

The Lewis and Clark Expedition
Mrs. Barbara Fowler, McLaughlin Middle School
Grade 8 and Above

Below are excerpts of documents to read and use in answering the question that follows. The question was created to test your skill with historical documents. As you study each document, please consider where these first-hand documents originate and who is the author of each.

Directions:

- Study each document
- Answer the questions that follow the document.
- Use facts from these documents to make your details support each topic main idea that proves your explanation
- Be sure to include any specific related outside information
- Write a well-organized essay that follows the required five paragraph essay framework: an introduction, at least four main points with supporting details, and a conclusion.

Historic Background:

Thomas Jefferson saw the need for the Louisiana Purchase gained from Napoleon to be explored not only for a water route leading to the Pacific to promote trade (commerce) but also for the expansion of land needed for a growing young nation. He took time with Meriwether Lewis in preparing him to make the expedition across the continent. Lewis was the right person for the job from his experience in the frontier as well as the men he chose to be with him.

Task:

For Part I, carefully read each document and answer the question or questions after each document. Then read the discussion for Part II and write your essay.

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Document A:

“The commerce which may be carried on with the people inhabiting the line you will pursue, renders a knowledge of these people important...Other objects worthy of notice will be the soil and the face of the country, its growth and vegetable productions...the animals of the country...mineral productions of every kind...and climate.”

--Thomas Jefferson, quoted in *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*, edited by Frank Bergon.

1. What was the goal of the expedition, that is, what kind of information did Jefferson want Lewis and Clark to collect on their journey?

Document B:

Background: “Once he was named by President Thomas Jefferson to head the Corps of Discovery, Meriwether Lewis began preparations for the long trip ahead. Much of that preparation involved education; in the months prior to his departure, Lewis would learn astronomy, botany, navigation, medicine and biology, among other scientific disciplines.

In addition, Lewis spent his time accumulating all the supplies that the expedition was going to need. He wrote list after list of provisions, which included guns, ammunition, medical supplies and scientific instruments. While still on the East Coast, Lewis accumulated almost two tons of goods using the \$2,500 Congress had allocated for the expedition. " (Source?)



"A Memorandum of Articles in Readiness for the Voyage, 1803"

The following is a partial list that was needed:

Mathematical Instruments:

- surveyor's compass
- hand compass
- quadrants
- telescope
- thermometers
- 2 sextants
- set of plotting instruments
- chronometer (needed to calculate longitude)

Camp Supplies:

- 150 yards of cloth to be oiled and sewn into tents and sheets
- pliers
- chisels
- 30 steels for striking to make fire
- handsaws
- hatchets
- whetstones
- iron corn mill
- two dozen tablespoons
- mosquito curtains
- 10 1/2 pounds of fishing hooks and fishing lines
- 12 pounds of soap
- 193 pounds of "portable soup" (a thick paste concocted by boiling down beef, eggs and vegetables)
- three bushels of salt
- writing paper, ink and crayons

Presents for Indians:

- 12 dozen pocket mirrors
- 4,600 sewing needles
- 144 small scissors
- 10 pounds of sewing thread
- silk ribbons
- ivory combs
- handkerchiefs
- yards of bright-colored cloth
- 130 rolls of tobacco
- tomahawks that doubled as pipes
- 288 knives

- 8 brass kettles
- vermilion face paint
- 33 pounds of tiny beads of assorted colors

Clothing:

- 45 flannel shirts
- coats
- frocks
- shoes
- woolen pants
- blankets
- knapsacks
- stockings

Arms and Ammunition:

- 15 prototype Model 1803 muzzle-loading .54 caliber rifles
- knives
- 500 rifle flints
- 420 pounds of sheet lead for bullets
- 176 pounds of gunpowder packed in 52 lead canisters
- 1 long-barreled rifle that fired its bullet with compressed air, rather than by flint, spark and powder

Medicine and Medical Supplies:

- 50 dozen Dr. Rush's patented "Rush's pills"
- lancets
- forceps
- syringes
- tourniquets
- 1,300 doses of physic
- 1,100 hundred doses of emetic
- 3,500 doses of diaphoretic (sweat inducer)
- other drugs for blistering, salivation and increased kidney output

Traveling Library:

- Barton's Elements of Botany
- Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz's History of Louisiana
- Richard Kirwan's Elements of Mineralogy
- A Practical Introduction to Spherics and Nautical Astronomy
- The Nautical Almanac and Astronomical Ephemeris
- a four-volume dictionary
- a two-volume edition of Linnaeus (the founder of the Latin classification of plants)
- tables for finding longitude and latitude
- map of the Great Bend of the Missouri River

Transcript from http://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/inside/idx_equ.html

2. Why was it necessary to have the supplies for the trip?
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3. Give examples of the different types of supplies and describe the purpose of these as well.

Document C

Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, November 16, 1803

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Thomas Jefferson and Early Western Explorers, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington Nov. 16. 1803

Dear Sir

I have not written to you since the 11th & 15th of July, since which yours of July 15, 22, 25, Sep. 8, 13, & Oct. 3. have been recieved. The present has been long delayed by an expectation daily of getting the inclosed 'account of Louisiana' through the press.* The materials are received from different persons, of good authority. I inclose you also copies of the Treaties for Louisiana, the act for taking possession, a letter from Dr. Wistar, & some information collected by myself from Truteau's journal in MS. all of which may be useful to you.

[Enclosure]

Extracts from the Journal of M. Truteau, Agent for the Illinois trading company, residing at the village of Ricara, up the Missouri.

This company was confirmed in 1795, with the exclusive right for 10 years to trade with all the nations above the Poncas, as well to the South, and the West, as to the North of the Missouri with a premium of 3000 prs. for the discovery of the South Sea: and a gratification of 10,000 prs. which the King of Spain is to pay for the support of a milice. The company however have...In the Missouri river there is depth sufficient to carry a frigate as far up as it is known. It has no cataracts, no portages. The winds on it are so violent that the periogues are sometimes obliged to lie by one, two, three, or four days, and sometimes take as long time to descend as to ascend the river. The Canadians employed in the trading voyages on it have 250 " to 300" for 18 months and take it often in goods, on which the merchant gains half. The soil of the Missouri is the most fertile in the Universe. The rivers falling into it are all navigable more or less from 50 or 100 to 200 or 300 leagues.

The Ricaras, are a branch of the Panis, residing up the Missouri, about 430 leagues from the Illinois. There are 2 villages of them, half a league apart, the one 800 yds. from the river, the other 100 yards. They are a mild people, having about 300 warriors. There is no timber on the Missouri for 50 leagues above or below them.

The Crow nation inhabit near the Rocky mountain.

The Sioux inhabit the Northern part of the Missisipi, and are hostile to the Ricaras, Mendanes, big-bellies and others. Others of them live on the river St. Pierre. They have from 30 to 10.00 men, and abound in fire-arms. They are the greatest beaver hunters; and could furnish more beavers than all the nations besides, and could bring them to a depot on the Missouri rather than to St. Pierre, or any other place. Their beaver is worth the double of the Canadian for the fineness of it's fur and parchment;

The Chayennes, Panis Mahas, Mendannes, Big bellies are in the neighborhood of the Ricaras.

The Pados are 80 leagues form the Ricaras, South, on a branch of the river.

The Cayoguas, Caminaiches and Pitapahatos are to the South and S.W. of the Ricaras, on a branch of the Missouri. They have had no communication with the Whites. This river is wide but too shallow for a perioque.

The Grand Osages are from 7 to 800 men. They furnish 20,000 skins of the small deer, and take 14 to 15 M. pcs. de Mes. [qu. whether these character pcs de Mes. mean pieces de Marchandis or piastres de Mexique?

The Petits Osages are 250 to 300 men. Furnish 7 to 8000 fine deer skins and take 4 to 5 M. pcs. des Mes.

The Kansas, 250 to 300 men. Furnish and take the same as the Petits Osages.

With the three last nations the hunt continues to Oct. Nov. and even the middle of Dec. The hunters then meet, fix their prices, which are a blanket of 21/2 points for 6, 7, or 8 deerskins. In 2 days the whole are sold, and, if the ice did not hinder, the traders could be returned by Christmas, whereas they do not return till April or May. These nations are very certain of the arrival of traders among them, but those above are often disappointed; because the merchants at St. Louis receive their goods from Mackinac, or Montreal, and they do not arrive at St. Louis early enough to reach the upper nations in time for the season. Through th Ohio the goods might be brought in time to reach the uppermost nations.

The Otoctatas take 2 M to 2,500 pcs. marchse. and furnish 3500 to 4000 fine peltries of Deer, and 1/4 of that of beaver.

The Mahas are from 4 to 500 men. The Poncas 200 to 250 men. These two nations furnish and take each about the same as the Otoctatas, but more beaver. The English however drove them off by land to the river Moingona.

The Panis of the 2 villages are from 4 to 500 men. Take 2000 to 2500 pcs Marche. and furnish 4000 skins, robes and ...of the 1st quality. Those of the Republic (Loups) are from 400 to 500 men. Take and furnish about half as much as the last. They are 50 to 100 leagues apart.

The Loups, which are Panis also are from 200 to 250 men.

FC in the hand of Thomas Jefferson in Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

*An Account of Louisiana, being an abstract of documents, in the offices of the Departments of State, and of the Treasury (Washington, 1803).

Questions:

4. How many Native American groups are listed by excerpt above? _____

- a. What type of information was in each?

- b. How would this be useful for the expedition?

Document D: Maps



Question:

5. Describe the route taken and the geographic features involved: _____

6. Use your map in your textbook to help you with the map above and following map. Compare and contrast the map drawn by Clark below to the one above. Note important features. _____

7. Using the reference to the Native Americans, locate the areas each tribe was located and comment on the terrain (land features) they lived in. _____



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Document E: Meriwether Lewis to Thomas Jefferson, September 23, 1806

Thomas Jefferson and Early Western Explorers, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
St. Louis September 23rd 1806.

Sir,

It is with pleasure that I announce to you the safe arrival of myself and party at 12 O'Clock today at this place with our papers and baggage. In obedience to your orders we have penetrated the Continent of North America to the Pacific Ocean, and sufficiently explored the interior of the country to affirm with confidence that we have discovered the most practicable route which does exist across the continent by means of the navigable branches of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers. Such is that by way of the Missouri to the foot of the rapids five miles below the great falls of that river a distance of 2575 miles, thence by land passing the Rocky Mountains to a navigable part of the Koozkooske 340; with the Koozkooske 73 miles. a South Easterly branch of the Columbia 154 miles and the latter river 413 miles. to the Pacific Ocean; making the total distance from the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi to the discharge of the Columbia into the Pacific Ocean 3555 miles. The navigation of the Missouri may be deemed safe and good; its difficulties arise from its falling banks, timber imbedded in the mud of its channel, its sand bars and steady rapidity of its current, all which may be overcome with a great degree of certainty by taking the necessary precautions. The passage by land of 340 miles from the Missouri to the Koozkooske is the most formidable part of the tract proposed across the Continent; of this distance 200 miles is along a good road, and 140 over tremendous mountains which for 60 miles are covered with eternal snows; however a passage over these mountains is practicable from the latter part of June to the last of September, and the cheap rate at which horses are to be obtained from the Indians of the Rocky Mountains and West of them, reduces the expenses of transportation over this portage to a mere trifle. The navigation of the Koozkooske, the South East branch of the Columbia itself is safe and good from the 1st of April to the middle of August, by making three portages on the latter; the first of which in descending is that of 1200 paces at the great falls of the Columbia, 261 miles from the Ocean, the second of two miles at the long narrows six miles below the falls, and the 3rd also of 2 miles at the great rapids 65 miles still lower down. The tides flow up the Columbia 183 miles, or within seven miles of the great rapids, thus far large sloops might ascend in safety, and vessels of 300 tons burthen could with equal safety reach the entrance of the river Multnomah, a large Southern branch of the Columbia, which taking its rise on the confines of Mexico with the Callarado and Apostles river, discharges itself into the Columbia 125 miles from its mouth. From the head of tide water to the foot of the long narrows the Columbia could be most advantageously navigated with large batteauxs, and from thence upwards by perogues. The Missouri possesses sufficient depth of water as far as is specified for boats of 15 tons burthen, but those of smaller capacity are to be preferred.

We view this passage across the Continent as affording immense advantages to the fur trade, but fear that the advantages which it offers as a communication for the productions of the East Indies to the United States and thence to Europe will never be found equal on an extensive scale to that by way of the Cape of Good hope; still we believe that many articles not bulky brittle nor of a very perishable nature may be conveyed to the United States by this route with more facility and at less expence than by that at present practiced.

The Missouri and all its branches from the Chyenne upwards abound more in beaver and Common Otter, than any other streams on earth, particularly that proportion of them lying within the Rocky Mountains. The furs of all this immense tract of country including such as may be collected on the upper portion of the River St. Peters, Red river and the Assinniboin with the immense country watered by the Columbia, may be conveyed to the mouth of the Columbia by the 1st of August in each year and from thence be shipped to, and arrive in London. The British N. West Company of Canada were they permitted by the United States might also convey their furs collected in the Athabaska, on the Saskashawan, and South and West of Lake Winnipic by that route within the period before mentioned. Thus the productions nine tenths of the most valuable fur country of America could be conveyed by the route proposed to the East Indies.

In the infancy of the trade across the continent, or during the period that the trading establishments shall be confined to the Missouri and its branches, the men employed in this

trade will be compelled to convey the furs collected in that quarter as low on the Columbia as tide water, in which case they could not return to the falls of the Missouri until about the 1st of October, which would be so late in the season that there would be considerable danger of the river being obstructed by ice before they could reach this place and consequently that the commodities brought from the East Indies would be detained until the following spring; but this difficulty will at once vanish when establishments are also made on the Columbia, and a sufficient number of men employed at them to convey annually the productions of the East Indies to the upper establishment on the Koozkooske, and there exchange them with the men of the Missouri for their furs, in the beginning of July. By this means the furs not only of the Missouri but those also of the Columbia may be shipped to the East Indies by the season before mentioned, and the commodities of the East Indies arrive at St. Louis or the mouth of the Ohio by the last of September in each year.

Although the Columbia does not as much as the Missouri abound in beaver and Otter, yet it is by no means despicable in this respect, and would furnish a valuable fur trade distinct from any other consideration in addition to the otter and beaver which it could furnish. There might be collected considerable quantities of the skins of three species of bear affording a great variety of colours and of superior delicacy, those also of the tiger cat, several species of fox, martin and several others of an inferior class of furs, besides the valuable Sea Otter of the coast.

If the government will only aid, even in a very limited manner, the enterprise of her Citizens I am fully convinced that we shall shortly derive the benefits of a most lucrative trade from this source, and that in the course of ten or twelve years a tour across the Continent by the route mentioned will be undertaken by individuals with as little concern as a voyage across the Atlantic is at present.

The British N. West Company of Canada has for several years, carried on a partial trade with the Minnetares Ahwayhaws and Mandans on the Missouri from their establishments on the Assiniboin at the entrance of Mouse river; at present I have good reason for believing that they intend shortly to form an establishment near those nations with a view to engross the fur trade of the Missouri. The known enterprise and resources of this Company, latterly strengthened by an union with their powerful rival the X. Y. Company renders them formidable in that distant part of the continent to all other traders; and in my opinion if we are to regard the trade of the Missouri as an object of importance to the United States; the strides of this Company towards the Missouri cannot be too vigilantly watched not too firmly and speedily opposed by our government. The embarrassments from which the navigation of the Missouri at present labours from the unfriendly dispositions of the Kancez, the several bands of Tetons, Assiniboins and those tribes that resort to the British establishments on the Saskatchewan is also a subject which requires the earliest attention of our government. As I shall shortly be with you I have deemed it unnecessary here to detail the several ideas which have presented themselves to my mind on those subjects, more especially when I consider that a thorough knowledge of the geography of the country is absolutely necessary to their being understood, and leisure has not yet permitted us to make but one general map of the country which I am unwilling to risk by the Mail.

As a sketch of the most prominent features of our pergrination since we left the Mandans may not be uninteresting, I shall endeavour to give it to you by way of letter from this place, where I shall necessarily be detained several days in order to settle with and discharge the men who accompanied me on the voyage as well as to prepare for my route to the City of Washington. We left Fort Clatsop where we wintered near the entrance of the Columbia on the 27th of March last, and arrived at the foot of the Rocky mountains on the 10th of May where we were detained until the 24th of June in consequence of the snow which rendered a passage over the those Mountains impracticable until that moment; had it not been for this detention I should ere this have joined you at Monticello. In my last communication to you from the Mandans I mentioned my intention of sending back a canoe with a small party from the Rocky Mountains; but on our arrival at the great falls of the Missouri on the 14th of June 1805, in view of that formidable

snowey barrier, the discouraging difficulties which we had to encounter in making a portage of eighteen miles of our canoes and baggage around those falls wer such that my friend Capt. Clark and myself concieved it inexpedient to reduce the party, lest by doing so we should lessen the ardor of those who remained and thus hazard the fate of the expedition, and therefore decline that measure, thinking it better that the government as well as our friends should for a moment feel some anxiety for our fate than to wrisk so much; experience has since proved the justice of our dicision, for we have more than once owed our lives and the fate of the expedition to our number which consisted of 31 men.

I have brought with me several skins of the Sea Otter, two skins of the native sheep of America, five skins and skelitons complete of the Bighorn or mountain ram, and a skin of the Mule deer beside the skins of several other quadrapeds and birds natives of the countries through which we have passed. I have also preserved a pretty extensive collection of plants, and collected nine other vocabularies.

I have prevailed on the great Cheif of the Mandan nation to accompany me to Washington; he is now with my frind and colligue Capt. Clark at this place, in good health and sperits, and very anxious to procede.

With respect to the exertions and services rendered by that esteemable man Capt. William Clark in the course of late voyage I cannot say too much; if sir any credit be due for the success of that arduous enterprize in which we have been mutually engaged, he is equally with myself entitled to your consideration and that of our common country.

The anxiety which I feel in returning once more to the bosom of my friends is a sufficient guarantee that no time will be unnecessarily expended in this quarter.

I have detained the post several hours for the purpose of making you this haisty communication. I hope that while I am pardoned for this detention of the mail, the situation in which I have been compelled to write will sufficiently apologize for having been this laconic.

The rout by which I purpose traveling from hence to Washington is by way of Cahokia, Vincennes, Louisvill Ky., the Crab orchard, Abington, Fincastle, Stanton, and Charlottesville. Any letters directed to me at Louisville ten days after the receipt of this will most probably meet me at that place. I am very anxious to learn the state of my friends in Albemarle particularly whether my mother is yet living. I am with every sentiment of esteem Your Obt. and very Humble servent. ... Meriwether Lewis Capt.

1st. U.S. Regt. Infy.

N.B. The whole of the party who accompanied me from the Mandans have returned in good health, which is not, I assure you, to me one of the least pleasing considerations of the Voyage. ... M.L.

RC in the hand of Meriwether Lewis. Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

8. Discuss how the trip was a success through Lewis' eyes.

9. Why would Thomas Jefferson consider it a success?

10. Were all the expectations fulfilled by this trip?

11. Despite its success, what did Jefferson consider to be a negative for the trip?

Part II

Directions: Using the documents, the answers in Part I, and your knowledge of American History, write a well-organized essay to answer the question below:

Question: *Describe the necessary steps in preparing for the Lewis and Clark expedition, the different aspects of the trip, and the final outcome and significance for the expedition that made the trip successful. Explain how each was necessary for each to be part of the total plan.*