

Explore More—Costs and Benefits

Directions: Listen to your teacher talk about the costs and benefits of the Louisiana Purchase. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

What are costs and benefits?

We can analyze historical events in terms of their costs and benefits. The costs include the difficulties or negative effects of an event. The benefits include the advantages or things that are gained because of the event. Most major events have both costs and benefits. When making decisions, we often compare the costs and benefits, or pros and cons, and then decide which is greater. This decision-making process helps us determine how to proceed. Costs and benefits can be different depending on your perspective. Let's examine the Louisiana Purchase and explore how the costs and benefits of the event are different depending on your perspective.

What was the Louisiana Purchase?

The French sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States for 15 million dollars. The Louisiana Purchase agreement was signed in Paris, France on May 2, 1803. The Louisiana Purchase included the land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, and from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. You can see the Louisiana Territory on the map on page 24 of Book 5.

What were the benefits of the Louisiana Purchase?

It depends who you ask. For the United States, the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the country. This meant more land for farming and fur trapping. More and more people were coming to the United States, and they needed land to live on. This new land gave settlers a chance to move west for both adventure and opportunity.

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Did the Louisiana Purchase have costs?

Yes. As more and more settlers moved west after the Louisiana Purchase, the American Indians were forced to leave their homes and make other changes in their lives. Though the Louisiana Purchase was good for many white settlers, it had many unfortunate, long-term consequences for the American Indians. Their lives were never the same.

Do current political events have both costs and benefits?

Yes. When countries go to war, when the form of government in a country changes, when taxes are raised or lowered, when court decisions are made, when environmental laws are altered ... all of these events have both costs and benefits. Are the benefits greater than the costs? Once again, in most cases, it depends who you ask. When analyzing costs and benefits, perspective is important. ❖

YOUR TURN!

1. Think about a current event. What are the costs and benefits?
Record your answers in the chart.

Event: _____

Benefits	Costs

2. In your opinion, were the benefits of the Louisiana Purchase greater than the costs? Why or why not?

3. Why is it important to examine both the potential benefits and costs before making a decision?
