



## LOUISIANA v. ALASKA

**Learning Objectives:** The students will...

1. Communicate in visual, written, and oral form.
2. Apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology.
3. Understand political, economic, and social changes that occurred in the United States during the 19th Century.
4. Identify significant events and concepts associated with U.S. territorial expansion.
5. Use geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data.

**TEKS:** 5.4C, 5.7A, 5.7B

**Materials Needed:** Research materials (including Internet if available); poster board or electronic media (edu.glogster.com), maps.

**Vocabulary:** manifest destiny, expansion, natural resources

**Teaching Strategies:**

1. Display the following quote and ask students to think about what it means.
  - a. "Let the Land rejoice, for you have bought Louisiana for a Song." –Gen. Horatio Gates to President Thomas Jefferson, July 18, 1803
2. Display the picture of the original check which was used to purchase Alaska found at [http://www.ourdocuments.gov/document\\_data/pdf/doc\\_041.pdf](http://www.ourdocuments.gov/document_data/pdf/doc_041.pdf).
3. Ask students to think about the two purchases—Alaska for \$7.2 million and Louisiana for \$15 million. Which was more valuable to the U.S.? Why would we want either one?
4. Divide the class into two groups. One group will investigate the purchase of Louisiana in 1803; the other will investigate the purchase of Alaska in 1867.
5. Students will divide up the subjects to be researched. Aspects of each purchase to be discovered include:
  - a. Person responsible for purchase (Seward, Jefferson)
  - b. Purchase price
  - c. Natural resources involved
  - d. How many acres in purchase
  - e. Previous owner and why it was sold
  - f. Advantages/Disadvantages of purchase
  - g. Map of area involved in purchase
  - h. Statehood—what state(s) were formed?
  - i. Public opinion
6. Possible resources for inquiry include: <http://www.quora.com/What-was-the-best-land-purchase-the-Alaska-Purchase-or-the-Louisiana-Purchase>, [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american\\_originals\\_iv/sections/louisiana\\_purchase\\_treaty.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals_iv/sections/louisiana_purchase_treaty.html), and <http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/louisianapurchase.htm>.
7. After the information has been found and recorded, students will create a poster, either through technology at [edu.glogster.com](http://edu.glogster.com) or on poster board, creatively displaying the facts learned, as well as a map of the area. Each group will argue that their purchase was the most valuable to the United States.

8. Each group will select two people to explain their poster to the rest of the class. Then posters will remain on display throughout the study of the Westward Expansion.
9. Optional: Students may role-play the negotiations with Napoleon and/or Russia.

**Extension for Gifted/Talented:**

Students will investigate Robert Livingston and James Monroe as they went to Paris to negotiate the purchase of the port of New Orleans. Students will make a timeline of events leading to the Louisiana Purchase. What were they authorized to buy? What happened in the negotiations with Napoleon and why?

# WESTWARD EXPANSION

## Louisiana v. Alaska

1. Who was responsible for the purchase? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the purchase price? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What natural resources could be found in the area?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How many acres were in the purchased land? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was the land bought from and why it was sold?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What were some good things about the purchase?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What were some disadvantages of the purchase?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What state(s) were formed from the purchased land?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What did the public think about the purchase?  
\_\_\_\_\_