

# An Expanding Nation

## An Introductory Research Assignment Packet

The last major battle of the Revolutionary War was fought at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781. While it took two years for the peace negotiations to be completed, and occasional battles were fought, it is generally accepted that the Battle of Yorktown, won by the Continental Army with the help of French troops on October 19, 1781, was the end of the war. The Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolutionary War and was signed on September 3, 1783.

The Treaty of Paris gave the new nation of the United States of America control of all the territory between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River, from the border with Canada to the border of Florida. Canada remained in the control of the British, and Spain continued to control Florida and the territory immediately to the west of the Mississippi River.

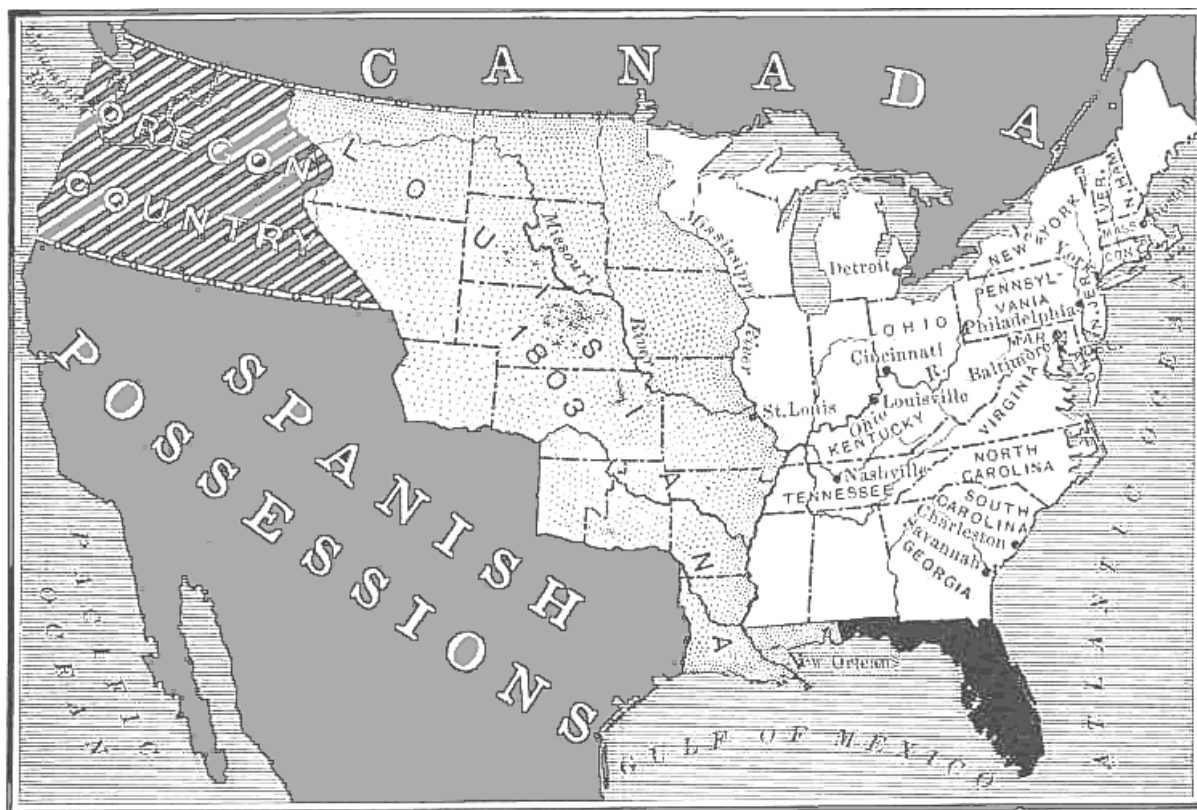
The United States began with thirteen states, which entered the Union in the order in which they ratified the Constitution. The territory to the west of the original colonies, up to the point of the Mississippi River, also belonged to the new country.

In 1801, President Thomas Jefferson discovered that France had taken control of a large area of the country between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains. This area had previously belonged to Spain and was now called Louisiana. Napoleon I, emperor of France at that time, decided not to continue his plans to colonize this area of the Western Hemisphere and sold Louisiana to the United States in 1803 for fifteen million dollars. This land purchase doubled the size of the United States at the time and encouraged the expansion of the country westward.

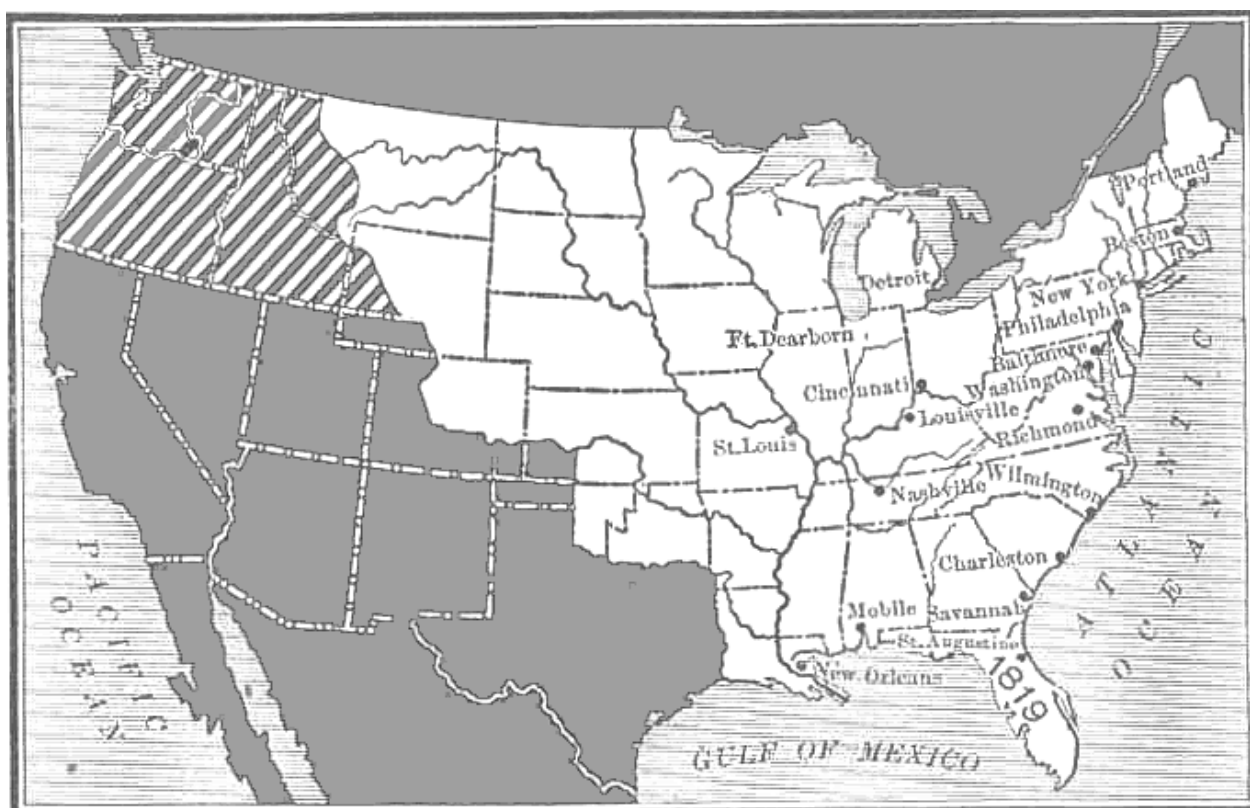
In 1819, the United States signed a treaty with Spain in which it gained the area that is now the state of Florida. This came about as a result of trying to set the borders of the Louisiana Purchase that had been made in 1803. Florida officially became a territory of the United States in 1821.

In the territories that belonged to Mexico, Americans were also spreading and settling. At first, American settlers were invited, by the Mexican government to settle in the area of Texas in 1835. However, by 1836, these settlers, along with many Mexicans living in Texas, declared Texas to be an independent country. Many thought they were being ruled by a distant government that acted as a tyrant. Later, in 1845, the United States annexed Texas and made it a state. This resulted in the Mexican War.

The following map shows the original size of the United States after the Revolutionary War, the section in white between the Atlantic Ocean the Mississippi River and between Canada and the area of Florida. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase added a large area of land to the new nation.



The following map shows the United States with the addition of the area of Florida in 1819.









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Rank by Size: \_\_\_\_\_  
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