U.S. Territorial Acquisitions, 1803–1853

[Map showing territorial acquisitions from 1803 to 1853, including areas such as Oregon Country, Louisiana Purchase, Gadsden Purchase, and Florida, 1819.]
Geography Skills

Score 1 point for each correct answer. Use the map on the previous page to check shading and labeling.

1. Adding the Louisiana Territory in 1803 about doubled the size of the United States.

2. Texas was added in 1845 and the Mexican Cession in 1848. The Gadsden Purchase was the other territory acquired from Mexico.

3. The Oregon Trail crossed the Louisiana Territory on the way to Portland. The Santa Fe Trail crossed it on the way to Santa Fe. The California Trail crossed it on the way to Sacramento.

4. The United States added Oregon Country in 1846.

5. The western end of the Old Spanish Trail was Los Angeles.

6. Following the Santa Fe and Old Spanish trails to California required settlers to cross the Arkansas River, Rio Grande, and Colorado River as well as the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada. (Note: Students may not be certain about the Arkansas River.)

7. The California Trail left the Oregon Trail at Fort Hall.

8. The Mormon, California, and Oregon trails crossed the Rocky Mountains at South Pass.

9. By following rivers, the trails provided travelers with a source of water along much of their journey.

10. Moving wagons over mountains, and with snow and cold weather, would have been slower than riding over flat land.

11. Had the Louisiana Territory not become part of the United States, Americans traveling to Oregon and California would have had to cross land that belonged to another nation. This might have discouraged Americans from settling in these regions.

Critical Thinking

Questions may have more than one correct answer. Score 1 to 3 points for each reasonable answer, depending on the strength of students’ geographic reasoning. Possible answers are given here.

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