
CHAPTER 1 — The Louisiana Purchase

The Louisiana Purchase
was Purchased in 1803
from France. Encompassed
more than 500 million acres
of land.

Superpower - an extremely
powerful nation

Jeopardy - exposure to loss

Economic - dealing with
goods and services

Opportunities - favorable
times

Commerce - business

In 1803, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France. President Thomas Jefferson agreed to purchase over 500 million acres for \$15 million, which is about 4 cents an acre. The purchase nearly doubled the size of the United States. Most historians agree that the United States would not be the superpower that it is today if Jefferson had not made the purchase.

Jefferson knew that America's goals of liberty and freedom would be in jeopardy if France remained in control of Louisiana. The ports in New Orleans were necessary for the economic growth of the United States. The Louisiana Purchase allowed the United States to open the rivers and ports to trade and increased opportunities for commerce. The purchase also freed parts of the United States from French influence.

Being a superpower brings responsibilities as well as privileges. Many countries think the United States should help less fortunate countries and step in when people are treated unfairly. Although the United States often aids poor countries, it is also criticized for being too involved in the internal affairs of these countries.

What might have happened if the U.S. had not purchased the Louisiana Territory? What other benefits or burdens are associated with being a superpower?