

# French Exploration- Robert La Salle and Samuel de Champlain

Robert La Salle



Samuel de Champlain



In the early 1500s, France was trying to find a shorter route to the Indies by traveling north around America. This route they were looking for was called the Northwest Passage. In looking for this Northwest Passage, the French were able to lay claims to land in North America.

Earlier French explorers had traveled to North America and explored parts of Canada including the St. Lawrence River, Quebec, and Montreal. While exploring this territory the French discovered a resource that they felt was very valuable, furs. The French realized that the animals found in this region could be trapped and skinned; and when the fur was sold, it would bring a large profit.

Our first explorer will travel with the fur-trading expeditions to lay French claims in North America. This explorer is Samuel de Champlain. Champlain traveled with the fur-traders along the St. Lawrence River and explored the Great Lakes region from New York down to Lake Champlain (which he named). In addition to exploring this territory, he was able to establish the French settlement of Quebec.

As the fur trade increased, so did the need for a relatively simple way to ship the pelts from the northern wilderness to the southern ports and European markets. This was established in 1682 when Robert La Salle traveled down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico and claimed the entire Mississippi River Valley for King Louis XVI. La Salle named this region Louisiana in honor of the French King. The French now had access to a wide variety of lakes and rivers that extended from northeastern Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The French were able to use the St. Lawrence River, Great Lakes, Ohio River, and Mississippi River to transport their precious cargo.

French Exploration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Block \_\_\_\_\_ Entry \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Using your "French Exploration" story, read each of the questions below and fill in the blank with the correct answer.

1. France was trying to find a shorter route to the Indies by traveling \_\_\_\_\_ around America.

2. What was the name given to the route that the French were looking for that would take them to the Indies by traveling north around America?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What resource did the French find very valuable in Canada? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What explorer explored the Great Lakes region from New York to Lake Champlain? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Samuel de Champlain established the French settlement of \_\_\_\_\_

6. What explorer sailed down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Robert La Salle claimed \_\_\_\_\_ River Valley for France.

8. Who was the French King during La Salle's exploration? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What region did La Salle name in honor of the French King?  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. With the help of Robert La Salle, the French now had access from northeastern \_\_\_\_\_ to the Gulf of Mexico.