

## The Louisiana Purchase—Main Exploration Routes Student Worksheet

### Historical Context

In 1803, the United States purchased approximately 828,000 square miles of land from France for a price of around \$15 million. This transaction, called the **Louisiana Purchase**, doubled the size of the United States, expanding its territory west of the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains and from New Orleans into small parts of present-day Canada. Immediately after the purchase, President **Thomas Jefferson** commissioned an expedition to explore the new territory. This expedition, led by **Meriwether Lewis** and **William Clark**, aimed to explore the continent for potential commercial and scientific purposes. A subsequent expedition, under the leadership of **Zebulon Pike**, explored additional areas of the new territory.

### Vocabulary

**Louisiana Purchase**  
**Thomas Jefferson**  
**Meriwether Lewis**  
**William Clark**  
**Zebulon Pike**

### Map Activity

To do this activity, you will need a blank outline map and access to the “Louisiana Purchase—Main Exploration Routes, 1804–1807” digital map. Turn on the layers of the digital map as indicated in the following instructions, and answer the questions in the space provided:

1. Look at the map with only the “Ocean,” “Gulf,” “River,” “State,” and “Lake” layers turned on.
2. Can you point out the extent of the Louisiana Purchase on the map? Can you identify the territory the United States acquired in this deal? What country claimed the territory to the west of the Louisiana Purchase territory?
3. Turn on the “Louisiana Purchase” and the “Territory” layers to reveal the answers to the above questions.
4. Shade and label the Louisiana Purchase territory on your outline map.
5. Do you recall the name of the first expedition the United States government sent to explore the Louisiana Purchase territory? You might remember that this was the Lewis and Clark Expedition, under the direction of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

6. See if you can identify the approximate route Lewis and Clark took on their outbound journey. On your outline map, lightly pencil in a line that demonstrates your recollection of the route they took.
7. Answer these questions in the space provided:
  - a. What major rivers did they follow?
  - b. What present-day states did they explore?
  - c. Where did they end up, before commencing their return voyage?
  - d. Where did they spend their winters?
  - e. Did they remain within the Louisiana Purchase territory, or did they venture beyond this territory? What country claimed the westernmost territory into which they ventured?
8. Turn on the “Lewis and Clark, 1804–1805” and “City” layers to show the route. Use a darker pencil line to show the actual route, as compared to the one you predicted.
9. Did Lewis and Clark take exactly the same route on the way back east? What differences do you recall about the eastbound journey? Did Meriwether Lewis and William Clark stay together the entire time, or did they split up?
10. Turn on the “Lewis and Clark, 1805–1806” layer to show this eastbound route.
11. Draw and label this route on your map. Also, label the places where the expedition spent the winters.
12. What do you know about Zebulon Pike’s explorations? What area did Pike explore first? Did his explorations overlap Lewis and Clark’s, or not?
13. On your map, lightly pencil in your prediction of Pike’s routes.
14. Turn on the “Zebulon Pike, 1805–1806” layer to show Pike’s exploration of the upper Mississippi River. Use a darker pencil line to show the actual route, as compared to the one you predicted.

15. Answer these questions in the space provided:

- a. Where else did Pike explore?
- b. Do you know his approximate route?
- c. Can you identify the approximate location of the mountain that bears his name?
- d. Did Pike remain within the Louisiana Purchase territory, or did he venture beyond this territory?
- e. Whom did Pike encounter on his journey? What happened next?

16. Turn on the “Zebulon Pike, 1806–1807” layer to show Pike’s western route.

17. Draw and label this route on your map.

18. Look again at Pike’s route. His mission was to find the sources of the Arkansas and Red Rivers. Did he succeed in this mission? What river did he mistake for the Red River? Label these rivers on your outline map.

19. Answer these questions in the space provided:

- a. What information did Lewis and Clark, and Pike provide about the Louisiana Purchase territory? How successful were their explorations in finding out about this vast region?
- b. What present-day states did each expedition explore? What types of terrain and landscapes did they cover?
- c. What was the role of Native Americans in these expeditions? Were the Native Americans always friendly, always hostile, or a combination? How did Native Americans respond to the white visitors to their land?

- d. What was the historical significance of these explorations? What was their legacy?

### Assessment

Write a paragraph responding to the following question:

Why do you think both Lewis and Clark and Zebulon Pike explored far beyond the boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase?