

Expanding the Nation

Lesson #5 of the 1783-1812 Module

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What were some policies of the Democratic-Republican Party during the Jeffersonian Era and were they beneficial to the country?

OVERVIEW

Jefferson's eight years as president saw successes for the United States, but sometimes his decisions did not always completely align with his Democratic-Republican ideology. A major way Jefferson sought to impose his vision of policy on the United States was by lowering the national debt while also repealing excise taxes greatly. Jefferson shrunk the federal debt from 83 million dollars in 1801 to 57 million dollars in 1809. Other accomplishments or challenges of Jefferson's presidency included founding the United States Military Academy at West Point, expanded the Library of Congress, First Barbary War (1801-1805), Burr Conspiracy and Trial, Embargo of 1807, Chesapeake-Leopard Affair (1807) and Congress and the Constitution ending the United States participation in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The most notable success of Jefferson's presidency was the acquisition of Louisiana Territory. In 1803 Jefferson sent James Monroe to purchase the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon. Monroe's mission succeeded with the Louisiana purchase, purchasing 828,000 square miles for only 15 million dollars. Jefferson realized this move would be hypocritical—there was no provision in the constitution for land acquisition. Jefferson attempted to make an amendment to the constitution allowing the purchase, however, Napoleon threatened to pull out of the deal if not done expeditiously. Jefferson made the deal immediately and without clear Constitutional authority to do so. Jefferson long criticized the Federalists for their loose interpretation of the constitution, but for the largest success of his presidency, Jefferson had to stray from his strict interpretation of the constitution. Jefferson would send explorers Meriweather Lewis and William Clark to map and explore the new territory in 1804. The Louisiana Purchase nearly doubled the size of the United States; it would have far-reaching effects for settlement and future states, and it would drastically change the lives of Native American tribes who already inhabited the regions.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

1. Knowledge
 - Recognize some of the key events and leaders of Jefferson's presidency.
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis

- Examine a secondary source and a primary source and note political ideals upheld or challenged during Jefferson’s presidency.
3. Evaluation
- Evaluate when the Democratic-Republican ideals of government and when those ideals shifted with circumstances to allow for a perceived greater good.

ACTIVITIES

1. Use the [Lesson’s PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history; the PowerPoint introduces an Essential Question and lays foundational knowledge about the Jefferson’s presidency.
2. Distribute the [worksheet](#) so students can take notes in the discussion, using Section 1 of the worksheet.
3. As a class or in small groups, read this secondary source article: [The Jeffersonian Party](#). On their worksheets, have students list hallmark policies and political ideals of the Democratic-Republican Party (Jeffersonian Party).
4. Let students choose a primary source. Primary sources are available on the [Lesson Plan Page](#), under the category “Primary Sources.”
5. Students will read their selected primary source and fill out or discuss the questions in Sections 2-4.
6. Encourage a class discussion around the findings and reflections, particularly from Section 4 of the worksheet.

STANDARDS

Please visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) and select the “Common Core and NCSS Standards for Social Studies” to view the details.

RESOURCES

[Visit the Lesson Plan Page](#) to find all resources in one convenient place. You’ll find everything mentioned or linked in this Lesson Plan along with additional videos, articles, primary sources, and biographies.

Quick Links

- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Article: The Jeffersonian Party](#)
- [Secondary Source and Primary Source Worksheet](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: Jefferson’s First Inaugural Address

The Election of 1800 was intense and contested. When the results were decided in Thomas Jefferson's favor, he prepared to take office just a couple of weeks later.

Summarize the Election of 1800 or have the students read this article: [The Election of 1800](#).

Then, read aloud [Jefferson's First Inaugural Address](#) while students take notes of unifying themes in the speech.

1. What key principles did Jefferson emphasize in his speech?
2. How did Jefferson address the divisions between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans?
3. What did Jefferson say about the role of government?
4. What democratic values did Jefferson highlight in his speech?
5. How did Jefferson's speech reflect his vision for America's future?

Option 2: The Louisiana Purchase

The Library of Congress has an [online exhibit of maps and artifacts](#) related to the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis & Clark Expedition.

Begin with a classroom discussion:

- What do you already know about the Louisiana Purchase and its exploration?
- Why do you think the Louisiana Purchase was important to U.S. history?
- What questions do you have about the Louisiana Purchase? (write down or have students write down their questions)
- How do you think acquiring new land affected the United States? (Encourage critical thinking about national expansion, Native American relations and government policies.)

As a class or in groups, explore the Library of Congress's online exhibit "[Rivers, Edens, Empires: Lewis & Clark and the Revealing of America](#)" and allow the students to research answers to their questions. There are tabs at the top of the exhibit for different sections and online views of maps, artifacts, primary sources and secondary material are available in the exhibit. The tab labeled "Lewis and Clark" may be most useful!

At the conclusion of the research time, invite students to share their findings and what questions were answered.