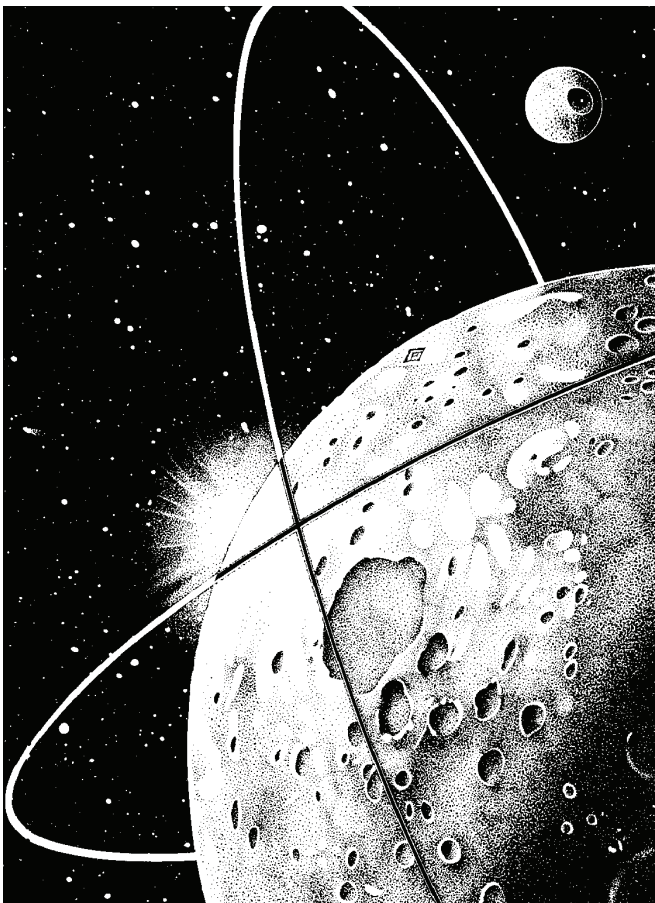
## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 4

2. Have the groups form circles. Then give each student an objective test which group members may discuss among themselves.
3. Have students return to their regular seats and individually take the test without any aid from their notes.
4. Exchange papers, score them, and have the groups reform and calculate their average scores. Give a bonus to the group members with the highest average score. Here is a key to the 24-item test: 1. b, 2. c, 3. d, 4. c, 5. d, 6. b, 7. b 8. d, 9. c, 10. d, 11. a, 12. c, 13. a, 14. d, 15. d, 16. d, 17. a, 18. b, 19. b, 20. d, 21. b, 22. a, 23. b, 24. b.
5. Now move into debriefing by using the case study on the moon acquisition. See that each group has a chairperson and a recorder.
6. Insure that each group's recorder writes down arguments *for* and arguments *against* the president submitting the Moon Acquisition Treaty to the Senate. Also stress that the recorder is to write down in parentheses what type person

either *within* or *outside* the United States would advance each argument.

7. To culminate your debriefing, choose one of the following options, depending upon the amount of time you wish to spend upon this activity.

- **Option 1:** Have each activity group's members a) vote whether the president should send the treaty to the Senate, and b) select their two strongest arguments. Each activity group then makes a brief report to the whole class.
- **Option 2:** Members vote and choose their strongest arguments. Then one representative joins the other groups' representatives in front of the class for a "hot seat" give-and-take discussion.
- **Option 3:** Require each activity group to list at least two or three alternatives other than a unilateral, American acquisition of the moon (e.g., a joint acquisition by the USA, European nations, and Japan). A general discussion or debate could follow.



*You will find that your students will get truly involved in this case study ...*