

Literacy Learner Analysis Project

Jeffrey Shaffer

Michigan State University

### Abstract

This paper will be written in three parts. The first part will contain background information about the project as well as myself. It will have information about the student I am working with, their home life as well as literacy practices. It will also discuss the experience the student has with literacy in schools. The second part of the report will talk about the emotional climate in the classroom. I will be giving my student pre- and post-tests and the results will be analyzed. There will also be the lesson plans that I created as well as information about them. The third and final part will contain my reflections on my literacy lesson plans. It will also contain a letter to teachers and guardians with my recommendations from the lessons.

## **PART 1**

### **I. Brief Background and Reason for Project Focus**

Differentiated instruction is very important, especially when it comes to literacy. The reason is that it can help students who are below grade level in reading and writing. Students get instruction that is tailored to their needs. Essentially, “differentiated instruction focuses on whom we teach, where we teach, and how we teach. Its primary goal is ensuring that teachers focus on processes and procedures that ensure effective learning for varied individuals” (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006, p. 3). It is about who we are teaching, how we do so and making sure all learners’ needs are met. Not everyone learns the same way and that is where differentiated instruction comes in. Additionally, “differentiated teaching means a teacher is attuned to students’ varied learning needs as to the requirements of a thoughtful and well-articulated curriculum” (Tomlinson, & McTighe, 2006, p. 18). If there is differentiated instruction being used, students will learn the material better. Having a well-thought out curriculum along with differentiated instruction allows for success in the classroom because all of the students’ varied needs are being met.

My goals are to learn how to help close the achievement gap in the classroom with literacy. That is a big issue where I teach at and I believe that in order to improve scores in all subjects, it starts with literacy. Additionally, I want to learn new strategies to help students who struggle with literacy and ways that help me grow as a teacher so I can help students grow in the classroom.

Differentiated instruction is not one of my strongest areas. I believe that in order to have a more successful classroom, I need to improve in this area. The reason is that it will allow me to reach all students at their current literacy level. I need to give them instruction that is appropriate

for their learning level and not just assume everyone is at the same grade level. If I make that assumption, students who have difficulties might not be able to understand the material as well and can fall behind even more. I know that I have a lot to learn about differentiated instruction and my hope is that by the end of all this, I have a better idea how to do it and do it well.

This particular project is very important to my teaching. In my past, I have had many students who struggle with literacy and I wasn't quite sure how to help the students. The reason is that literacy came easy for me, so I have a hard time connecting with students who have these struggles. However, this project will allow me to work with a student and really see what works well and what doesn't in terms of improving literacy. In my present and future teaching situations, I know that I will always have students with literacy levels that are low. I think that after this project is completed, it will give me a better sense moving forward how to help these students.

For this project, I am lucky enough to work one-on-one with a student who has a literacy level that is below where it should be for his age and grade. Before I can start to work with him, I think it is important to know a little about his background and literacy history so I have a good idea of who I am working with.

## **II. The Student, Home, and Family Literacy Practice**

The student I am working with, Robert Smith, is thirteen years old. He is currently in the eighth grade. He has a reading level of about a fourth grade student. Robert is a male student with a mixed ethnicity. He recognizes himself as part Caucasian and part Hispanic. He has a primary language of English and that is the only language he speaks. He does not have any disabilities or receive any special education services. When he was a sixth grader, a few teachers were concerned about his learning and were unsure if he had a learning disability or not. There

were tests set up with the school psychologist and after everything came back, it was determined he did not have a learning disability. He has, however, taken supplemental Math and Reading courses. These are classes for students who struggle in these areas and are a few grade levels behind. They are essentially like a Tier 2 in Response to Intervention. These support classes are designed to help close the achievement gap and improve the student's ability in the specific area.

Robert lives with his grandmother and grandfather and he calls them mom and dad. His biological mother left him with his grandmother when he was younger and moved to another state. She recently returned and lives a few floors above him in the same apartment complex. Robert has a few siblings, with one being an older brother and also two younger brothers. His youngest brother passed away a few years ago and it is something that he still struggles with emotionally.

Robert faces many challenges at home. He comes from a very economically challenged household. His grandmother is the only one that works and his grandfather cannot due to health reasons. There is not a lot of structure at home either, with Robert going to bed when he pleases and not really having any rules to follow. Instead of going outside and playing with friends, all he wants to do is play video games. He is able to do this because no one tells him he can't. Emotionally, there are many things that he has issues with and it all depends on his day or the night before. If one thing sets him off, his entire day can be ruined. An example of this would be when he was in my class and a student asked him to stop tapping his pencil during a test because it was distracting. Robert got really loud and started threatening the other student. After I was able to calm him and down and talk, he said the reason he was so upset was because he got his Xbox taken away for his behavior at home the night before. Because of issues like this, he has a strong tendency to miss school or not pay attention in class because of his emotional instability.

In terms of supports, there are not a ton of them at home. His grandmother tries her best to get him to school as often as possible. She makes sure he has enough to eat and a place to sleep, but other than that, there is not much in terms of what he has. He has about four or five shirts and a jacket that he always wears and they are not the best fitting. There is no emphasis on school or school work from home. One of the biggest supports he has is a mentor group at the school he attends. His mentor, a teacher at the school, is someone Robert can talk to when he is having trouble. The mentor will also stay after school with him to help him with his work so he can be more successful in the classroom.

In Robert's family background with literacy, there are some consistencies with what I saw from him in my classroom. I currently have Robert's little brother in my classroom and he shows some of the same tendencies in terms of literacy as Robert. He has a low reading level and is struggling with writing as well. There is not a lot of vocabulary knowledge from him. I do not know much about his older brother. In terms of his parents, there is not much to go on. Robert does not speak about them or have much of a relationship. However, his grandparents are both graduates of high school, so they have a high enough literacy level to complete that.

In terms of literacy practices at home, there is not much. According to Robert, he was read to as a very young child, but the older he got, the quicker the reading stopped. There is not a lot of reading that he does. He doesn't read at home, and only does at school when he has to for class. He will, however, read some comic books that are mostly pictures with very few words in them.

There is not much access to texts at Robert's home. He said the only things to read are old books he read when he was just beginning school. However, he does have access to all different types of texts due to the library at school. As mentioned, he really only wants to read the comics.

When he had to choose a book for a report or project, he told me he just tried to find the shortest he could.

Robert told me that he would sometimes enjoy the books that were being read in his English class. If there was a book he liked, he would talk to his family about it, but mostly his little brother. He liked sharing some of that information with him. If there was a movie about the book, they would watch it together so they could discuss it afterward because this allowed for his brother to understand what he was talking about. Other than that, there is not much text-based conversation taking place.

There is very little assistance provided to Robert at home. He just does his own thing and he said that no one in his house really pushes him to do better in school, which in turn has affected his literacy. There is no modeling of parent reading that is occurring in the household. Again, he was read to when he was very young, but that's about it terms of reading by parents.

### **III. Experiences with Literacy in Schools**

In his English classes, there have been books that the class has read together. Sometimes students would read out loud or the students would follow along as the book was read on tape. When Robert was able to listen to someone else read to him, it was much easier for him to complete assignments based on the reading, but also participate in conversations about what he heard. He may not have been able to understand everything that was read, but could get the main ideas at least. He has also been placed in a supplemental Reading course, which was there to help improve his reading level and get him back to as close to grade level as possible.

When talking to some of Robert's teachers, especially the one in the Reading course, they noticed a few things. One of them was that it was very difficult to get Robert to write more than one or two sentences to get answers. If an answer was supposed to be a paragraph long, it almost

never got to that length. Over time, and with some great instruction, they were able to get him to start using more details and expand on his thoughts to improve his writing. When talking about his reading, all of his teachers said just how challenging it was to try to get him to even start reading on his own, let alone do in for an extended period of time. This is still something he struggles with today. Overall, many literacy related tasks were, and still are challenging to Robert. He needs that extra push and a lot of individual attention to help. Basically all the literacy instruction he got was very relevant and needed just because of how low he was. Every little bit has helped him along the way and he has shown improvement because of the instruction.

When looking at Robert and his instructional challenges, there are quite a few. The first is just his willingness to even do the work. He is not a student who just does what is expected of him in the classroom. There are usually a few times he needs to be either redirected to the work, pushed a little bit to get him started, and pushed even more to get it completed. He responds much better to one-on-one or small group instruction. In terms of context, if there is something that he is remotely interested in, he will usually be much more willing to attempt the work and do better. Most school subjects, however do not seem to interest him as I have learned over the years. For his schooling history, it shows that he has struggled to maintain decent grades. He will have a class or two where he does well, but most classes are at a seventy percent or lower. A lot of time he just refuses to do work or does so little of it that it just constantly brings down his grades. I think a lot of this is traced back to having a low literacy level and him not feeling confident in his abilities because of it.

## **PART 2**

### **IV. Classroom Emotional Climate**



The emotional climate of the classroom can be very important in terms of motivation and engagement for any student. The classroom climate is especially important for Robert. At Robert's school, risk taking is a big part of what is preached. It is a learner profile all teachers discuss in their room. The reason being that without taking risks, you will not grow as much as you could. Additionally, students are encouraged to try and go outside of their comfort zones. It is okay if they make mistakes, as long as they are giving their best effort. In terms of independence, there is some of that in the classroom, however that does not work well for Robert as he would rather just sit and do nothing instead of read or write. I believe this has to do with his reading level being below his peers and him not feeling confident in his abilities. So while the class does promote some independence, Robert does not take advantage of it.

When Robert engages in literacy activities, his results can be all over the place. When working one-on-one with him, he seems to take up more interest in the activity as he has someone there to help guide and push him. However, he will still stop at random times and try to get off task, so there is some redirection needed. That happens most when he is reading. When he is writing, he can usually finish a sentence or his thought before getting off task, so at least he waits until whatever question or section of an assignment he is doing before he thinks of other things. The bigger challenge comes when Robert does not have that one-on-one attention and has to work on his own for something literacy related. He might read a few sentences and just stop or he will write only one sentence, even if a whole paragraph is needed. He needs to be redirected to his work often, and sometimes that still does not do the trick.

There are moments when Robert expresses frustration or disinterest in reading. When there is a reading that does not interest Robert in any way, he tends to want nothing to do with it. He might follow along if the class is reading aloud together, but he would never volunteer to read

aloud to the class. I believe that has to do with his frustration of reading. When there are words he cannot pronounce, Robert gets frustrated. He has told me does not like reading when he knows that his classmates can do it better than him. He said it does not make him feel smart to read and not do it as well as others. I have noticed that when he gets frustrated, he has a tendency to shut down and will not continue the reading, even if being redirected.

In terms of rewards for reading and writing, there are not a lot. For himself, Robert feels rewarded when he reads about Minecraft and is able to use what he reads to help him in the game. He said that is his favorite thing to read about because he can see how useful it can be to something he enjoys. Talking to one of his previous reading teachers, they found there to be very little intrinsic motivation for Robert when it came to reading. They would sometimes offer him something like a piece of candy if he finished what he was supposed to read in class. Even though it may have been small, it made him want to finish what he had to get that candy. It seems as though he needs to see a reward to his reading in order for him to do it. The reward could be helping on something he likes, or just getting a small prize to do so, but both have the same effect in making him want to read.

In terms of responding to engagement and motivation issues, Robert can have mixed results. For engagement, it can depend on who is trying to help with the issue or how they are trying to discuss it. If the person does not have a good relationship with him, he sometimes chooses not to listen to them. For motivation, something that works is still using the candy or small prize, but making it harder to get. Maybe the first time he has to read one chapter to get it, but the next time he has to read three chapters. Doing something like this is helpful in getting more done, but without much of a prize, or him seeing the usefulness of reading at the end he does not have much motivation to read.

## V. Pre- and Post-Assessments Given and Summary of Test Results

Robert was given a pre- and post-test. For each test, he was given a different article to read that related to the Social Studies content he would be learning about this school year. After he read the article, he had a few questions to answer. Each test was four questions long. The questions were about important vocabulary the student would come across when reading the article. They either had to select an answer for what the word meant, or a tell which answer was not a synonym of the word. Each question was multiple choice and there was also an explanation section after. The student had to select the answer and then explain why they chose the answer they did. This format was chosen so I would be able to see Robert's line of thinking. Also, without the explanation section he could just guess and get it right but have no idea what the word actually meant, which defeats the purpose. The purpose of the testing was to see Robert's vocabulary knowledge. That is an area in which Robert struggles, so I wanted to see the gains he could make and the pre- and post-tests would show me his improvement.

When Robert took the pre-test, the first thing he had to do was read an article about Reconstruction (Appendix B, Document 2). As he was reading this, he never once looked at the questions of the pre-test to see which words were going to be on it. After he finished reading the article, he then answered the questions without looking back at the article. Looking at the results of the pre-test, Robert got one out of four questions correct. The first question was "what does neglected mean?" (Appendix B, Document 1). Robert selected the answer of "to make money off of" (Appendix B, Document 1). That was incorrect. His reason he chose this was "the slaves was not making anof money until over-time" (Appendix B, Document 1). By looking at his answer and reasoning, it was clear he did not know what neglected meant because his explanation was not close to the correct answer. The correct answer was actually "not pay attention to" (Appendix B, Document 1). For question number two, Robert was able to get that correct. The question

asked “what does harvest mean?” (Appendix B, Document 1). Robert chose the answer of “gather crops” (Appendix B, Document 1). His explanation was “because harvest mean to gather crops not destroy crops” (Appendix B, Document 1). From this answer, he showed that he knew what it meant and what the opposite of harvest was by his explanation. Robert answered the third question incorrectly. The question asked “which of the following is not a synonym for depend?” (Appendix B, Document 1). Robert chose the answer of “turn to” but the correct answer was “disbelieve in” (Appendix B, Document 1). His explanation was “depend is to turn to” (Appendix B, Document 1). He essentially just said that depend meant to turn to, but for this question he needed to pick the answer that depend did not mean. The fourth question was one that Robert also got incorrect. The question was “what does reconstruction mean?” (Appendix B, Document 1). Robert choose the answer of “to talk about” while the correct answer was “to rebuild” (Appendix B, Document 1). His explanation was “because in the story it was talking about sleeve not rebuild” (Appendix B, Document 1). This answer showed he was thinking about the correct answer of rebuild, but thought that it had a different meaning. This pre-test really allowed me to see the struggles Robert has with his vocabulary knowledge. That is why I choose this type of test. I wanted to see the answers he chose, but also get an idea of why he picked the answers he did. It was important for me to see his thought process as he answered each question. He did not know many of the words he was asked to define. The test showed that Robert could remember some parts of the article he read, but revealed a big weakness in his understanding of vocabulary. By not knowing what the words meant it most likely impacted what he read and how he read it. Vocabulary is very important when it comes to reading comprehension. In fact, “vocabulary experts agree that adequate reading comprehension depends on a person already knowing between 90 and 95 percent of the words in a text. Knowing that

percentage of words allows the reader to get the main thrust of what is being said and therefore to guess correctly what the unfamiliar words probably mean” (Hirsch, 2003, p. 16). The pre-test showed that Robert struggles with vocabulary knowledge. By improving in this area, he will also be improving in his comprehension as well.

For the post-test that Robert took, it was the exact same style as his pre-test. He had to read an article, this time about the Fugitive Slave Act (Appendix B, Document 4). He had multiple choice questions in which his vocabulary knowledge was tested and also had to explain his choice for each answer. Robert was able to get three of the four questions correct for this test. The first question asked “what does capture mean?” (Appendix B, Document 3). Robert got this answer correct as he chose “to take control of” (Appendix B, Document 3). His explanation was “if you get capture you are like in jail” (Appendix B, Document 3). This answer showed that he knew what it meant, but was also able to make a connection with the word. By his explanation, he knew that someone could be captured and taken to jail. The second question was asking “what does fugitive mean?” (Appendix B, Document 3). Robert also got this question correct with his answer of “to hide from arrest” (Appendix B, Document 3). His explanation was “they broke out” (Appendix B, Document 3). I interpreted this as meaning they broke out of a place and had to hide from arrest based on his multiple choice answer. For the third question, “which of the following is not a synonym for resistance?”, Robert got this question incorrect by choosing “refusal” (Appendix B, Document 3). His explanation for his choice was “resistance mean making you (people) do what you say” (Appendix B, Document 3). From his response and explanation, it showed that he did not know what resistance meant, as his explanation did not provide any more clues to him actually knowing the definition. The fourth and final question asked “what does enforce mean?” (Appendix B, Document 3). Robert got this question correct

by choosing “to support by force” (Appendix B, Document 3). His explanation was “to make you do something” (Appendix B, Document 3). By choosing this answer and his explanation, it showed that he really understood what the word meant because his explanation was not the exact same thing as the answer he chose, showing understanding of the word. This post-test showed an improvement not only in the vocabulary knowledge of Robert, but also his ability to determine what words mean. For the article on the Fugitive Slave Act (Appendix B, Document 4), he highlighted the words from the test each time he read them. This was something we worked on in a lesson. Additionally, it showed he has a strength of figuring out meanings and making connections to words with other ways they can be used or their meaning based off of his explanations.

**VI. Lesson Plan Matrix**

<b>Lesson Foci/Date</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Instructional materials</b>	<b>On-going assessment</b>
The focus of the first lesson was to see what words the student would pick as most important and see if they were able to say what these words	The objective of this first lesson is the student will be able to select one word from each paragraph they find the most important to the main idea and be able to explain what that word	The materials needed for the lesson will be the article on the Louisiana Purchase <a href="https://newsela.com/read/lib-ushistory-louisiana-purchase/id/26819/">https://newsela.com/read/lib-ushistory-louisiana-purchase/id/26819/</a> The student will also have a sheet of paper with the bell work, space for work needed	As the lesson progresses, the student will explain to me why they choose the words they did and what they mean. We will work on different strategies to help figure out their

<p>actually meant. This lesson was taught on October 3, 2017.</p>	<p>means. This lesson is completed in a one-on-one setting. The state standard associated with the lesson is 8 – U4.2.3 Westward Expansion– Explain the expansion, conquest, and settlement of the West through the Louisiana Purchase, the removal of American Indians (Trail of Tears) from their native lands, the growth of a system of commercial agriculture, and the idea of Manifest Destiny. (E2.1, G6).</p>	<p>for the lesson, and a question for the exit ticket as well.</p>	<p>meaning. The student’s exit question for that day will be important to see what they took away for this lesson. The question will ask if it is important to know the meaning of words in order to pick the ones that are the most important. Depending on the answer received for that question, it will allow for me to see what they took away from the lesson and if some reteaching may be needed.</p>
<p>The focus for the second lesson was what to do when you come across words you do not know. It revolved around teaching different strategies to figure out vocabulary that the student has difficulty with the meaning of. It took place on October 9, 2017.</p>	<p>The objective for the lesson is that the student will be able to circle words they do not know and use context clues to be able to figure out what they mean. This lesson is completed in a one-on-one setting. The state standard associated with the lesson is 8 – U4.2.3 Westward Expansion– Explain the expansion, conquest, and</p>	<p>The materials needed for the lesson will be the article on the Indian Removal Act. <a href="https://newsela.com/read/gl-history-indian-removal-act/id/22442">https://newsela.com/read/gl-history-indian-removal-act/id/22442</a> The student will also have a sheet of paper with the bell work, space for work needed for the lesson, and a question for an exit ticket as well.</p>	<p>As we move through the lesson, we will talk about context clues, as well as root words to help the student figure out the meaning of words they do not know. Also, the final question the student will answer is a way they can figure out the meaning of a word in a reading that they do not know. Their answer will give me an idea of what the student</p>

	settlement of the West through the Louisiana Purchase, the removal of American Indians (Trail of Tears) from their native lands, the growth of a system of commercial agriculture, and the idea of Manifest Destiny. (E2.1, G6).		took away from this lesson.
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**Part 3**

**VII. Reflections on Your Literacy Lesson Plans**

The literacy area of focus for Robert was vocabulary knowledge. Robert comes from a family with a very low socioeconomic status. Studies show that “three-year-old children from families on welfare not only had smaller vocabularies than did children of the same age in professional families, but they were also adding words more slowly” (Hart & Risley, 2003). Robert started out a disadvantage with his vocabulary knowledge, and that trend of him having the smaller vocabulary has continued to where he is now, which is the eighth grade. By strengthening Robert’s vocabulary, it allows for him to expand his knowledge. He will be able to read more in-depth texts because he has a higher vocabulary, which will allow for him to comprehend these texts. Robert has a difficult time understanding what words mean and he loses comprehension because of it. This is part of the reason that his reading level is so low compared to his grade level. When determining which strategies to use to help him improve in this area, the first one I used was funneling. This was used in lesson one where he had to pick one word from each paragraph that he felt was the most important. He then had to explain what that word



meant. This was done so that he could see how important it is to understand all the different words he reads. The second strategy involved using context clues. I wanted him to see that even though you do not know the meaning of some words, there are clues around it to help you figure it out.

Robert was given a pre-test and there were four questions on it. They were multiple choice questions in which he had to tell me what the word meant but also why he chose the answer he did. The words were chosen from an article he had to read. One of the questions asked “which of the following is not a synonym for depend?” (Appendix B, Document 1). I could see if he was able to figure out the meaning of a word based on the text. He chose the answer “turn to” (Appendix B, Document 1). When looking at the pre-test and the results, I knew I had to do something to help Robert figure out what words meant if he did not know them. I had to think about different strategies that would help Robert not only now, but in the future. That is how I decided to use funneling for lesson one and then have Robert look at context clues for lesson two. I felt that after these two lessons, he would make a gain in his ability to figure what words meant that he may have been unsure of.

The first lesson I taught Robert was about realizing just how important it is to understand what words mean. If students do not think it is important to have a good knowledge of vocabulary, they will not see a reason to improve it. In this lesson, I had Robert highlight a word from each paragraph that he thought was the most important (Appendix C, Document 2). The reason that I chose this was because I wanted to see what he found important, and also if he knew what the words he was choosing meant. After the article was read and Robert highlighted a word from each paragraph, we looked at some of the words and discussed their meaning

together. Then I chose some words that were highlighted and he told me what their meanings were (Appendix C, Document 1).

During the lesson, I supported Robert's learning a few ways. The first was just helping him stay focused on the task at hand. He would sometimes ask me questions that were off topic like what the school was serving for lunch tomorrow and I would do my best to get him back on track. He can become distracted and doing whatever I could to have him avoid that was going to be beneficial to his success. Part of what allowed me to do that was working one-on-one with him. Additionally, I supported Robert's success by pushing him more as we were working together on figuring out a few of the words and their meanings. I would ask him questions about the words and try and help him make a connection to a time when he had heard it before. One of the words Robert highlighted was "principles" (Appendix C, Document 2). I asked him where he had heard it before and he referenced one of our learner profiles, which is principled. He said that it meant to do the right thing. By me pushing him and asking questions, he was able to think about another time where he heard the word and knew what it meant.

A choice that I made that impacted the first lesson started with the grade level I chose for the article. Robert is an eighth grader, yet I chose the article to be at the reading level of a fourth grade student, which is about where Robert is based on his NWEA test score. I did this because I did not want something that would be overly difficult for him and have him shut down during the lesson. I wanted him to feel comfortable with what we were doing.

For the work Robert had to do in lesson one, I gave him three words and he had to tell me what they meant. The words I chose were ones that he had highlight from the article. I was able to tell that Robert learned based on his use of making connections. One of the highlighted words was guaranteed. Robert wrote "Guaranteed mean a promise" (Appendix C, Document 1). When I

asked him how he knew that he said because of Subway. He said that Subway is guaranteed fresh so they are promising the food is fresh. Something I was unsure of in terms of Robert's learning from me stemmed from his answer of the word "inequality" because Robert wrote "equal means the same Inequal mean diffant" (Appendix C, Document 1). While I was very pleased to see that he could find the root word in inequality and know what it meant, it was something I did not teach him. In my eyes, he had some skill as to figuring out the meaning of words before I taught him this lesson and he was able to use it to decipher the meaning.

In terms of what I would do differently for lesson one, I would start with having Robert pick an entire sentence. I would not ask him to pick a single word because he could have just been guessing with the word he chose. After he chose the sentence, he would then choose a single word from that sentence that he found most important. This way, he narrows it down a little bit at a time, rather than just seeing an entire paragraph and selecting a word. It would essentially go from a paragraph, down to a sentence, then to a single word. I would also slow this lesson down. When this lesson was being taught I felt that at the time I may have rushed Robert. He was taking his time choosing a word, and to me, it felt like he was taking a while to pick one. Also, when completing the worksheet, he would want to do one part and then just ask me questions that were not about the work he was doing. The next time, I would not engage in this and let Robert know we need to finish the lesson, then we can talk about other things. Something I would change would have been what I used to help him with motivation. I did nothing special to get him interested in doing this lesson, and looking back on it, I should have had some reward for this one. If I could go back, at the beginning of the lesson, I would tell Robert that if he stays on task and completes his assignment with full effort, then I will give him one or two pieces of candy. As stated previously, this can help with Robert's motivation and it would have been

helpful as he was taught this lesson. Another choice was that I had him do funneling. I am not sure that this was the best idea for working on his vocabulary knowledge. In theory, he would have only selected words that he knew what they meant, so it would have been harder for me to teach him how to figure out what new words mean. That is something I would change

For lesson two, Robert again had another article to read. This time, as he came across a word he did not know or was unfamiliar with, he circled it (Appendix C, Document 4). The idea was to see how many words Robert did not know, then give him ideas on how he could figure out the meaning of them. After the article was read, we looked at a few of the words circled and discussed how we could figure out the meaning of them using context clues. Some of the first words circled were different Native American tribes. We looked at the sentences before and after the words Robert circled and came to a conclusion that they are all different tribes. The reason is that in the sentence before the circled words, it talks about a part of the United States being known as “Indian Country” (Appendix C, Document 4). Another example is the word “acquired” that Robert circled (Appendix C, Document 4). We talked about the sentence that the word was used in, but we took that word out. It talks about trade and different items. Robert come to the conclusion that acquired meant to get something and he related it back to when he would trade his Pokémon cards and he would get new ones. Robert did a few of the words on his own and had an exit question for the end of the lesson. One of the words Robert had to figure out was “imbalance” and his explanation was that it meant that “imbalances is more than 1 side” (Appendix C, Document 3). Another word Robert had to do on his own was “glimpse” and he said that it means “for a glimse (look)” (Appendix C, Document 4).

Like lesson one, this was also done in a one-on-one setting. There was also direct instruction that took place. The reason is that I was able go more in-depth with the material.

Robert could also ask any questions he had and I would be able to give him my full attention. I was also able to model for Robert how I figured out the meaning of words I did not know. When he was working, I was giving him verbal feedback as well.

For this lesson, a choice I made was to read the article to Robert instead of having him read it and then circle words. The reason behind this is that “numerous studies have documented the fact that young students can learn word meanings incidentally from read-aloud experiences” (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2014, p. 201). Even though he may not have been a young student, I was hoping that by me reading aloud he may have picked up a few new meanings of words just from one article. Also, it made it easier for him to know if he understood what a word meant or not because he heard it pronounced correctly. There is a chance that if he were to read it, he would have circled more words, even ones he may have known, just because he could not pronounce it or was unsure of what the spelling of it might have been. However, to make this lesson more authentic, I would have him read the article on his own if I was able to reteach it because he will not always have someone available to read to him.

Robert was able to learn from this lesson. I was able to determine that Robert learned because of his answer to the question, “what is one way you can figure out the meaning of an important word you are unsure of?” (Appendix C, Document 3). His answer was “look at words around it” (Appendix C, Document 3). This let me know that something he took away from the lesson was if he does not know what a word means, he will look at other words around it to try and figure out what it means. He is using the other words as clues. Before the lesson, when asked how he would figure out the meaning of a word he did not know, Robert said he would “try or guess” (Appendix C, Document 3). After this lesson, he went from guessing, to looking for context clues to figure out meanings.

For lesson two, there are a few things I would do differently if I had the chance to reteach it. The first this is that I would be focusing a little more on prefixes and suffixes in addition to using context clues to figure out the meaning of a word. I know that in the first lesson Robert used his ability to find a root word to figure out the meaning, but that is still something I would have liked to have included in my teaching. I would have liked to go in-depth and discuss multiple prefixes and suffixes and how they can change the meaning, or tense of the word. In terms of behavior for this lesson, it was a little better, but that was because there was the opportunity to have some candy when he was finished. Robert asked if he did well and stayed focused, would he be able to get a couple pieces. That helped with his behavior, so I wouldn't need to change much there. This lesson would also have been slowed down like lesson one, but this time would be because I would incorporate more instruction. Like mentioned above, adding instruction about prefixes and suffixes would take more time, so it would have made me slow down and most likely take more than one class period for the lesson.

The post-test revealed that Robert was able to improve his vocabulary knowledge based on the two lessons we did. On the post-test, he got three out of four questions correct. That was two more than the pre-test. A conclusion I did draw from this is that Robert does not know what the word synonym means. He got a question wrong on the pre- and post-test that was asking for the synonym of another word. If I could go back to the lessons that I taught, I would incorporate learning about synonyms into each lesson to help him understand what they are. Something else that caught my attention were the reasons for the answers he chose. He was essentially putting the words that the questions were asking about and giving his own definition. For question four, it asked "what does enforce mean?" (Appendix B, Document 3). Robert chose "to support by force" and his reasoning was "to make you do something" (Appendix B, Document 3). This

showed me he was on the right track to determining what words mean, because he was able to put the definitions in his own words.

### **VIII. Recommendations to Teachers and Parents/Caregivers**

To Whom it may Concern,

I was fortunate enough to teach Robert two lessons. The goal of these lessons were to improve his vocabulary knowledge. The first lesson focused on Robert understanding how important it is to know what words mean while the second lesson focused on how to figure out the meaning of words when you are unsure of what they mean.

After assessing Robert, I noticed a few of his strengths. One of them involves his desire to read when it is useful. When he is able to see how he can use what he learns or how it can help him in the real world, he becomes much more interested and wants to learn. Additionally, he has developed a strength of figuring out the meaning of words he doesn't know. This is something we worked on, and I feel that he has made a great improvement in this area based on our short amount of time together. While Robert has his strengths, he also has some weaknesses. One of them is his ability to focus for a long period of time when it comes to reading. If he does not have someone to work one-on-one with or is left to read alone for a long period of time, there is a good chance he will not stay on task very long. He will need to be redirected. This is related to the struggles Robert has with his reading stamina. Additionally, Robert also struggles with harder texts. His reading level is below his grade level and while it is important to push him to improve, trying to do too much at one time can cause him to shut down. He needs to feel that he is succeeding, even just a little bit, to keep working and stay motivated.

While Robert has shown improvement in his vocabulary knowledge, it is important to keep assessing him on it so he does not fall back to where he was before our lessons. Even if

it is a quick assessment followed by some type of instruction, that would prove to be helpful. The best way to do this will be one-on-one, as he will gain more trust in the person and will give them more effort. In addition, the next step to work on along with his vocabulary knowledge would be his reading stamina. The more he is able to read on his own, the better. He will need to be able to do this with all of the standardized testing he will have in the future. A couple of text recommendations I have for Robert include *Jumanji*, *James and the Giant Peach*, and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. I recommend these because there is also a movie made for each text, so he could watch it with parents or siblings after he reads them and they would be able to have meaningful discussions about it.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Shaffer



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## **X. Appendices of Work**

### Appendix A

#### Document 1

#### Lesson Plan 1

**Objective:** Use an article to help the student gain knowledge of the Louisiana Purchase, but also improving their literacy skills.

**State Standard:** 8 – U4.2.3 Westward Expansion– Explain the expansion, conquest, and settlement of the West through the Louisiana Purchase, the removal of American Indians (Trail of Tears) from their native lands, the growth of a system of commercial agriculture, and the idea of Manifest Destiny. (E2.1, G6)

**Materials needed:** <https://newsela.com/read/lib-ushistory-louisiana-purchase/id/26819/>

**Rationale for lesson:** The student will learn about a topic that is covered in their class, but the actual way they are learning about it will involve improving their vocabulary knowledge. It is important that the student understands what the words they read mean, as they will have to be picking out a word from each paragraph they find the most important. They will then have to tell me what the words they chose mean. Doing it this way allows for them to get the main idea of what they read, but also allowing me a chance to work on the student's vocabulary.

**Warm up question:**

1. Do you think that in a paragraph, there is one word that could be the most important or are they all equal?
2. Discuss student's answer with them and see their line of thinking

**Learning Target/Success criteria:**

1. Go over the learning target with the student, which is Westward Expansion

2. Explain the success criteria which is I can pick a word from each paragraph that I find the most important and explain what word means.

3. Go over the agenda for the lesson

**Instruction:**

1. Hand out the article to the student

2. Read the article to the student one paragraph at a time

3. As each paragraph is being read, student will select one word from each paragraph they find the most important to the main idea

4. They will explain to me why they chose the word they did

**Guided practice:**

1. I will choose three of the words that the student chose as most important

2. We will discuss what the meaning of these words are, and if they are not quite sure, explain how we can figure it out using context clues.

**Individual practice:**

1. I will select three of the words the student chose as the most important

2. The student will then tell me the meaning or what they think each meaning is

3. The student will do this on a sheet of paper.

**Exit question:**

1. Now that we know that some words are more important than others, is it valuable to try to know all the meaning of the words in order to pick the correct one?

## Document 2

## Lesson Plan 2

**Objective:** Use an article to help the student learn about the Indian Removal Act in addition to learning how to figure out the meaning of words they are unsure of.

**State Standard:** 8 – U4.2.3 Westward Expansion– Explain the expansion, conquest, and settlement of the West through the Louisiana Purchase, the removal of American Indians (Trail of Tears) from their native lands, the growth of a system of commercial agriculture, and the idea of Manifest Destiny. (E2.1, G6)

**Materials Needed:** <https://newsela.com/read/gl-history-indian-removal-act/id/22442>

**Rationale for lesson:** The student will be learning about another topic covered in class. There is some content specific vocabulary, as well as general terms that the student will see in the article. I think that it is important they see which words they do not know so they know so they can see where the need to improve. This lesson will also help the student in terms of trying to figure out the meaning of words they do not know.

**Warm up question:**

1. When you come across a word that you do not know, what do you do to try and figure out what it means?
2. Discuss student's answer with them

**Learning Target/Success criteria:**

1. Go over the learning target with the student, which is Westward Expansion
2. Explain the success criteria which is I can learn about the Indian Removal Act and understand ways to figure out the meaning of words I am unsure of.
3. Go over the agenda for the lesson

**Instruction:**

1. I will hand out the article to the student
2. I will read the entire article to the student
3. As I am reading it, the student will circle words they are unsure of or do not know what they mean

**Guided practice:**

1. I will pick out three words the student circled
2. We will talk about what they think the words mean
3. We will discuss strategies on how to figure out what they mean, or at least give us an idea based on context clues

**Individual practice:**

1. The student will be given a few words they circled
2. Based on the guided practice and strategies learned, they will try and tell me what these words mean

**Exit question:**

I will ask the student one way they can figure out the meaning of an important word if they are unsure of it.

## Appendix B

## Document 1

## Pre-Test

Here is a link to the article: <https://newsela.com/read/lib-south-reconstruction-period/id/29407>

1. What does neglected mean?

- A. Give extra care  
B. Not pay attention to  
C. To sell something  
 D. To make money off of

Explain why you chose this answer:

The states was not making money until over-time, and of

2. What does harvest mean?

- A. Gather crops  
B. Destroy crops  
C. Make a shelter  
D. Not having a job

Explain why you chose this answer:

Because harvest mean to gather crops not destroy crops,

3. Which of the following is not a synonym for depend?

- A. Lean on                       B. Turn to  
C. Confide in                  D. Disbelieve in

Explain why you chose this answer:

Depend is to turn to.

4. What does reconstruction mean?

- A. To rebuild                      B. To break down  
 C. To talk about                  D. To make fun of

Explain why you chose this answer:

Because in the story  
it was talking about slave  
not rebuild.

## Document 2

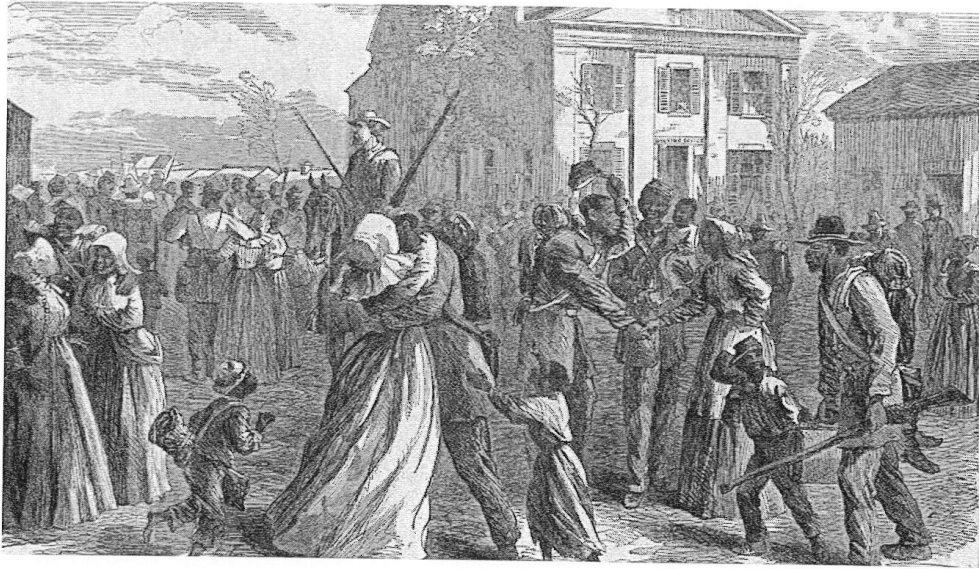
NEWSLA

## Reconstruction in the South

By Encyclopaedia Britannica, adapted by Newsela staff on 04.19.17

Word Count **569**

Level **810L**



This drawing of African-American soldiers returning to their families in Little Rock, Arkansas, after the war captures the joyous spirit of many former slaves upon gaining their freedom. They were soon to find out that freedom did not necessarily mean equality during Reconstruction of the South. From Wikimedia Commons

The Reconstruction period came after the Civil War and lasted from 1865 to 1877. It was a plan to rebuild the South and give rights to former slaves. Reconstruction was a time of huge change.

Southern whites wished to keep African-Americans as semi-slaves. Southern whites gave them few rights and did not see them as equal. On the other hand, African-Americans wanted full freedom and especially wanted land of their own.

During this time, Southern whites and blacks began trying to get their farms working again. The Civil War was fought mainly in the South. Nearly all the men of fighting age took part in the war, and many were killed. Likewise, many farms were destroyed or neglected. Southern



## NEWSELA

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society slowly changed. African-Americans could now marry. Under slavery, their marriages were not legal. African-Americans left the white churches and formed their own. Black churches became centers for the African-American community.

### **The South was very poor during Reconstruction**

Most African-Americans did not have land or money of their own and had to continue working for white plantation owners. They became sharecroppers. This means they worked on plantations for a part, or "share," of the harvest. Planters did not have much cash and liked the system because they did not have to pay wages.



African-Americans preferred it at first because they could rent pieces of land and live in their own cabins on that land. They could also decide what to plant and how to plant it. However, the sharecropping system made African-Americans depend on whites and kept them very poor. As a whole, the South was extremely poor throughout the Reconstruction period. Bad harvests hurt both whites and blacks.

## NEWSELA

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### **New governments were set up**

Congress set up governments in the South, which were fairly honest and worked well. Most of the governments in the South were white. There were no black governors, only two black senators and a handful of congressmen. South Carolina was the only state where most of the lawmakers were African-American. African-Americans officials were as able and honest as whites. For the first time, there was a public school system in the South.

Some Southern whites in the mountains and some planters in farm areas were willing to work with African-Americans and “carpetbaggers.” “Carpetbagger” was a word used to describe whites from the North who traveled South. They were called carpetbaggers because they carried only a satchel, or carpetbag, of possessions.

### **Southern whites did not support Reconstruction**

Many of these “carpetbaggers” moved South to make money. They bought land, rented plantations or went into business with Southern planters in hopes of making money from cotton. “Carpetbaggers” were different from “scalawags.” These were planters who supported the government plan for Reconstruction. There were not very many of these scalawags, and they were hated by Southern whites. “Scalawags” were small farmers, who did not own slaves. They were also merchants, craftsmen and other professionals who had remained loyal to the Union during the Civil War.



Most Southern whites remained completely against African-American equality. Sometimes they joined violent groups like the Ku Klux Klan. They tried to punish African-Americans who tried to gain their rights. Southern whites waited for the North to get tired of supporting Reconstruction.

## Document 3

## Post-Test

Here is a link to the article: <https://newsela.com/read/lib-history-fugitive-slave-act/id/25746>

1. What does capture mean?

- A. To hurt  
B. To take control of  
C. To leave alone  
D. To be friends with

Explain why you chose this answer:

If you get capture  
you are like in jail.

2. What does fugitive mean?

- A. To hide from arrest  
B. To turn yourself in  
C. To stay in jail  
D. To do nothing wrong

Explain why you chose this answer:

they broke out.

3. Which of the following is not a synonym for resistance?

- A. Impede  
B. Defiance  
C. Refusal  
D. Acceptance

Explain why you chose this answer:

Resistance mean making you  
(people) do what you say.

4. What does enforce mean?

- A. To support by force  
B. To leave alone  
C. To give up  
D. To ignore

Explain why you chose this answer:

To make you do something

## Document 4

NEWSELA

## The Fugitive Slave Acts

By History.com, adapted by Newsela staff on 02.15.17

Word Count **641**



"Effects of the Fugitive-Slave-Law," an impassioned condemnation of the Fugitive Slave Act passed by Congress in September 1850, which increased federal and free-state responsibility for the recovery of fugitive slaves. The law allowed the appointment of federal commissioners empowered to issue warrants for the arrest of alleged fugitive slaves. Universal History Archive/UIG via Getty images

The Fugitive Slave Acts were laws that allowed for the capture and return of runaway slaves in the United States. Slaves who had escaped their masters were described as fugitives. Congress passed the first Fugitive Slave Act in 1793. It gave local governments the power to seize and return escaped slaves to their owners. It also called for punishments on anyone who helped slaves escape. In 1850, Congress passed the second Fugitive Slave Act. It created even harsher punishments for people who helped runaways. Hardly any laws were more argued about than the Fugitive Slave Acts in the early 1800s. Congress officially got rid of them in 1864.

Laws regarding runaway slaves existed in America as early as 1643. Slave laws were later passed in several of the 13 original colonies.

By 1787, many Northern states had made slavery against the law. That year, the states came together to write the Constitution. Southern lawmakers were concerned that the new free states would become shelters for runaway slaves. They made sure that the Constitution included a "Fugitive Slave Clause." It said that no slave would be released

## NEWSELA

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### **The North does not support slavery**

After the Constitution was signed, anti-slavery feeling remained high in the North. Many asked Congress to make the practice against the law. Instead, Congress gave in to further pressure from Southern lawmakers. In 1793, it passed the first **Fugitive** Slave Act.

This law was similar to the **Fugitive** Slave Clause. However, it included more details about how the law was to be put into practice. Most importantly, it said that slave owners had the right to search for escaped slaves in free states. The law also imposed a \$500 fine on any person who helped hide escaped slaves.

Many people criticized the new law. Northerners did not like the idea of slave owners searching their states for runaways. Some anti-slavery activists even organized secret groups to fight the law. They built networks of safe houses to help slaves escape to the North.

### **Northern states choose to ignore the act**

Many Northern states chose not to follow the **Fugitive** Slave Act. By the mid-1800s, thousands of slaves had escaped to free states. Southern lawmakers continued to pressure Congress for stricter laws. In 1850, Congress finally passed a second **Fugitive** Slave Act. The new law forced citizens to help **capture** runaway slaves. It also denied slaves the right to a jury trial. The 1850 law placed control of individual cases in the hands of federal officials. These agents were paid more for returning a suspected slave than for freeing them. This led many to argue the law was biased in favor of Southern slaveholders.

The **Fugitive** Slave Act of 1850 was met with even more **resistance** than the first **Fugitive** Slave Act. States like Vermont and Wisconsin passed new measures to get around the law. Activists made even more efforts to help runaway slaves. In the 1850s, the Underground Railroad reached its peak. This was a network of safe houses that runaway slaves used to escape to the North. Occasionally people even rose up against the government. In 1851 a group of activists rushed a Boston courthouse. They freed an escaped slave who had been **captured**. Similar rescues were later made in New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

### **Law becomes impossible to enforce**

The **Fugitive** Slave Act of 1850 was very unpopular in the North. So many people rejected it that the law was almost impossible to **enforce**. By 1860 only around 330 slaves had been successfully returned to the South. Lawmakers regularly introduced bills to get rid of the **Fugitive** Slave Act. However, the law remained in place until after the beginning of the Civil War. Congress officially got rid of the Fugitive Slave Acts on June 28, 1864.

## Appendix C

## Document 1

## Lesson 1

Do you think that in a paragraph, there is one word that could be the most important or are they all equal?

Yes because it will be bold.

1. Inequality - equal means the same and the equal mean different.

2. Negotiating - making a deal.

3. Guaranteed - Guaranteed mean a promise.

Now that we know that some words are more important than others, is it valuable to try to know all the meaning of the words in order to pick the correct one?

Yes because you need it for life.

## Document 2

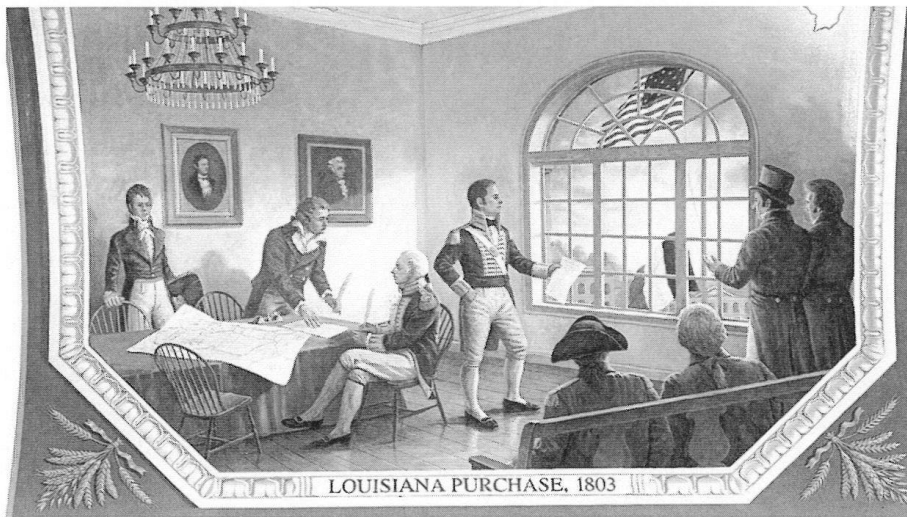
NEWSELA

## Westward Expansion: The Louisiana Purchase

By USHistory.org, adapted by Newsela staff on 02.21.17

Word Count **704**

Level **730L**

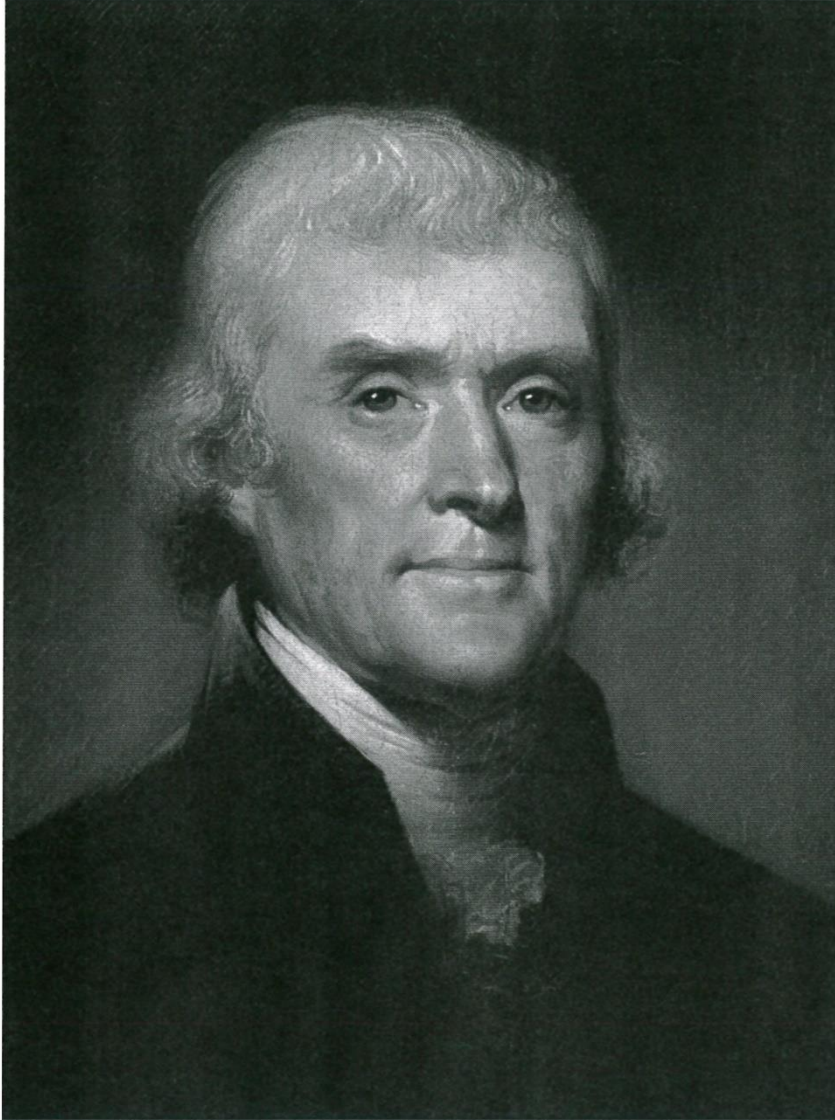


TOP: The third signing of the Louisiana Treaty, which occurred in New Orleans, is depicted. MIDDLE: Official White House portrait of Thomas Jefferson. BOTTOM: Map showing the extent of the Louisiana Purchase. Photos from: Wikimedia Commons.



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Thomas Jefferson was president of the United States from 1801 to 1809. The United States had just become its own country after declaring **independence** from Britain and defeating the British in the Revolutionary War. Jefferson was the newly formed nation's third president.

## NEWSELA

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Jefferson had strong ideas about what type of society America should be. He believed the country should make its money from farming. Across the ocean in Britain, **industry** was growing. People were moving away from farming to work in factories.

Jefferson worried that the growth of factories would make American society less equal. As England's industry began to grow, workers in factories worked in terrible **conditions**. They made very little money. Factory owners were making much more, and suffering less. Jefferson saw this as a terrible example of what could happen at home.

### **Jefferson pushes western growth**

Jefferson believed the best idea was for America to grow to the west. This would free up more land for farmers. It would keep the new country grounded in farming, and would prevent **inequality** from growing.

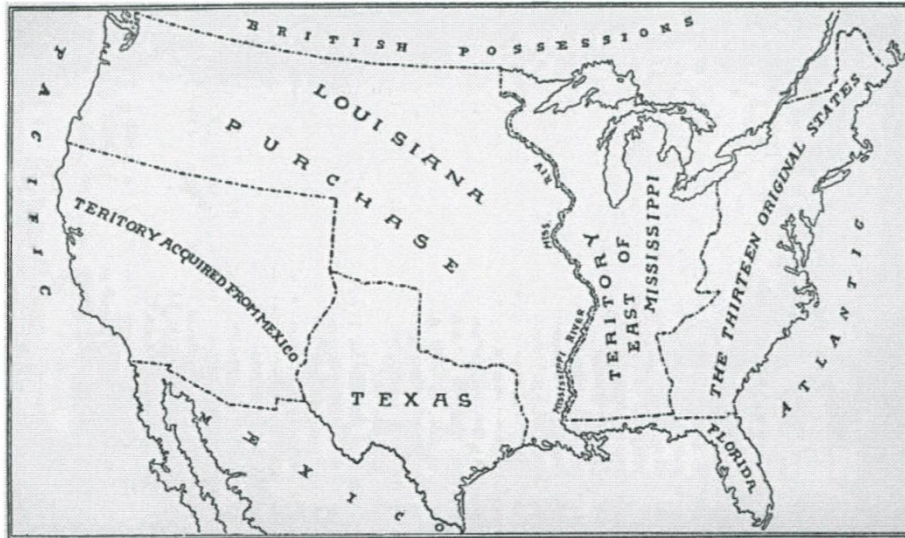
France had regained control of Louisiana in the south. This put Jefferson's idea at risk. French leader Napoleon Bonaparte had risen to power in France, and now threatened to **block** America's use of New Orleans as trading port. New Orleans, a city in Louisiana, sits on the Mississippi River. American towns to the north of New Orleans depended upon the river. They used it to ship goods and make their living.

Blocking America from using New Orleans to trade would harm the U.S. So President Jefferson sent a U.S. official to France to bargain for continued trade along the Mississippi River. James Monroe was the top American **negotiating** in Paris. He wanted to buy New Orleans and West Florida. The U.S. was willing to pay between \$2 million and \$10 million.

### **French leader sold land to the U.S. for \$15 million**

Surprisingly, Napoleon offered the U.S. even more land. His army was at war with Britain, and needed money to continue. Napoleon also knew that he could not force **Americans** out of the land France owned in North America.

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Napoleon offered to sell all of Louisiana to the U.S. for \$15 million. The amount of land was huge. It stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. This more than doubled the size of the United States. Napoleon's asking price was low for such a large piece of land. It came out to about 4 cents for each acre of land.

For Jefferson, the decision was not easy. He believed that governments should stay small. He did not think they should spend a lot of money. As president, he made the government smaller by ending taxes on people's property and the goods they bought. His wish to limit the government came from his strict reading of the Constitution. Spending an enormous amount of money to buy land was against Jefferson's principles.

### Everyone didn't like the land deal

Still, the deal was struck in April 1803. Jefferson knew America needed to grow west to become a stronger country. He felt it was worth it.

Not everyone liked the deal. Some people complained that Jefferson was not following the U.S. Constitution, which he helped write. They argued that the Constitution didn't allow the government to buy new land. In the end, Jefferson decided that the Constitution did allow the

## NEWSELA

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president to buy the land. That's because it allows treaties, or agreements, with other countries. Most of the country's lawmakers agreed. They voted in favor of the deal with France.

### **Major achievement for Jefferson**

The deal also went against Jefferson's wish to quickly lower the amount of money the country owed. Fifteen million dollars was a small price for so much land. Still, it was a lot of money for the country back then.

The Louisiana Purchase is a good example of Jefferson's willingness to make sensible decisions. It went against some of what he had long believed, but it guaranteed America would expand westward. This was Jefferson's biggest hope for the country.

The new land would in time add 13 new states to the country. Louisiana would be the first. It became a state in 1812.

## Document 3

## Lesson 2

When you come across a word that you do not know, what do you do to try and figure out what it means? try or guess

1. Imbalances — Imbalances is more than 1 side,
2. resisted — When you are force to,
3. Glimpse — for a glimpse (look)

What is one way you can figure out the meaning of an important word that you are unsure of?

Look at words around it.

## Document 4

NEWSELA

## Expansion & Reform: The Indian Removal Act

By Elliott West, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, adapted by Newsela staff on 11.22.16

Word Count **636**

Level **820L**



TOP: The Choctaw tribe was removed to west of the Mississippi starting in 1831. "Louisiana Indians Walking Along a Bayou" by Alfred Boisseau was painted in 1846. Courtesy of Wikipedia. BOTTOM: Indian peace medals were given to tribes to seal the signing of treaties. This one, from 1829, has Jackson's profile on the other side. Gilder Lehrman Collection.

In the early 1800s, white settlers were fighting to make their place in the West. True power was still in the hands of the Native people. They far outnumbered whites, and they knew how to live off the land. But the Native Americans also fought with each other. Problems between them grew as the U.S. government forced most eastern Native groups to move to the West.

In the 1830s, the westernmost part of the United States was known as "Indian Country." The Sioux allied with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. In 1840, these three groups made peace with the Kiowas and Comanches. Together they formed an area from Montana deep into Mexico that was controlled by the allied tribes. Elsewhere, other tribes increased their influence in the Southwest, the Northwest, and the northern plains. The movement of tribes increased fights over land and materials.

## NEWSELA

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### More trade connected people to each other

There was also an increase in trade. This connected Native people to the world outside. In exchange for goods, some tribes supplied animal skins to white merchants. Others gave white fur trappers protection, horses, and wives.

Trade improved Native American life as tribes acquired guns, cattle, food, knives, tools, and other luxury goods. But trade also had its downside. Much of what American Indians acquired they could not make themselves. The more they relied on such goods, the more bound they became to those who provided them.

For a glimpse of the future, western Indians might have looked toward the East. Native Americans there faced growing pressures to surrender their lands. At the time, U.S. leaders were trying to create trade imbalances with the Natives. In other words, they gave the Natives many goods without making them pay for them. They hoped the tribes would eventually give up their lands to pay off the debts.

### The search for land

The most powerful force pressing against the Indians was the white settlers' search for land. The U.S. government had agreed to treaties guaranteeing American Indians their land. But rapid population growth seemed to demand opening up that land to white settlers.

President Thomas Jefferson's answer was to change the Native Americans to fit the white settlers' way of life. Those who resisted or were too slow to change would surrender their lands and move west. There, the transformation would continue.

In 1828, Americans elected Andrew Jackson as president. He had become famous by fighting the American Indians and argued that the government should take their land away.

## NEWSELA

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### The Indian Removal Act

In 1830, the U.S. government passed the Indian Removal Act. The law gave the president the power to remove the Native Americans from their land in the East. It created an Indian Territory for them in the West in what is now Oklahoma and Nebraska. Through persuasion and sometimes force, the U.S. government cleared most of the Native Americans from their homelands. Some tribes moved peacefully, but most resisted.

When they refused to leave, the U.S. Army moved in, rounded them up, and forced them to move to the Indian Territory. Of the more than 16,000 Native Americans who traveled the "Trails of Tears," it is estimated that 2,000 died. In the end, as many as 100,000 American Indians were removed from east of the Mississippi.

The Indian Removal Act created a "permanent Indian frontier" along the western edge of the United States. Some said that this would create peace. But the forces that had removed the Native Americans in the East were already at work in the West.

*Elliott West teaches history at the University of Arkansas. He is the author of "The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado" (1998); "The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains" (1995); and "The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story" (2009).*