Thomas Jefferson was the third president of the United States, but he played many political roles throughout our nation’s history. His political life influenced the country in many ways, from the founding documents to the shape of our nation on the map. His contributions include the Declaration of Independence, America’s two-party political system, and the Louisiana Purchase, which added territory to our nation.

**It’s Time for a Revolution**

Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, which informed Great Britain that the American colonies were breaking away. Jefferson argued that King George, the leader of Great Britain, had broken an agreement between the people and the government. The Declaration said that since the king failed to protect everyone’s rights, the colonies could revolt and demand a new government. Jefferson’s draft listed the Americans’ complaints against British rule and was signed by 55 other delegates from the colonies. The document shocked the world and led to the Revolutionary War.

**Come Join the Party**

Jefferson had very clear ideas about how he wanted the government to work. He believed in a small government with limited powers. People who agreed with his views came together and formed our first political party — an organized group of people with similar political views. This party was called the Democratic-Republican Party. Another Founding Father, Alexander Hamilton, believed in a stronger national government. Hamilton and his supporters created the Federalist Party.

As the new government made decisions, people took sides and the political parties grew. Political parties are important because when people with similar views act together, they have a better chance to influence the government. When Jefferson won the presidential election in 1800, it was the first time a government changed power from one party to another because of a democratic election. Jefferson would later call it the “revolution of 1800.”

**Expanding Westward**

As president of the United States, Jefferson doubled the size of the country with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. France had claimed the land between the Mississippi River and Rocky Mountains for its own empire but had to change plans. Jefferson took advantage of this and made France an offer that they accepted. This was a little tricky, since the Constitution didn’t give instructions for expansion. Eventually the purchase gained enough support, and Congress approved the deal.

**Fulfilling His Vision for the Country**

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, established the two party system in United States politics, and oversaw the expansion of our young nation. And because he stuck to his vision for the country, he was able to lead the colonies to independence and to a political system that allows for different points of view. Jefferson’s lasting impact can be seen in our founding documents and on the map of the United States.
Thomas Jefferson

What a Deal! In 1803, the U.S bought the 825,000 square miles of the Louisiana Territory for $15 million. That is less than $20 per square mile. Answer the questions below about the Louisiana Purchase.

1. How many states does the purchase cover today?
2. List them all here:

They Said What? The Founding Fathers may have agreed to create the Constitution, but they didn’t stay in agreement for long. Connect the quotes to the political party that may have said each statement.

Let’s imitate British aristocracy—but without a king!

Common people should be able to govern themselves!

We should be able to limit freedoms in order to keep political power.

Long live freedom of speech and freedom of the press!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Federalists</th>
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Here is a political cartoon from the 1800 presidential election. It shows an eagle stopping Jefferson from “destroying” the Constitution. Which party do you think put out this cartoon?

____________________________
The Louisiana Purchase
1803

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1. How many states does the purchase cover today? Fifteen states
2. List them all here: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico

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