

LEWIS AND CLARK: BUILDING A LASTING LEGACY

Overview:

Lewis and Clark were called heroes when they returned from the expedition. They made maps of the West, made records of hundreds of plants and animals, and created new opportunities for trade. But the two leaders weren't the only heroes—every expedition member contributed to the journey. And without the generosity, kindness, and support of Native Americans, the expedition would not have succeeded. In this lesson, students will draw or make a diorama that focuses on the geographic perspective of the expedition. Conduct the lesson after students study Lewis and Clark, or after they see the large-format film *Lewis and Clark: Great Journey West*.

Connections to the Curriculum:

history, language arts, fine arts

Connections to the National Geography Standards:

Standard 4: "The physical and human characteristics of places"

Standard 15: "How physical systems affect human systems"

Standard 17: "How to apply geography to interpret the past"

Time:

one hour

Materials Required:

- Photocopies of the map Photocopies of the map "Lewis and Clark Expedition Routes"
- Photocopies of the map "Lewis and Clark Expedition Westward Route, Native Americans, and Forts"
- Photocopies of memorials:
Gateway Memorial Arch (National Park Service)
The Irish Memorial
Lewis and Clark Memorial (Heritage Preservation)
Mount Rushmore (South Dakota Department of Tourism)
- Blank paper, markers or pencils
- Optional: shoeboxes or plastic containers, soil, plants, rocks, animal crackers, paint, clay, other art supplies

Objectives:

Students will:

- Use the geographic inquiry process
- Examine selected memorials and their components
- Recognize the physical and cultural features of a place
- Represent the significance of the land that was explored by Lewis and Clark
- Represent contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, and members of the expedition in a diorama

Geographic Skills:

Asking Geographic Questions
Acquiring Geographic Information
Organizing Geographic Information
Answering Geographic Questions

Suggested Procedure

Opening:

Have the class discuss different memorials they have seen. Are there any memorials in their city? What do the memorials represent or commemorate? Have students compare the messages of the memorials below. What geographic elements are in the memorials?

- Gateway Memorial Arch (National Park Service)
The nation's tallest memorial, The Gateway Arch, was built in St. Louis, Missouri, near the place where Lewis and Clark began their journey up the Missouri River. Why is St. Louis a good location for this memorial? Why is an arch an appropriate symbol for this memorial?
- Mount Rushmore (South Dakota Department of Tourism)
Four American presidents—Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt—were carved into South Dakota's Black Hills to commemorate their roles in the development of the United States. Why were these men chosen for this memorial?
- The Irish Memorial
This new monument in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, commemorates the Irish who starved to death as a result of the "Potato Famine," and the Irish who immigrated to the U.S. to escape the famine.
- Lewis and Clark Memorial (Heritage Preservation)
Lewis, Clark, and Sacagawea and her infant are depicted gazing toward the Rocky Mountains, in the direction of the Pacific Ocean. Why does this statue face toward the west?

Development:

1. Before conducting this lesson, students should study Lewis and Clark or see the large-format film *Lewis and Clark: Great Journey West*. If they see the film, have them concentrate on the following things and record their observations as a homework assignment:

- What kinds of physical geographic features—mountains, rivers, plains—did the expedition explore? What features did they climb or cross?
- How did they overcome the challenges these physical features presented?
- Who helped Lewis and Clark succeed?

2. Tell students they will draw or make a diorama about one aspect of the expedition. To help students recall the expedition's route, give them copies of the map "Lewis and Clark Expedition Routes". Older students may find the map "Lewis and Clark Expedition Westward Route, Native Americans, and Forts" useful for this exercise. Have students list what they know about the expedition:

- People (Expedition members, Native Americans, others)
- How did people contribute to the success of the expedition? How did people help Lewis and Clark? Did the expedition beneficial prove for any Native Americans?
- Places and physical features along the expedition route
- Wildlife and plants that were of importance to the expedition

3. Students can work in small groups or individually. They can simply draw an idea for a diorama, or build an actual diorama. The diorama can depict the landscape (soil, rocks, twig "trees"), people, wildlife (toy animals or animal crackers, fish), and modes of transportation (canoes, horses). Encourage them to include a variety of people and physical geographic features.

4. Post the sketches (or dioramas) around the room. How many ways have students depicted the same event?

Closing:

Why can an event such as the Lewis and Clark Expedition be represented in so many different ways? What people did students include in their dioramas? Do students think these people are heroes?

Suggested Student Assessment:

Work with the class to create a poster that announces their diorama “exhibit.” The poster should explain why the Lewis and Clark Expedition was important. Invite other students in the school to visit the exhibit.

Extending the Lesson:

Have students create a diorama that portrays the Lewis and Clark Expedition from the perspective of someone in a particular group (e.g., a Shoshone Indian).

Related Links:

[Gateway Memorial Arch](#)
[Lewis and Clark Memorial](#)
[Mount Rushmore](#)
[The Irish Memorial](#)