In 1800's the western border of the United States was the Mississippi River.

France, Spain, England and Russia all had claims on lands in the west.

Jefferson believed the port city of New Orleans was the key to controlling North America.

LOUISIANA PURCHASE was huge tract of land in the middle of North America sold by France to the United States in 1803 for $15 million.
Napoleon wanted to sell the land because he was worried about colonies and needed money to fight the war with England.

The Louisiana Purchase was bought for $15 million – about 3 cents an acre (about a football field).

Jefferson chooses MERIWETHER LEWIS and WILLIAM CLARK to lead an expedition into the unknown territory.
The CORPS OF DISCOVERY set out from St Louis in the summer of 1804.
The expedition includes about 40 people.

Jefferson gave the Corps 3 main goals:

1) Discover if there is a Northwest Passage to the Pacific through the Missouri River.

2) Set up good relations with the Native Americans in the area.

3) Journal and take notes on the animals and wilderness of the area.
The Corps stayed in a Mandan village in present day North Dakota

SACAGAWEA was a 17 year-old woman who helps the Corps as an interpreter on the expedition
The Corps found there was no Northwest Passage, they formed good relationships with some of the Native Americans and did record the animals and nature. ZEBULON PIKE explores the southern part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1806.