THE IMPACT OF THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

TEACHER VERSION

Subject Level:
Middle School History

Grade Level:
6-8

Approx. Time Required:
45 minutes

Learning Objective:

- Students will be able to interpret population density maps to assess the effect of the Louisiana Purchase on the United States.

United States Census Bureau

Classrooms Powered by Census Data

STATISTICS IN SCHOOLS

Activity Description

Students will examine population density maps of the United States during the 1800s. They will learn about the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 to make and evaluate predictions about the changes in population density that resulted from this event, identifying shifts in boundaries and in areas of population density, and drawing conclusions. Students will then write a paragraph summarizing the impact of the Louisiana Purchase on the United States.

Suggested Grade Level:
6–8

Approximate Time Required:
45 minutes

Learning Objective:
- Students will be able to interpret population density maps to assess the effect of the Louisiana Purchase on the United States.

Topics:
- Louisiana Purchase
- Westward expansion

Skills Taught:
- Analyzing change over time
- Analyzing population density maps
- Making predictions

Materials Required

- The student version of this activity, 9 pages
- Teacher computer with Internet access and a projector to display web sites

A computer with Internet access for small groups of students is optional.

Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity. Items, their sources, and any relevant instructions for viewing them online appear at the end of this teacher version.

- Item 1: U.S. Population Density Map, 1800
- Item 2: U.S. Population Density Map, 1820
- Item 3: U.S. Population Density Map, 1840
- Item 4: U.S. Population Density Map, 1860
- Item 5: U.S. Population Density Map, 1880

For more information to help you introduce your students to the U.S. Census Bureau, read "*Census Bureau 101 for Students*." This information sheet can be printed and passed out to your students as well.

Standards Addressed

See charts below. For more information, read "*Overview of Education Standards and Guidelines Addressed in Statistics in Schools Activities*."

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Standard	Strand	Cluster
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.	RH 6–8 – History/Social Studies	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

UCLA National Standards for History: U.S. History Content Standards

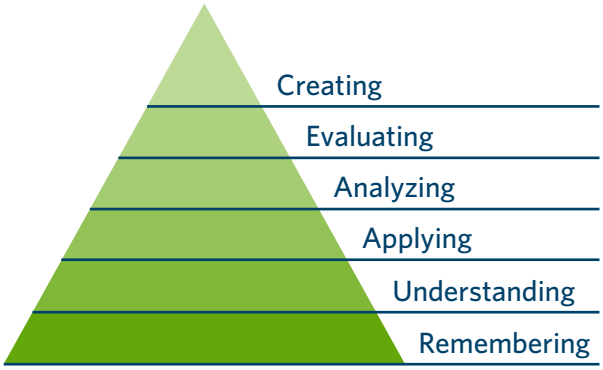
Era	Standard
4 – Expansion and Reform (1801–1861)	Standard 1A: Analyze Napoleon's reasons for selling Louisiana to the United States.

UCLA National Standards for History: Historical Thinking Standards

Standard	Description
Standard 1: Chronological Thinking	Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration. Students will analyze a population density map of the United States prior to the Louisiana Purchase and population density maps after the Louisiana Purchase.
Standard 2: Historical Comprehension	Draw upon data in historical maps. Students will use map data to make predictions and draw conclusions about population density in the United States between 1800 and 1880.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Students will ***analyze*** population density maps of the United States to ***evaluate*** the impact of the Louisiana Purchase.



Teacher Notes

Before the Activity

Students must understand the following key term:

- **Population density** – the number of people per unit of area

Students should have a basic understanding of the following concept:

- Background knowledge and historical context of the Louisiana Purchase

Teachers should be aware that this activity is designed to be teacher-led and should consider organizing students in groups of two or three to complete the chart.

Teachers also should note that the text of **Items 1–5** is difficult to read, so it is preferable for students to view them on computers so that they can zoom in. Teachers should use information in the original document containing all five items ***(www.census.gov/history/pdf/General_Discussion_of_the_Movements_of_Population.pdf)*** as a guide for filling in the table in question 2 with students.

Teachers will project **Item 1** on the screen and discuss the map, then ask students the following questions (students can follow along if they have access to computers):

- In general, what can you learn from analyzing population density maps?
- Specifically, what can you learn from this map?

Then teachers will explain to students *just* the historical context leading up to the Louisiana Purchase, referring to the explanation below (if desired) or to outside texts:

> "The transfer of the territory of Louisiana to our [the United States'] jurisdiction, which was effected in 1803, has brought into the country a large body of population, which stretches along the Mississippi river from its mouth, nearly up to the present [in 1810] northern limit of the state of Louisiana. … The purchase of Louisiana has added 1,124,685 square miles, an empire in itself, to the United States, and has given to us absolute control of the Mississippi and its navigable branches."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, General Discussion of the Movements of Population—1790 to 1880, Page 3: www.census.gov/history/pdf/General_Discussion_of_the_Movements_of_Population.pdf.

Teachers should also explain Napoleon Bonaparte's role in the Louisiana Purchase and the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815).

During the Activity

Teachers will lead students through this activity, modeling and prompting them throughout. If students have access to computers, they should use them to follow along.

Teachers should tell students that they will not be evaluated based on the accuracy of their predictions in the second column of the table. Teachers should also note that certain cells in the table are marked "N/A" because students do not have data for the previous or following 20 years.

After the Activity

Teachers should ask students the following questions:

- How accurate were your predictions? How do you know?
- What did you notice during this activity that surprised you?

Teachers should lead a class discussion on what students learned about state boundary and population changes in the United States between 1800 and 1880 and about the impact of the Louisiana Purchase on the population density of the United States. Teachers could ask students:

- How did the boundaries of U.S. states change in the decades following the Louisiana Purchase? Why do you think this happened?
- How did the U.S. population density change in the decades following the Louisiana Purchase? Why do you think this happened?
- What were the implications of these changes for the United States?

Extension Ideas

- Teachers could direct students to assess their predictions made about 1900 using data from an outside source, since these data are not available in this activity.
- Teachers could lead students in a discussion about what the Louisiana Purchase meant for the United States politically.
- Teachers could discuss with students why the Federalists, such as Alexander Hamilton, opposed the Louisiana Purchase, explaining its potential effects (on slavery, for example).

Student Activity

Click ***here*** to download a printable version for students.

Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity and appear at the end of this student version.

- Item 1: U.S. Population Density Map, 1800
- Item 2: U.S. Population Density Map, 1820
- Item 3: U.S. Population Density Map, 1840
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Student Learning Objective

- I will be able to interpret population density maps to assess the effect of the Louisiana Purchase on the United States.

1. Thinking about the timing of the Napoleonic Wars, the size and location of Louisiana at the time, and the growing influence of the early United States in 1803, explain why Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States.

   Student answers will vary but could include: Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States because he needed an immediate source of money to fund the French efforts in the Napoleonic Wars against the British, and one of the requirements for the United States to purchase Louisiana was to pay in gold upfront. Furthermore, because of the wars, France did not have the military manpower to protect the large landmass of Louisiana. Napoleon also understood that selling Louisiana to the United States would strengthen the United States — and therefore ultimately weaken Britain.

2. Using **Items 1–5** and their respective explanations (with guidance from your teacher), complete the table below.

Year	What do you predict happened with the U.S. population 20 years later? Why?	What actually happened? (Assess your prediction.)	How did state boundaries change since the previous 20 years?	What areas had the highest population density?	What areas had the lowest population density?	What does this tell you about the United States during this time?
1800	**Student predictions for 1820 will vary.**	**Student assessments of their predictions about 1820 will vary.**	N/A	**East Coast, northern cities**	**Southern states, areas farther inland**	**Student answers will vary but could include: Most people lived along the coast and in cities such as Boston and Philadelphia.**
1820	**Student predictions for 1840 will vary.**	**Student assessments of their predictions about 1840 will vary.**	**Student answers will vary but could include: Illinois is now a state and the Louisiana Territory is now the Missouri Territory.**	**East Coast, northern cities**	**Southern states, areas around the Mississippi River**	**Student answers will vary but could include: As in 1800, most people still lived along the coast and in New England cities, such as Boston and Philadelphia, but by 1820 westward expansion had begun to populate areas in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Indiana.**

Year	What do you predict happened with the U.S. population 20 years later? Why?	What actually happened? (Assess your prediction.)	How did state boundaries change since the previous 20 years?	What areas had the highest population density?	What areas had the lowest population density?	What does this tell you about the United States during this time?
1840	Student predictions for 1860 will vary.	Student assessments of their predictions about 1860 will vary.	Student answers will vary but could include: Missouri and Arkansas are now states.	Northeast	West	Student answers will vary but could include: Even though many people moved west, the population density was still highest in the Northeast.
1860	Student predictions for 1880 will vary.	Student assessments of their predictions about 1880 will vary.	Student answers will vary but could include: Texas is now a state.	East Coast	West	Student answers will vary but could include: The population of the United States and the population density of many areas of the country were both increasing. The Gadsden Purchase of 1853 and immigration were sources of these population changes.

Year	What do you predict happened with the U.S. population 20 years later? Why?	What actually happened? (Assess your prediction.)	How did state boundaries change since the previous 20 years?	What areas had the highest population density?	What areas had the lowest population density?	What does this tell you about the United States during this time?
1880	**Student predictions for 1900 will vary.**	N/A	**Student answers will vary but could include: Colorado is now a state, and U.S. boundaries now include territory stretching to California.**	**East Coast cities, Midwest**	**West**	**Student answers will vary but could include: The United States was growing rapidly — doubling its physical size since 1800, developing a railroad system that made territories more accessible, and seeing continued growth in cities as large centers of population.**

3. In a 2003 Smithsonian.com article *(tinyurl.com/gqsorlf)*, Douglas Brinkley — then-director of the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans — said about the Louisiana Purchase: "With the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, this is one of the three things that created the modern United States."

   Use evidence from this activity to write a paragraph that either supports or counters Brinkley's statement on the importance of the Louisiana Purchase in U.S. history.

   Student answers will vary but should cite evidence from the activity.

Item 1: U.S. Population Density Map, 1800

www.census.gov/history/pdf/General_Discussion_of_the_Movements_of_Population.pdf

To view the map online, click on the link above and go to Page 4 of the PDF.

Item 2: U.S. Population Density Map, 1820

www.census.gov/history/pdf/General_Discussion_of_the_Movements_of_Population.pdf

To view the map online, click on the link above and go to Page 7 of the PDF.

Item 3: U.S. Population Density Map, 1840

www.census.gov/history/pdf/General_Discussion_of_the_Movements_of_Population.pdf

To view the map online, click on the link above and go to Page 11 of the PDF.

Item 4: U.S. Population Density Map, 1860

www.census.gov/history/pdf/General_Discussion_of_the_Movements_of_Population.pdf

To view the map online, click on the link above and go to Page 15 of the PDF.

Item 5: U.S. Population Density Map, 1880

www.census.gov/history/pdf/General_Discussion_of_the_Movements_of_Population.pdf

To view the map online, click on the link above and go to Page 19 of the PDF.