

Primary Source and Writing Activity

The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Common Core Standards

Reading: Informational Text—Key Ideas and Details, RI.3.1–5.1; 3.2–5.2; and 3.3–5.3; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, RI.3.10–12.10

Reading: Foundational Skills—Fluency, RF.3.4–5.4

Writing—Text Types and Purposes, W.3.2–W.12.2; Production and Distribution of Writing, W.3.4–W.6.4; W.3.5–W.6.5; W.3.6–W.6.6; Research to Build and Present Knowledge, W.4.9–W.12.9

Speaking & Listening—Comprehension and Collaboration, SL.3.1–12.1; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, SL.3.4–12.4

NOTE: See also your state’s social studies standards for state and US history.

Ask students if they have ever gone camping. Did they sleep in a tent? Did they use backpacks and hike into the mountains, or did they stay in a campground? Did they cook food over a fire? What other details do they remember? Now, ask your students to imagine: What if the camping trip lasted for two and a half years, and there were no roads or towns or stores the whole time?

Explain that in 1803 President Thomas Jefferson bought a huge piece of land from the French. This land doubled the size of the United States and covered most or all of eight current states plus parts of seven more and parts of two Canadian provinces. Show students a map of the Louisiana Purchase. Tell them that two men named Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were asked by President Jefferson to lead an expedition to explore the northern part of the new US land and beyond. Their goals were to establish a military presence, find a route to the Pacific, represent the US government in a friendly way to the Indian tribes they met, map the land, and collect specimens of plants and animals. The land they would cross was mostly unknown to white Americans, although a few fur trappers had traveled to parts of it. Show students a map of the expedition route (these are easily found online).

Ask students how they think Lewis and Clark prepared for the long journey. Tell them that first of all Meriwether Lewis went to school! President Jefferson arranged for five important scientists to teach Captain Lewis. Why did Lewis need to study as part of his preparation for the trip? What do your students think he studied? Put the following on the board and see if your students know what some of them are. Fill in the meanings of the ones they don’t know.

- Anatomy
- Astronomy
- Biology
- Botany
- Fossils
- Geology

- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Natural history
- Navigation by the stars

Ask students why Lewis studied each of these subjects. Clarify that he studied math to be able measure the land properly, especially by using scientific instruments.

Next, ask students what would they bring on this long journey if they were Lewis and Clark. The “Preparing for an Expedition” activity page lists items Lewis and Clark really brought with them as well as other things they did not. Have your students check off the supplies they think the expedition actually took with them. Then meet as a class to discuss the real supply list. Show your students what the original pages of the list look like (nebraskastudies.org/0400/stories/0401_0101_02g.html). A complete printout of the supply list is also provided in your materials. (Two medical items have been deleted. Note that “do.” stands for dozen and each additional “do.” is multiplied.)

What supplies do students find surprising? Point out that the small mirrors, face paint, beads, and needles were among a number of gifts for Indians that the expedition brought with them. Why would that be helpful? The nine items that don’t belong on the list are as follows: *charcoal, matches, sunscreen, flashlights, sleeping bags, chocolate, mailing stamps, beef jerky, toilet paper, and granola bars*. Why didn’t Lewis and Clark bring them? What supplies had not been invented yet? What old-fashioned items did they bring to serve the purposes of some of those items? Why did Lewis and Clark choose to bring the supplies they did select? How would those items have been useful?

Let your students know that Lewis and Clark and about 30 other people who accompanied them traveled from May 1804 to September 1806. Again, this was nearly two and a half years. They journeyed 8,000 miles during that time. When they returned to St. Louis, Missouri, everyone was surprised to see them. They were gone so long that Americans in the East thought the expedition members were dead!

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Finally, copy and distribute one or all of the articles linked below for your students. The first article, from the National Archives, is a useful summary about Lewis shopping for supplies. The second even includes the stores and merchants Lewis bought them from. The third article is about the game the Corps of Discovery hunted and ate. Divide the class into three sections and have each section read one of the three articles in pairs or small groups and discuss what they read. Next, have students write reader responses of 1–2 paragraphs individually. Remind them to use examples and evidence from the article as they explain what they've read, what it means, and what they think about it. They should also include 1–2 key quotes.

Give students time to get feedback from a partner or small group before revising. Make sure students focus on content development, adding details and clarification rather

than simply proofreading (correcting a few spelling and grammatical errors). After students have revised and you have checked their work, they should type up their writing on the computer.

When students finish revising and typing up their work, have the larger groups report back to the class about their reading. Depending on how formal you wish these reports to be, give students the time they need to meet and prepare before presenting. Or you can hold a more casual classroom discussion and call on different students to take turns sharing just one fascinating fact or idea from their reading.

www.archives.gov/calendar/features/2004/04.html

lewis-clark.org/content/content-article.asp?ArticleID=2977

lewisandclarktrail.com/hunting.htm

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Preparing for an Expedition

The list below contains a number of actual supplies that Lewis and Clark's expedition took with them in 1803. It also contains some supplies they did **not** take along. Check the supplies you think they took on their journey.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 144 pocket mirrors | _____ 24 tin cups |
| _____ 116 pounds of charcoal | _____ Mosquito curtains |
| _____ 1 hammock | _____ 24 large knives |
| _____ 20 pounds of beads | _____ 250 mailing stamps |
| _____ 210 boxes of matches | _____ 600 of Dr. Rush's "Thunderclapper" pills |
| _____ 15 rifles | _____ 1 microscope |
| _____ 1 keelboat | _____ 15 blankets |
| _____ 1 compass | _____ 75 pounds of beef jerky |
| _____ 19 bottles of sunscreen | _____ Map of the Great Bend of the Missouri River |
| _____ 3 bushels of salt | _____ 24 large knives |
| _____ 23 flashlights | _____ 193 pounds of dried soup mix |
| _____ <i>A Practical Introduction to Spherics and Nautical Astronomy</i> (book) | _____ 60 rolls of toilet paper |
| _____ 2 handsaws | _____ 2 pounds of red face paint |
| _____ 35 sleeping bags | _____ 30 pairs of socks |
| _____ 12 pounds of chocolate | _____ Dictionary |
| _____ 576 fishhooks | _____ 400 granola bars |
| _____ Writing paper, ink, and crayons | _____ 1,728 sewing needles |

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Preparing for an Expedition

Complete Lewis and Clark Supply List

This list shows the original spelling and capitalization. A “groce” is a “gross,” which means 12 dozen or 144.

Mathematical Instruments

- 1 Hadley’s Quadrant
- 1 Mariner’s Compass & 2 pole chain
- 1 Sett of plotting instruments
- 3 Thermometers
- 1 Cheap portable Microscope
- 1 Pocket Compass
- 1 brass Scale one foot in length
- 6 Magnetic needles in small straight silver or brass cases opening on the side with hinges.
- 1 Instrument for measuring made of tape with feet & inches mark’d on it,...
- 2 Hydrometers
- 1 Theodolite
- 1 Sett of planespheres
- 2 Artificial Horizons
- 1 Patent log
- 6 papers of Ink powder
- 4 Metal Pens brass or silver
- 1 Set of Small Slates & pencils
- 2 Creyons
- Sealing wax one bundle
- 1 Miller’s edition of Lineus in 2 Vol:
 - Books
 - Maps
 - Charts
 - Blank Vocabularies
 - Writing paper
- 1 Pair large brass money scales with two setts of weights.

Arms & Accoutrements

- 15 Rifle
- 15 Powder Horns & pouches complete
- 15 Pairs of Bullet Moulds

- 15 do. Of Wipers or Gun worms
- 15 Ball Screws
- 24 Pipe Tomahawks
- 24 large knives
- Extra parts of Locks & tools for repairing arms
- 15 Gun Slings
- 500 best Flints

Ammunition

- 200 Lbs. Best rifle powder
- 400 lbs. Lead

Clothing

- 15 3 pt. Blankets
- 15 Watch Coats with Hoods & belts
- 15 Woolen Overalls
- 15 Rifle Frocks of waterproof Cloth if possible
- 30 Pairs of Socks or half Stockings
- 20 Fatigue Frocks or hinting shirts
- 30 Shirts of Strong linnen
- 30 yds. Common flannel.

Camp Equipage

- 6 Copper kettles (1 of 5 Gallons, 1 of 3, 2 of 2, & 2 of 1)
- 35 falling Axes.
- 4 Drawing Knives, short & strong
- 2 Augers of the patent kind.
- 1 Small permanent Vice
- 1 Hand Vice
- 36 Gimblets assorted
- 24 Files do.
- 12 Chisels do.
- 10 Nails do.
- 2 Steel plate hand saws
- 2 Vials of Phosforus

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1	do. Of Phosforus made of allum & sugar	Indian Presents
4	Groce fishing Hooks assorted	5 lbs. White Wampum
12	Bunches of Drum Line	5 lbs. White Glass Beads mostly small
2	Foot Adzes	20 lbs. Red Do. Do. Assorted
12	Bunches of Small cord	5 lbs. Yellow or Orange Do. Do. Assorted
2	Pick Axes	30 Calico Shirts
3	Coils of rope	12 Pieces of East India muslin Hanckerchiefs striped or check'd with brilliant Colours.
2	Spades	12 Red Silk Hanckerchiefs
12	Bunches Small fishing line assorted	144 Small cheap looking Glasses
1	lb. Turkey or Oil Stone	100 Burning Glasses
1	Iron Mill for Grinding Corn	4 Vials of Phosforus
20	yds. Oil linnen for wrapping & securing Articles	288 Steels for striking fire
10	yds do. do. Of thicker quality for covering and lining boxes. &c	144 Small cheap Scizors
40	yds Do. Do. To form two half faced Tents or Shelters.	20 Pair large Do.
4	Tin blowing Trumpets	12 Groces Needles Assorted No. 1 to 8 Common points
2	hand or spiral spring Steelyards	12 Groces Do. Assorted with points for sewing leather
20	yds Strong Ozaburgs	288 Common brass thimbles - part W. office
24	Iron Spoons	10 lbs. Sewing Thread assorted
24	Pint Tin Cups (without handles)	24 Hanks Sewing Silk
30	Steels for striking or making fire	8 lbs. Red Lead
100	Flints for do. do. do.	2 lbs. Vermillion - at War Office
2	Frows	288 Knives Small such as are generally used for the Indian trade, with fix'd blades & handles inlaid with brass
6	Saddlers large Needles	36 Large knives
6	Do. Large Awls	36 Pipe Tomahawks - at H. Ferry
	Muscatoe Curtains	12 lbs. Brass wire Assorted
2	patent chamber lamps & wicks	12 lbs. Iron do. Do. generally large
15	Oil Cloth Bags for securing provision	6 Belts of narrow Ribbons colours assorted
1	Sea Grass Hammock	50 lbs. Spun Tobacco.
	Provisions and Means of Subsistence	20 Small falling axes to be obtained in Tennessee
150	lbs. Portable Soup.	40 fish Griggs such as the Indians use with a single barbed point - at Harper's ferry
3	bushels of Allum or Rock Salt	3 Groce fishing Hooks assorted
	Spicies assorted	3 Groce Mockerson awls assorted
6	Kegs of 5 Gallons each making 30 Gallons of rectified spirits such as is used for the Indian trade	
6	Kegs bound with iron Hoops	

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- 50 lbs. Powder secured in a Keg covered with oil Cloth
- 24 Belts of Worsted feiret or Gartering Colours brilliant and Assorted
- 15 Sheets of Copper Cut into strips of an inch in width & a foot long
- 20 Sheets of Tin
- 12 lbs. Strips of Sheet iron 1 In. wide 1 foot long
- 1 Pc. Red Cloth second quality
- 1 Nest of 8 or 9 small copper kettles
- 100 Block-tin rings cheap kind ornamented with Colour'd Glass or Mock-Stone
- 2 Groces of brass Curtain Rings & sufficently large for the Finger
- 1 Groce Cast Iron Combs
- 18 Cheap brass Combs
- 24 Blankets.
- 12 Arm Bands Silver at War Office
- 12 Wrist do. do. Do.
- 36 Ear Trinkets Do. Part do.
- 6 Groces Drops of Do. Part Do.
- 4 doz Rings for Fingers of do.
- 4 Groces Broaches of do.
- 12 Small Medals do.

Means of Transportation

- 1 Keeled Boat light strong at least 60 feet in length her burthen equal to 8 Tons
- 1 Iron frame of Canoe 40 feet long
- 1 Large Wooden Canoe
- 12 Spikes for Setting-Poles
- 4 Boat Hooks & points Complete
- 2 Chains & Pad-Locks for confining the Boat & Canoes &c.

Medicine

- 15 lbs. Best powder's Bark
- 10 lbs. Epsom or Glauber Salts
- 4 oz. Calomel
- 12 oz. Opium
- oz. Tarter emetic
- 8 oz. Borax
- 4 oz. Powder'd Ipecacuana
- 8 oz. Powder Jalap
- 8 oz. Powdered Rhubarb
- 6 Best lancets
- 2 oz. White Vitriol
- 4 oz. Lacteaum Saturni
- 1 Flour of Sulphur
- 3 Clyster pipes
- 4 oz. Turlingtons Balsam
- 2 lbs. Yellow Bascilicum
- 2 Sticks of Symple Diachylon
- 1 lb. Blistering Ointments
- 2 lbs. Nitre
- 2 lbs. Coperas

Materials for making up the Various Articles into portable Packs

- 30 Sheep skins taken off the Animal as perfectly whole as possible, without being split on the belly as usual and dress'd only with lime to free them from the wool; or otherwise about the same quantity of Oil Cloth bags well painted
- Raw hide for pack strings
- Dress'd letter for Hoppus-Straps
- Other packing