

1803

President Jefferson

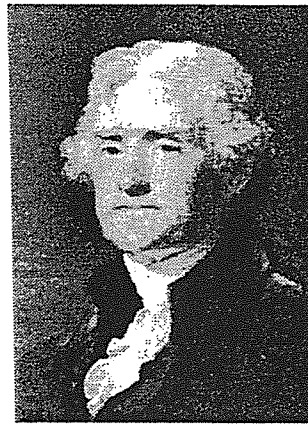
Should the U.S. buy the Louisiana Territory?

It is 1803. You are Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States.

Our new country has a chance to double in size. The French leader, Napoleon, wants to sell us a large territory called Louisiana. This territory is so large that we don't even know what it looks like. But we know it has New Orleans, the most important city on the Mississippi River. The French need money because they are going to war against England. They want \$15 million for Louisiana. They need the money soon or they won't sell Louisiana to us.

Louisiana could be very important for the United States. The Spanish used to own this territory. Sometimes, they would not let us use the port of New Orleans. Our traders and merchants on the Mississippi lost a lot of money. Now the French are in control. They are not going to let us use New Orleans,

either. If we buy the Louisiana Territory, we will control New Orleans and the Mississippi and gain new territory, too.



Thomas Jefferson

We have enough money to buy Louisiana from the French. But our Constitution does not say anything about buying land from other countries. Does the Constitution give a president the power to buy land for America? Is that

legal? Maybe the Congress should amend the Constitution so that we can buy Louisiana constitutionally. But Napoleon needs the money now. Maybe he will not wait for us.

