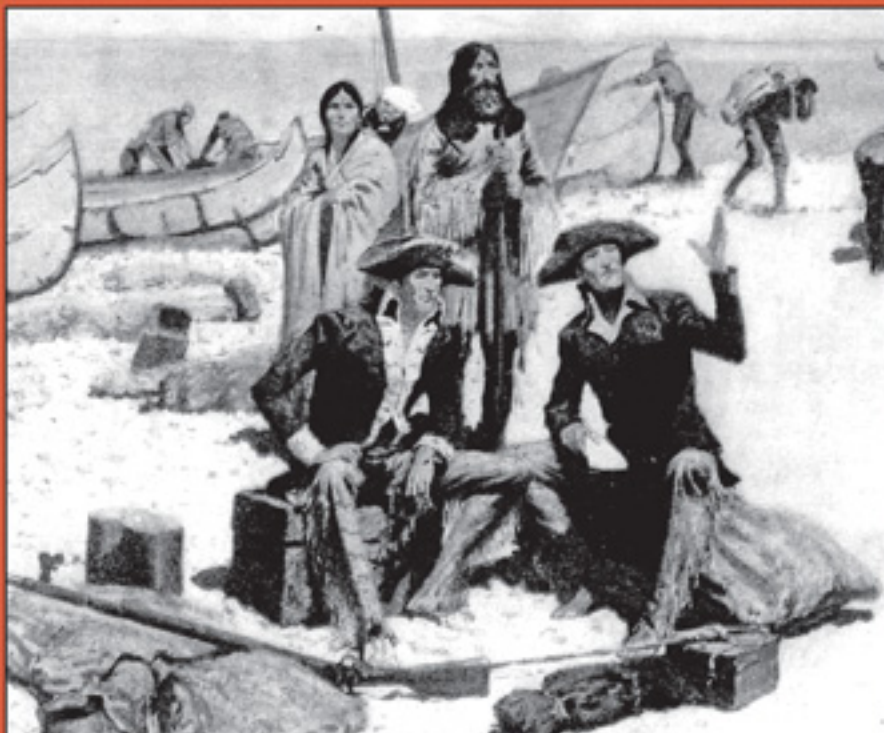


*History*  
UNFOLDING

# THE JOURNEY OF LEWIS AND CLARK



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**MindSparks**  
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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# Introduction

## Lewis and Clark and the Young Republic

Many admirable acts get labeled “heroic” these days. Perhaps the word has been cheapened by overuse. Yet when it comes to the journey of Lewis and Clark, no lesser term of praise would be appropriate. Their journey is one of history’s great and truly heroic adventures.

First and foremost, it was an amazing feat of planning and sheer physical exertion for this group of Americans, in 1803, to travel up the Missouri River, across the Rocky Mountains, down the Columbia River to the Pacific, and back again. Fur traders had explored some of this territory before. Many native tribes were familiar with parts of it. But no one knew its full extent or the awesome challenges it would present to anyone trying to travel across it. Lewis and Clark and their men made this journey with the loss of exactly one life, and that one only from natural causes.

Along the way, the men made endless discoveries about the flora and fauna, topographical features, and the many native cultures inhabiting these lands. And they made discoveries of a different sort about themselves. In their dealings with many Native American groups, and in their relationships with one another, the group came to adopt a democratic practice that in many ways was decades ahead of its time.

It is impossible to do justice to this great adventure through just twelve illustrations. But the twelve we have chosen focus on some of the key aspects of the journey of Lewis and Clark. The illustrations are presented in four lessons. Each lesson uses three of the illustrations to explore one broad topic in the overall story. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

### **The Land**

The illustrations here focus on the unique landscapes encountered by the expedition, and on the challenges and disappointments presented by some key natural obstacles.

### **The Corps of Discovery**

Lewis and Clark set out with a crew made up largely of white males. But it also included Clark’s black slave, York, some French Canadian guides and a remarkable young Indian mother named Sacagawea. The harmonious and effective functioning of this diverse team is one of the many inspiring facets of this incredible adventure.

### **The Inhabitants**

Without the assistance of several Native American tribes, the Corps would not have succeeded in reaching the Pacific or making it home again safely. The illustrations here call attention to their contributions.

### **The Discoveries**

The expedition returned with journals, maps, and hundreds of plant, animal, and mineral specimens. Its scientific discoveries were a crucial aspect of its success. So, too, was the knowledge gained about the land and its Native American cultures — not to mention what all of the members of Corps of Discovery learned about themselves.

## Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Many textbooks are full of colorful visuals. However, all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. Only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

## How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

**A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET** This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

**DIGITAL IMAGES** The booklet's PDF allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions.

### **DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS**

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the projected images. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

*The Journey of Lewis and Clark*

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**OBJECTIVES**

1. Students will better understand the natural environments that Lewis and Clark had to cross on their journey to the Pacific.
  2. Students will better appreciate the many physical challenges the expedition faced.
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# The Land

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*Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.*

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION****Illustration 1**

In 1804, Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and a small band of explorers set off up the Missouri River and across the Rocky Mountains. Their goal was the Pacific Ocean. That journey was to be as great an adventure as the voyages of Columbus or the moon landing. Most U.S. citizens still lived east of the Appalachian Mountains in 1800. The western boundary of the U.S. was still the Mississippi River. Americans were familiar with rivers, woodlands, and coastal ports. But the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 changed that. At once, the nation's size doubled. President Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark to find out what this new territory was like. As this painting and map suggest, many wonders and surprises awaited these explorers.

**Illustration 2**

The top drawing is of the Great Falls of the upper Missouri, in Montana. It took Lewis and Clark more than a year to reach these falls, which were the toughest challenge they had faced so far. They had to carry all their supplies over land, around what were actually five sets of falls spread over many miles. After this, the group made its way to the Three Forks of the Missouri, also shown here. At this point, the Missouri River phase of the trip was over. The men then had to decide which fork to follow to the Rockies. After crossing a thin line of Rockies, they still hoped to find the Columbia River quickly and sail down it easily to the Pacific Ocean.

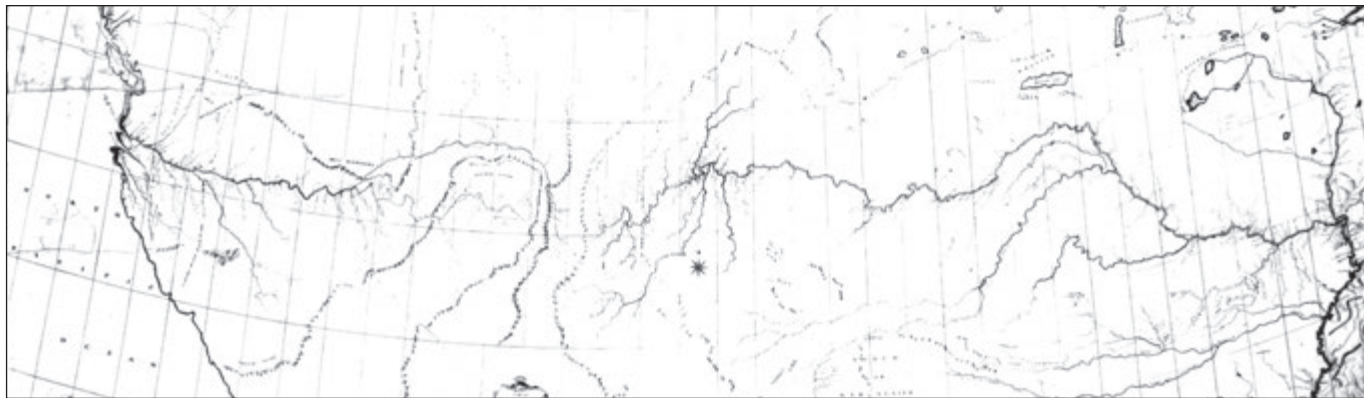
**Illustration 3**

By 1803, Americans already knew about the Columbia River from ships sailing along the Pacific coast. But they did not know how easily it could be reached by traveling overland from the east. Jefferson hoped the river would lie just over a single, thin line of Rocky Mountains. His hope was a last version of the long-held dream of a "Northwest Passage" — an easy route across North America to the Pacific. On August 12, 1805, this dream of a "Northwest Passage" finally died. At Lemhi Pass, high in the eastern Rockies, Lewis "discovered immense ranges of high mountains still to the West of us with their tops partially covered with snow." This painting shows Lewis and his group at Lemhi Pass. He knew then that an easy portage to the Columbia was impossible. Only with enormous effort, help from the Indians, and a lot of luck would they make it to the Pacific. And it would take them four more months to do this.

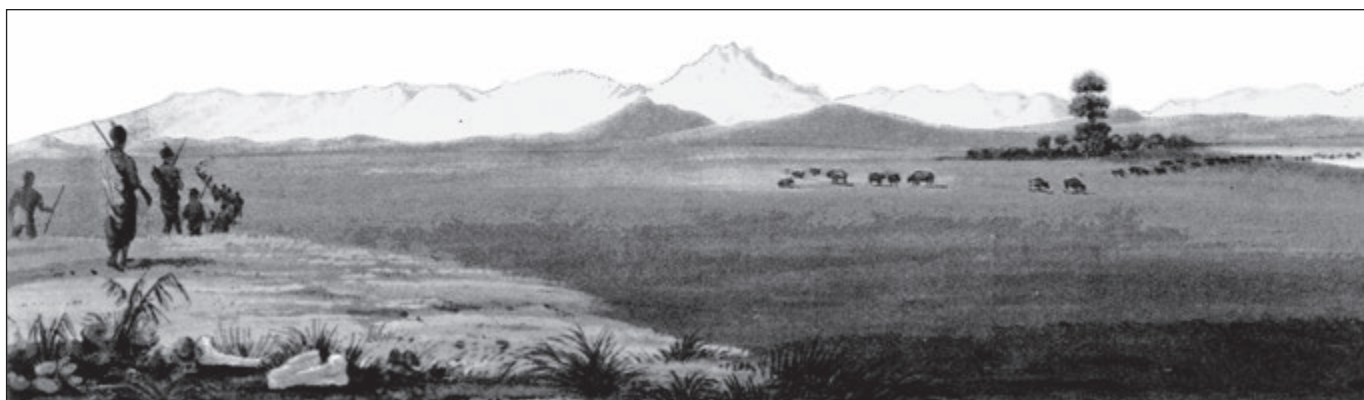


## Lesson 1 – The Land

# Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

### ***Discussing the Illustrations***

1. In 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out on a great journey. They were asked to explore a huge new area of land in the west that the United States had purchased from France in 1803. What was that “purchase” called?
2. Which president sent Lewis and Clark to explore the newly acquired lands?
3. The map on top shows the course Lewis and Clark took. They set out to follow one big river all the way to the Rocky Mountains. What river is that?
4. Lewis and Clark hoped to cross the Rocky Mountains quickly and find another big river that they knew could take them all the way to the Pacific. What river is that?
5. The Louisiana Purchase included lands that were vastly different from what most U.S. citizens in 1804 were familiar with. From bottom picture here, and from what you know about the American West, in what ways were these lands different?

### ***Follow-up Activities***

1. **Small-group activity:** Find a more up-to-date map of the route Lewis and Clark took from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean. Also, find present-day photos of at least five towns, cities, or interesting geographical spots along their route. Draw versions of what you think each spot must have looked like when Lewis and Clark passed by. Write a paragraph about each spot. In a bulletin board display, draw arrows or use string to connect your drawings, paragraphs, and present-day photos of each spot to your map.
2. The lands Lewis and Clark explored were totally different from what most Americans at the time were familiar with. In the journals of Lewis and Clark, find three short passages that describe such lands. Pretend you are the author of these passages. Include them in a long letter to friends back home telling them about the journey as whole. Tell your readers where the expedition was at the time of each passage and explain what made that particular spot seem so unusual or unique.

## The Discoveries

# Illustration 3



Courtesy of Library of Congress