International School of Monterrey

Reading Comprehension

___th Grade Trimester ___

Name _____ Date _____ List #: ____-____

The **main idea** *tells what a story or paragraph is mostly about.*

Greatest Deal in History



How would you like to buy land at four cents an acre? That is what the United States paid France for the Louisiana Territory in 1803. Many consider this purchase one of the greatest real estate deals in history.

When Thomas Jefferson became president of the United States in 1801, Spain owned the Louisiana Territory and the Floridas. The two countries had treaties that allowed American farmers and merchants to use the shipping ports in these areas. The port of New Orleans was especially important to the American settlers who shipped their products down the rivers that flowed into the Gulf of Mexico. When Jefferson learned that Spain had turned over control of the Louisiana Territory to France, he took action to protect the United States' access to New Orleans. There was also the danger that the French dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte, might try to build an empire in America that would threaten the United States. In 1801, Jefferson sent diplomats to France to negotiate the purchase of New Orleans.

At first Napoleon refused to sell any land to the United States because he did have dreams of expanding his empire. However, the diplomats did not give up, and soon events turned in their favor. French troops in the West Indies had been unable to stop a slave revolt, which forced them to return in defeat to France instead of going on to the Louisiana Territory. Napoleon was also planning a war against Great Britain. Unable to defend the Louisiana Territory and rather than risk losing it to Great Britain or the United States, Napoleon offered to sell the entire territory to the U.S. He could then use the money from the sale to finance his European conquests. On April 30, 1803, a "Treaty of Purchase between the United States and the French Republic" was signed by French and U.S. diplomats. The United States acquired nearly 600 million acres of land for $15 million dollars which calculated to about four cents an acre. While most countries had acquired land through war, the United States achieved its greatest expansion through peaceful negotiations.

Jefferson was rightfully proud of what has become known as the Louisiana Purchase. Acquiring the Louisiana Territory almost doubled the area of the United States. It greatly increased the economic resources in our country and united much of what is now the United States. This bargain buy created all or parts of thirteen states including Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Montana. With such expanded land and resources, the United States was poised to become a world power.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Choose the main idea of each paragraph and write the letter in the blank space..

____ 1. Paragraph 2:

- **a.** Spain owned two major territories in North America.
- **b.** The United States was threatened by French control of the Louisiana Territory.
- **c.** Thomas Jefferson wanted to purchase only New Orleans.

____ 2. Paragraph 3:

- **a.** Napoleon would do anything to get money to finance his wars.
- **b.** U. S. diplomats took two years to negotiate a treaty.
- **c.** Favorable events and patient diplomacy led to the greatest expansion in United States history.

____ 3. Paragraph 4:

- **a.** The United States doubled its size with the purchase of the Louisiana Territory.
- **b.** Thomas Jefferson was proud of the accomplishments of his presidency.
- **c.** The United States gained many benefits from the Louisiana Purchase.

____ 4. Choose another title for this story.

- **a.** What a Great Buy!
- **b.** Napoleon Is Doomed in America
- **c.** Land for Sale—Cheap, Cheap!
- **d.** New States Created

5. Surprisingly, not everyone was happy with the deal the United States made with France to purchase the Louisiana Territory. One Boston newspaper reporter complained that the United States already had enough land and did not need to spend so much money on more. How would you convince this reporter that the United States benefited from this purchase? Write the main benefits of this purchase for the United States.

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LIVEWORKSHEETS