

# Lewis and Clark: Exploration and Discovery

## Learning Guide

### **Background Information:**

On July 4, 1803, President Thomas Jefferson announced that the United States had just purchased "Louisiana" from Napoleon of France. The purchase doubled the size of the United States and included all of the land drained by the Mississippi River, an area of 825,000 square miles. Until that time, the United States claimed no land west of the Mississippi River. The same day, President Jefferson gave Meriwether Lewis a letter authorizing him to draw on whatever resources of the government he needed, to make a survey of the new territory. Lewis selected William Clark as a co-leader and they assembled a group of hardy men that would make the epic journey up the Missouri River, across the continental divide, and down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean.

The common thought in the early years of our country was that somewhere, connected to one of the great rivers of the west, was a navigable water passage to the distant Pacific Ocean. The country to the north and much of that to the west was considered part of the British fur trading territory. The stated purpose of the expedition was to explore the lands drained by the Missouri River from its junction with the Mississippi to its source (supposedly where it joined the Columbia River) and then to the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, the two captains were to explain to the Indian tribes that they were now to give allegiance to and receive protection and trade goods from the new "White Father in Washington," President Thomas Jefferson.

During the two years of preparation for the trip, President Jefferson found prominent scientists and doctors of the day that taught Meriwether Lewis to be a naturalist, diplomat, mapmaker, geologist, navigator, and to be competent in the medical knowledge of the day. His training as a soldier would give him the skills needed for command of the expedition.

## **Visiting the Exhibit**

Join the explorers as they encounter new lands, Native Americans, unknown species of plants and animals. Share in the beauty of the country they passed, the dangers and hardships they encountered as you explore the maps, photographs, and historical artifacts of the exhibit. Learn about the places pictured in the exhibit in words straight from the journals of the men who made that first trip through uncharted territory.

1. As you enter the exhibit, begin with the large **U. S. map on the floor**. Use the map to locate the pictures and events depicted in the photographs and captions around the room. As you move from one picture to the next in sequence, you can follow their journey of discovery by having a student find the number of the picture on the map.
2. The **pictures begin in the back corner** to your right as you enter. The first few pictures do not have numbers that correspond with the map. These show scenes of what parts of the expedition may have looked like. In many cases, the men of the expedition were displaying weapons and other items that the Indians had never seen before, and were used in a way that made them appear to have some special powers. Since they were almost always heavily outnumbered by the Native Americans they met, this may have helped them survive. They also used some of their medical knowledge and supplies to treat sick and injured natives.
3. The **mural on the back wall** is of the Lemhi Pass of the Rocky Mountains – the place where they crossed the continental divide and where the water then flowed to the Pacific. The captions on the wall tell of three very significant days of the expedition. The tent is representative of the camps that the men set up each evening, except when they were in their winter camps, where they built log forts for shelter and security.
4. **Around the room are artifacts** that represent some of the supplies taken, animals encountered on the expedition, and tools used. The cases in the corner display trade goods, firearms and tools, navigation instruments, and models of canoes and animals. On the tables are pieces of deerskin and rabbit fur, two materials that were used to make clothing and footwear for the men of the expedition. The other table has an interactive map and globe that allows students to explore geography.
5. **On the side walls** are a bison head, an elk antler, and a deerskin. The meat of these animals was important for the men's diet and the hides were used for boats, storage containers, clothing, and for trade.

## **Post Visit Activities**

Use of the following activities (adjusted, as necessary, to fit the abilities of the class) will add to the knowledge gained by the students during the visit.

1. Have the students write a journal page similar to those of Captains Lewis and Clark. Talk about the spellings used by them and explain that words were spelled just as they sounded and that there were no spelling rules at that time. Allow them to use phonetic spelling for this one assignment, if they choose. Share the journal pages with the class.
2. One of the many purposes of the expedition was the cataloging of new species of plants and animals. In some cases, Meriwether Lewis wrote more than a thousand words to describe one plant or animal. Ask the students to select one plant or animal that they know about and carefully describe it, telling about the size, shape, color, texture, and other interesting features. Use lots of descriptive words, so that others might be able to see a “word picture” of the animal or plant.
3. Mapmaking was an important skill in most early explorations. Help the class create a detailed map of the classroom or a playground space by measuring (this could be by walking and counting paces), locating objects in the space, and drawing them to scale on a large sheet of paper. Make a legend, and show directions.
4. Assist the class in making a list of supplies that they would need for a week-long trip to the mountains. Think about the quantity of food needed to feed the whole class three meals each day for the week, what clothing would be needed, and what items suggested that could be left behind. Also include cooking gear, first aid supplies, and shelter.

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California Content Standards Correlation Chart for grades 4 and 5

**The correlations listed below are approximate and will depend on the use of Activities, Teacher Background Information, and a visit to the Lewis and Clark exhibit at the Lori Brock Discovery Center.**

English – Language Arts	History – Social Science	Science	Mathematics
<b>Grade 4</b>			
Reading 1.1; 2.2; Writing 1.2; 1.3; 1.6; 2.1; 2.3; Listening and Speaking 2.2	4.1; 4.5	Life Science 2.b; 3.b Investigation and Experimentation 6.b	Number Sense 3.1; 3.2 Measurement and Geometry 1.1; 1.2; 1.3 Mathematical Reasoning 1.1; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.6
<b>Grade 5</b>			
Reading 1.1; 2.1; 2.2; Writing 1.3; 1.6; 2.2; 2.3; Listening and Speaking 2.2	5.1; 5.2; 5.7	b Investigation and Experimentation 6.a; 6.f; 6.g; 6.h; 6.i	Number Sense 2.3; 2.5 Measurement and Geometry 1.3; 1.4 Mathematical Reasoning 1.1; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.6

Based on standards in place August 2003

***Further support may be obtained through modification of activities to fit specific grade-level standards.***