

LOUISIANA PURCHASE FACILITATION GUIDE

PREPERATION BEFORE CLASS

REVIEW BACKGROUND

Here's some background information to help prepare you to lead your students through this role-play.

SUMMARY

The Louisiana Purchase role-play takes place in early 1803, as President Jefferson debates how to handle the Louisiana Purchase. As students debate issues of territory and governance, they must tackle the question: How should we balance executive power and Constitutional limitations?

KEY QUESTIONS

- How should we balance executive power and Constitutional limitations?
- When should practical considerations override political ideals?

STUDENT ROLES

As students log into VOXPOP, they are distributed across the following five groups:

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICANS	FEDERALISTS	WESTERN SETTLERS	CABINET ADVISORS	TERRITORY INHABITANTS
The Democratic Republican party believes in westward expansion, an agrarian republic and limited federal government. They want to secure this incredible opportunity while preserving their political philosophy.	While Federalists have traditionally pushed for expansive federal powers, they now find themselves arguing for a strict constitutional interpretation of executive powers. Some Northeasterners fear the purchase will flood Congress with farming states hostile to commercial interests like trade and banking.	Frontier farmers and traders see opportunity in the territory not available in the crowded east. They want land for their families to prosper, room for their children to build their own farms, and the chance to make their fortune through new settlements and trade routes.	Jefferson's inner circle and Cabinet see both the incredible opportunity and the constitutional obstacles. They're working to find a pragmatic solution that preserves republican government while seizing this opportunity.	French and Spanish colonists, free people of color, and Native American tribes currently living in Louisiana watch these negotiations with concern. They want to preserve their laws, customs, and rights under any new government.

SETUP

Prepare to run the role-play in your classroom.

CREATE A SESSION

Create a session for each class period in which you will run the role-play. Go to:

voxpath.io/role-plays/the-louisiana-purchase

You will be asked to **Name** your session. We suggest naming it after the class period in which you will run it.

Then you will be asked to enter your **email address**, so we can send you an email with the link to the session. Save the email and use it to open the session when the class starts.

VOXPOP saves your progress as you play, so you can run the role-play over multiple days. Just click on the link in the email to re-open it.

DECIDE ON DURATION

In this guide, we suggest timings for a 60-minute session, including notes about sections that you can skip if you are pressed for time.

For a more relaxed experience, you can split the role-play into multiple sessions. Running a VOXPOP over two 45-minute sessions works particularly well. Look for the + in suggested timings to see where it's beneficial to add time. If you split the role-play into two sessions, we suggest ending the first day after the Issues (page 3). You can always revisit the videos the next day if you like. Just hit the Back button at the bottom.

CLASSROOM SETUP

When you're ready to start the role-play, use the link in the email to open the session on your classroom's main screen.

Students should each use an individual device to log in and interact with the role-play. They can use any web-enabled device, including PCs, Chromebooks, tablets and phones.

You can leave desks in their normal configuration, but students will be moving around the class and meeting in different groups throughout the role-play. They should carry their device with them when they move.



INTRODUCTION

During this phase students are introduced to the situation, read their profiles and get into character.

10 minutes total

ASSIGN PROFILES – 3 min

Before class starts, open the VOXPOP session you created on your classroom screen.

As students arrive they can log in on their web-enabled device by going to the **URL**

voxpath.run/core

Students should then enter the 6-character alphanumeric **Code** displayed on the classroom screen.

They will be asked to type in a display name.

- If students are returning to a session that's already in progress, they must type their name exactly as they did before. Names are case- and punctuation-sensitive.
- Names will be displayed on the classroom screen.

As students log in, they will be assigned to **Groups** and their name will appear on the screen.

If students arrive late, you can bring up the **URL** & session **Code** by clicking on .

WELCOME – 1.5 min

A video introduces students to VOXPOP.

THE SITUATION – 4 min

A video provides the historical background that students need to know.

PROFILES – 3 min

Your students receive information about their roles, including their **Group** and a personal **Bio**.

Students should hit the yellow button on their screen when they're done reading.

INTRODUCTIONS – 3 min

In this phase, students get into character by introducing themselves to one another.

Walk around and look at your students' profiles to get a sense of who they are.

VALUES

During this phase students discuss their group's goals and share them with the class.

10 minutes total

VALUES INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

DISCUSS VALUES - 4+ min

Students meet with their **Group** and establish common goals.

Each **Group** has a different question to discuss. The questions are listed below along with their group's perspective on the value. Each **Group** must each select one representative to explain the answer to the class.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICANS value OPPORTUNITY	FEDERALISTS value STABILITY	WESTERN SETTLERS value GROWTH	CABINET ADVISORS value PRAGMATISM	TERRITORY INHABITANTS value SOVEREIGNTY
When is it acceptable to bend our principles for a greater good?	What are the dangers of uncontrolled expansion?	Why is expansion essential for America's future?	How do leaders balance ideals with practical necessities?	How can we respect the rights of existing inhabitants?
This chance to secure America's future may never come again. Sometimes leaders must act boldly for the nation's survival.	Republics fail when they grow too large to govern. We must strengthen what we have rather than grasp for an empire.	America's destiny lies westward. We need land to prosper, space for our children to build their futures, and new opportunities for wealth and advancement.	Leadership requires balancing principles with possibilities. We must find a path that serves the nation's interests.	We deserve a voice in decisions about our homeland. Our rights, customs, and self-governance must be respected.

SHARE YOUR VALUES - 5 min

In this phase, students practice public speaking and learn about the other **Groups**.

Encourage **Groups** to cheer for each other and show support for the **Values** that align with theirs.

As you click **Next**, the software will call up the **Groups**, in this order:

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICANS
FEDERALISTS
WESTERN SETTLERS
CABINET ADVISORS
TERRITORY INHABITANTS

ISSUES

During this phase, we break the challenge facing the class into three issues.

8 minutes total

ISSUES INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

THE ISSUES - 7+ min

VOXPOP divides the conflict into three main **Issues**. There is one video per **Issue**.


These are the **Issues**:

TERRITORY SIZE	CONSTITUTION	CONSTITUTION
<p>Supporters of buying the whole territory say this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. How else could we acquire so much land so cheaply - about three cents per acre? This would secure not just river access but our entire western frontier. We'd gain valuable resources and room for our growing population to expand for decades.</p> <p>Critics worry about governing such a vast territory. Senator Samuel White asks: can a republic effectively govern citizens "two or three thousand miles" from the capital? Won't settlers so distant "alienate their affections from the Union"?</p> <p>How big should America be?</p>	<p>Some propose a constitutional amendment to authorize the purchase. This would preserve our principles and set a proper precedent. But amendments take time - potentially years. Can we risk losing this opportunity while we debate constitutional niceties?</p> <p>Others argue for bold executive action now. Jefferson could act like a "guardian" for the nation, doing what's necessary to preserve our future. Congress can ratify his actions after the fact. In times of crisis, leaders must act decisively. The President must have room to operate to secure our nation's security and prosperity</p> <p>How do we justify actions not covered in the Constitution?</p>	<p>One approach is territorial government. Congress would appoint governors and judges to rule the territory until it's ready for statehood. This would allow time to establish American institutions, teach republican values, and ensure loyalty to the United States.</p> <p>The alternative is rapid statehood. Divide the territory and admit new states quickly, giving residents full representation in Congress. This honors our revolutionary principles: Government by consent of the governed. It also prevents the creation of a colonial empire incompatible with those principles.</p> <p>How should we govern new territories?</p>

POST-VIDEO DISCUSSIONS - Time-permitting

A discussion question will appear after each video plays, with suggestions for groups to call on. These classwide discussions are a good way to review the **Issues** and establish alliances between **Groups**.

However, **they are not necessary, and discussion is not included in the time estimates** given in this guide.

If you choose to answer the questions with your class, remind students to click the **Perspective** button  to learn more about what their group thinks.

COMMITTEES

During this section, students are divided into committees to work on one of the three issues.

10 minutes total

COMMITTEE INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

WORK IN COMMITTEES - 9 min

In this phase, students must work with members of other **Groups** to select proposals that address the crisis.

Students from each **Group** are distributed across three **Committees**.

In their **Committees**, students:

- Vote on their individual devices to select one **Proposal** for a whole class vote,
- Pick a representative to explain and argue for their **Proposal** to the class,
- If applicable, pick a representative to present arguments against the proposal.

These are the **Proposals**:

COMMITTEE ON TERRITORY SIZE	COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION	COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE
STRATEGIC PURCHASE Buy only New Orleans and West Florida as originally planned – securing river access without overextending ourselves. Supporters: FEDERALISTS, TERRITORY INHABITANTS	AMEND THE CONSTITUTION Pass a constitutional amendment granting federal power to acquire territory before completing any purchase Supporters: FEDERALISTS, TERRITORY INHABITANTS	TERRITORIAL SYSTEM Establish appointed territorial governments to prepare regions for eventual statehood. Supporters: FEDERALISTS, CABINET ADVISORS
ENTIRE TERRITORY Accept Napoleon's offer for all of Louisiana – doubling the size of the nation. Supporters: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICANS, WESTERN SETTLERS	EXECUTIVE ACTION Ratify the purchase immediately using treaty powers. Supporters: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICANS, CABINET ADVISORS	RAPID STATEHOOD Quickly admit new states with full representation. Supporters: WESTERN SETTLERS

Your students' devices have more information about the proposals they can access by clicking



Ask your students to tell you more about the proposals.

VOTE & EPILOGUE

During this section, students debate the solutions, cast votes, learn about what really happened and reflect on the experience.

17 minutes total

VOTE INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

DEBATE & VOTE - 9 min

The class decides by majority vote whether to pass the **Proposals** selected by the **Committees**.

This is an opportunity for students to practice public speaking as they attempt to persuade classmates to vote for or against proposals.

Encourage debate! This is the last chance to address the crisis.

As you click **Next**, the website will prompt a **DEBATE** and then a **VOTE** on each proposal, in this order:

COMMITTEE ON TERRITORY SIZE

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE

WHAT HAPPENED - 7+ min

An **Epilogue** video explains what really happened.

When the video is done playing, these suggested discussion questions appear:

- How should we balance executive power and Constitutional limitations?
- When should practical considerations override political ideals?

The post-activity discussion gives students time to decompress from the role-playing experience.