

## Manifest Destiny and the Lewis and Clark Expedition

### Overview

Students will examine the concept of Manifest Destiny as it relates to the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition through discussion, reading, and the examination of artwork and maps. Students will demonstrate their understanding of this content in a creative writing assignment in which they assume the persona of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and/or a Native American and create inferred journal entries.

### Grade

8

### North Carolina Essential Standards

- 8.H.3.1 - Explain how migration and immigration contributed to the development of North Carolina and the United States from colonization to contemporary times (e.g. westward movement, African slavery, Trail of Tears, the Great Migration and Ellis and Angel Island).
- 8.H.3.2 - Explain how changes brought about by technology and other innovations affected individuals and groups in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. advancements in transportation, communication networks and business practices).
- 8.H.3.3 - Explain how individuals and groups have influenced economic, political and social change in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.G.1.1 - Explain how location and place have presented opportunities and challenges for the movement of people, goods, and ideas in North Carolina and the United States.

### Essential Questions

- What is “Manifest Destiny,” and how did the US government act on this philosophy?
- What was the Louisiana Purchase, and what impact/effect did it have on the United States of America?
- How did the Louisiana Purchase affect the Natives living in the area?
- Who were Lewis and Clark, and what effect did their expedition have?
- How do Native American perspectives on the Lewis and Clark expedition differ from European perspectives?
- Who was Sacagawea, and how did she impact the Lewis and Clark expedition?

### Materials

- “Manifest Destiny and the Lewis & Clark Expedition” Power Point accompaniment, located in the Database of K12 Resources in PDF format
  - To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click “View” in the top menu bar of the file, and select “Full Screen Mode
  - To request an editable PPT version of this presentation, send a request to [CarolinaK12@unc.edu](mailto:CarolinaK12@unc.edu)
- “Discovering Lewis and Clark,” article from Teaching Tolerance, attached

### Duration

90 minutes (split over two periods)

## Procedure

### Day 1

#### Manifest Destiny

1. As a warm up, project slide 2 of the accompanying PPT, which is an image of the painting *American Progress*. (Do not yet tell students the title.) Discuss:
  - What do you see here? (Ensure students note all pieces of the painting, including symbols, objects, people, environment, etc.)
  - What location is pictured? What evidence makes you think this?
  - What time period do you think this represents and what evidence makes you think this?
  - Who might the female figure in the white represent? What is her purpose here?
  - What might the telegraph lines that she is leaving behind symbolize?
  - Describe the varying types of transportation you see.
  - Describe the different types of people and cultures you see.
  - Why do you think the animals and Natives are fleeing?
  - What message is the artist trying to convey?
  - What title would you give this painting and why?
2. Project slide 3 and ask students to share anything they already know (or think they may know) about the phrase **Manifest Destiny**. Facilitate the understanding that Manifest Destiny was a phrase used in the 1800s expressing the belief that the United States had a mission and right to expand its territory, spreading its form of democracy and freedom. Return to slide 2 and ask students to reconsider the painting with Manifest Destiny in mind and discuss:
  - What evidence in this painting illustrates Manifest Destiny?
  - Why would Manifest Destiny be a positive thing for the early American government?
  - Who might be impacted negatively by Manifest Destiny and why?
  - Reconsider the Native Americans that are fleeing in the painting. How might they feel about America's belief in "Manifest Destiny"?
  - How did Native American culture view land ownership and "expansion"?
  - Predict what impact Manifest Destiny had on Native Americans in the west, as well as in North Carolina.
  - Do you think the American government still inhabits the philosophy of Manifest Destiny today? Explain.
  - (Tell students that the title of this painting is *American Progress*.) Why do you think this is titled *American Progress*?
3. Once students have shared their thoughts, explain that this painting is a representation of Manifest Destiny. Here Columbia, a personification of the United States, leads civilization westward with American settlers, stringing telegraph wire as she travels. The different economic activities of the pioneers are highlighted and, especially, the changing forms of transportation. The American Indians and wild animals flee, knowing that this means trouble for them.

#### Louisiana Purchase

4. Next, project slide 4, which shows a map of the **Louisiana Purchase**. Discuss:
  - What does this map represent?
  - What do you already know about the Louisiana Purchase?
  - Why do you think the United States government wanted to purchase this land from France?
  - Facilitate discussion of **Thomas Jefferson's** desire to protect the US and help western farmers by sending **Robert Livingston** and **James Monroe** to buy New Orleans and nearby land from the French, who were under the command of **Napoleon Bonaparte**.

- Notice the borders of the final purchase. How did acquiring this land impact the US's physical size?
- Facilitate discussion of the fact that Livingston and Monroe paid \$15 million for all French lands west of the Mississippi, resulting in the size of the US doubling in 1803.)
- Looking at today's map of the United States as compared to the Louisiana Purchase, which states (as they are outlined today) were part of the purchase?
- What impact and effect did this purchase have on the United States? What impact and effect did it have on Natives living on the "purchased" land?
- What natural resources do you think the United States acquired as a result of this purchase?
- Based on the fact that Thomas Jefferson initiated this acquisition of western land, how would you infer that he feels about the concept of Manifest Destiny and why?
- Imagine the year is 1803. You are Thomas Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase has just been made. What would your next plan of action be in terms of this purchase? What would you do next regarding this land?

### The Lewis and Clark Expedition

5. After hearing student ideas of what Jefferson's next steps should be, explain that he sent explorers **Meriwether Lewis** and **William Clark** to study the landforms, plants, animals, natural resources, and people of the newly purchased land. Between 1804 and 1806, the **Lewis and Clark Expedition**, a party of over 33 explorers, traveled through the northern part of the Louisiana Purchase, creating maps and keeping detailed notes of the region. Project [slide 5](#) which pictures *Route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* and discuss:
  - Where did Lewis and Clark's route begin and end? What states did they explore?
  - Consider what western land, life, technology, people, etc. would have been like in 1804-1806. What do you imagine Lewis and Clark experienced as they traveled?
  - What effect do you think the Lewis and Clark expedition had on Native Americans living in the areas purchased and explored?
6. Project images of the Lewis and Clark expedition, such as those available on [slides 6-9](#), to encourage students to think further about Lewis and Clark's experiences. Also encourage students to consider Native American perspectives who encountered those on the Lewis and Clark expedition.
7. Next, project [slide 10](#) and explain the assignment, "You are Meriwether or William:"
  - Continue to imagine and infer what the Lewis and Clark expedition would have been like by assuming the persona of either **Meriwether Lewis** or **William Clark**. Write three journal entries describing your experiences during your exploration. Your journal entries must be at least a paragraph each and:
    - Begin with the date on which you are writing (sometime between 1804-1806) and end with your chosen identity's signature.
    - Contain details about where you are, your impression of the environment, your experiences, your feelings, exciting discoveries, interesting meetings with Natives, frightening encounters, etc.
  - Each entry must be different and creative, yet based in the realities that would have existed in this time period. You may do further research for ideas and to ensure accuracy.
  - Your journal entries must also contain at least one drawing. This can represent an illustration of the expedition, a particular event or discovery, a self-portrait, etc.
  - Be creative and have fun! You will be sharing these in class
8. Allow students to begin brainstorming and writing in class. You may also want to have Internet access available for additional research. Close class by sharing [slide 11](#), which contains an actual journal entry from the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Discuss:

- What were the weather conditions like as Clark wrote this entry? What type of shelter and provisions do you imagine Clark had in order to protect himself against the cold wind and other inclement weather?
- According to the entry, how do the explorers get needed resources, such as food?
- What do you imagine would have been most difficult about such a journey? What would have been most exciting?
- How do you imagine Lewis and Clark viewed the idea of Manifest Destiny?
- If you were living in 1804 and had the opportunity, would you go on the Lewis and Clark Expedition? Explain.
- Do you see any mistakes in the entry? (Point out the grammatical mistakes in the journal entry. Clarify your expectations for the journal entries students turn in with regards to grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.)

## Day 2

9. As a warm up, project [slide 12](#), which contains two pictures of **Sacagawea** and ask students to consider:
  - What do you see in this picture?
  - Who do you think these two people might be and what is their relationship (referring to the picture on the right)?
  - What do you think is happening in this moment?
10. Explain that these images are of Sacagawea, a Shoshone, who acted as a guide and interpreter in 1805 and 1806 for Meriwether Lewis and William Clark during their western expedition. Sacagawea helped the party obtain food and other necessary supplies from the Shoshone. Discuss:
  - How do you think Sacagawea helped Lewis and Clark be successful? Why would her services as a guide and interpreter have been so important to Lewis and Clark?
  - How might the expedition have been more difficult without the assistance of Natives such as Sacagawea?
11. Allow students to share their journal entries either in small groups or as a class. As they listen to one another's journals, ask them to note what they learned and liked about the entries heard and allow time for a feedback session. Once finished with sharing and feedback, ask students to consider what a Native American's diary might say during this same time. Brainstorm a list of thoughts as a class that focuses on inferred Native perspective, and how it compares and contrasts to the journal entries students created as Lewis or Clark.
12. Assign a reading on Lewis and Clark that is considerate of Native American perspectives, such as *Discovering Lewis and Clark*, by Ken Olsen; Teaching Tolerance magazine (text attached and also available at [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)). Students can read individually, in partners, or in literature circles. Upon reading, students should discuss (individually in writing, as a small group, or as a class):
  - Why do you think Lewis and Clark aren't considered prominent, heroic figures among Native Americans?
  - What effect did the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition have on Natives living in the western lands acquired?
  - What are the various misconceptions that exist regarding the Lewis and Clark expedition and Native people encountered?
  - In what ways did Native perspectives contrast those of Lewis, Clark, and the other European explorers?
  - Why should the Lewis and Clark Expedition not be forgotten?
13. As a homework assignment, have students redo the journal activity, but this time instruct students to create Native American journal entries to represent the differing perspectives. (Make sure students

understand Natives did not realistically keep such journals, since no written language was used. Or, to further differ the assignment from the first journal, allow students to create their journal entries from symbols, such as those found in Native American rock art.)

### **Additional Activity**

Create a group song based on the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Divide students into small groups and:

- Assign each group a prominent person involved in the Louisiana Purchase and/or Lewis & Clark Expedition (i.e. Thomas Jefferson, Zebulon Pike, Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, Shoshone natives, Sacagawea etc.)
- Instruct students to create a song about the Louisiana Purchase and/or the Lewis & Clark Expedition that summarizes the important facts and notes their assigned person's involvement.
- Songs should be creative, contain at least two verses (minimum 4 lines per verse) and one chorus
- Songs should contain a rhyming scheme. While the song's words must be original, you can use the tune from an already existing song.

Let students know that they will be performing their song in class at a "Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis & Clark Expedition Concert." (Let students know that while all of them are not required to sing, they are all required to stand with the singing group members and participate in some way – whether providing instrumental rhythm, serving as a back-up dancer, holding visual aids, etc.)

Let students know the due date, as well as how much class time and/or homework time they will have to complete their song.

On the due date, review class expectations for being respectful audience members. After each performance, facilitate a positive feedback session for each group by having audience members share responses to "What I liked" and "What I learned."

**Discovering Lewis and Clark**  
from [www.tolerance.com](http://www.tolerance.com)

***The Corps of 'Discovery'***

*Meriwether Lewis and William Clark began preparing for their historic journey in 1803 and officially launched the expedition in May 1804. They traveled more than 7,400 miles before returning to St. Louis on September 23, 1806. Besides the two leaders, the permanent crew included 27 soldiers and four civilians -- Clark's slave York, Sacagawea, her infant son Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, and her husband, Toussaint Charbonneau. The expedition crossed the homeland of more than 100 distinct Native American tribes.*

"As a school boy, you probably thought of Lewis and Clark chopping their way through a jungle," Marilyn Hudson says as we survey the gentle hills and winding cottonwood coulees of her Mandan-Hidatsa homeland in central North Dakota. "But they were on well-traveled trails. Our tribe drew them maps and told them, 'This is how you go up the Missouri (River) to the Great Falls.' They were given very specific directions."

We're standing on a grassy bluff called Indian Hills, more than 100 feet above the place Lewis and Clark camped on April 11, 1805. But 200 years later, we cannot see their historic campsite; it was buried by a 20th century reservoir, much as the Native American perspective on and contribution to the Lewis and Clark expedition is buried by ignorance and arrogance.

That's an apt metaphor on this bicentennial of the 1803-1806 Lewis and Clark expedition, a time when lessons of Lewis and Clark will gain greater emphasis in classrooms across the country.

"A dismaying amount of our history has been written without regard to the Indians," writer and historian Bernard DeVoto observed more than 50 years ago.

Such disregard is glaring in many mainstream stories of Lewis and Clark.

"They wouldn't have made it if we hadn't been here to show them how to hunt and what wood to chop," Hudson's granddaughter, Cassi Rench, says of the Mandan's critical role in Lewis and Clark surviving the 45-below days of the winter of 1804-05.

"It was two men -- two men who encountered at least 48 different tribes," adds educator Judy BlueHorse of Portland, Ore. "And yet it's always a story about these two men."

***In Recovery from 'Discovery'***

Dazzled by the notion of Manifest Destiny, American history tends to eulogize what Lewis and Clark "found" on their 7,400-mile journey. For Native Americans, the story instead is about what was lost -- lives, land, languages and freedom.

"Within 100 years of Lewis and Clark passing through here, every Native nation they encountered was displaced from their traditional lands and put on reservations," says BlueHorse, who works in the Indian Education Program for Portland Public Schools. "The ancient forests were clear cut. The great buffalo herds that fed (the expedition) were reduced to fewer than 300 animals, and the last Oregon sea otter, whose highly prized pelts had helped fuel (President Thomas) Jefferson's mission, was gone."

Pacific salmon, which the Nez Perce Indians fed the starving expedition in northern Idaho, continue to struggle for survival against lethal changes wrought by the dam-and-reservoir landscape. These same reservoirs drowned the most important Native American fishing sites and many sacred sites.

"I think continuing to glorify exploitation as exploration is dangerous," says BlueHorse, who is Nez Perce, Chickasaw and Cherokee. "We're in recovery from 'discovery.'"

Outside of Native American circles, the expedition is almost universally called the "Corps of Discovery." But Lewis and Clark didn't "discover" anything. They showed up and mined the knowledge of Native Americans.

"In the European view, 'discovery' means taking over the land," Hudson says. "They were a military expedition."

"To imply the land is empty or untrammled is to miss the fact that there were civilizations here that existed longer than the civilizations that came over," Bluehorse adds. "We were not just running around nomadically eking out a living. The items from our daily lives are in museums for their beauty and for the values they reveal about Native cultures."

Indeed, when the Lewis and Clark expedition arrived at the Mandan villages along the Missouri River in the late fall of 1804, these Native Americans were the hub of a trade network that stretched north to Hudson Bay in modern-day Canada, south into Latin America and included Spanish, French and British trappers and traders. President Jefferson knew this when he dispatched the Lewis and Clark expedition. Jefferson wanted to edge other countries out of the lucrative fur trade and begin shoving Native Americans aside for the coming westward expansion.

### **Unheroic and Unknown**

Lewis and Clark aren't prominent figures in Indian Country -- certainly not the heroic, larger-than-life characters America has popularized.

"Our family didn't really talk about it," Marilyn Hudson says. "I was told nothing in school. There was nothing about their relationship with our tribe" -- even though one of Lewis and Clark's campsites lies not very far from where Hudson grew up.

Hudson points toward an indiscernible spot on the vast blue waters of Lake Sakakawega to indicate the approximate location of the tree-lined streets of the Native American community of Elbowoods, drowned after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed Garrison Dam in the early 1950s.

"We rode horses and roamed all around there," she says of the winding river valley that provided shelter from the punishing winds of the Great Plains and nurtured Mandan and Hidatsa corn, bean and squash crops long before European Americans trudged onto the scene.

Native Americans were inundated with more pressing matters than memorializing the explorers. Lewis and Clark's historic visit triggered a wave of European American migrants who brought vicious epidemics that so devastated the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara that the three tribes joined forces in order to survive on the Fort Berthold Reservation, less than 100 miles from the Canadian border. Forced assimilation, culture-purging boarding schools and repeated assaults on Native American land followed.

Native Americans also don't make much of the expedition because Lewis and Clark weren't pioneering explorers. "One of the misconceptions is that Lewis and Clark were the first white men to travel here," Hudson says. Considering the earlier efforts of the Spanish, French and British, the Lewis and Clark expedition was one of the *last* such excursions.

Plenty of other misconceptions also linger, including the idea that Native Americans have largely vanished. "So many people think we're gone," Hudson says as we leave the reservoir, cruising past pastoral alfalfa and wheat fields on the 1804 Road, following the same route Lewis and Clark traversed across this land of limitless sky and endless horizon in 1804.

"We want people to know that the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara people are still here," Hudson says. "We are still contributing to society, growing stronger in numbers and are an independent, sovereign nation."

### **Resonating Consequences**

Native Americans also didn't understand some of the most significant messages Lewis and Clark delivered.

"When you read the journals of Lewis and Clark, you realize how ignorant they were of Indian beliefs and customs," says Theresa Schenck, Native American studies professor at the University of Wisconsin and a member of the Blackfeet Tribe. "Most Indians did not understand, 'You have a great white father in Washington, (and) we declare sovereignty over you,' because they had no word for sovereignty and no concept of control by a higher authority."

So Native Americans listened to the explorers' speech -- and ignored it.

In the end, people cannot understand the Lewis and Clark expedition if they don't understand the spectrum of Native American cultural practices, Schenck says. And these different perspectives need to be taught long after the bicentennial of the expedition fades from billboards and travel brochures.

"Historical events of this magnitude should not be forgotten," Schenck says. "The consequences of the expedition resonate year after year."

### **Diverse perspectives**

There is not a single, unified Native American view of Lewis and Clark.

"There are many American Indian perspectives," Schenck says. "Even within a given tribe, there are many different attitudes."

Consider the expedition's famous female member, Sacagawea, who joined the group after Lewis and Clark hired her husband, Toussaint Charbonneau, as a guide that first winter in North Dakota.

The Lemhi-Shoshone spell her name Sacajawea and consider her a native Shoshoni who was captured by the Hidatsa, neighbors of the Mandan, and later sold to Charbonneau.

The Hidatsa, conversely, spell her name Sakakawea and consider her a native of their tribe. Hidatsa oral history says Sakakawea was captured by the Shoshoni but eventually escaped and returned to her people in what is now North Dakota.

"We tell people it's incumbent upon them to go out and do as much research as they can and come to their own conclusion," says Hudson, who today is administrator of the Three Tribes (Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara) Museum in New Town, N.D.

"It's like a diamond," Schenck says of this and other varying Native American views of the Lewis and Clark expedition. "Every side has a different facet. Every facet contributes to the beauty of the whole diamond."

*Ken Olsen is a freelance writer living in the Pacific Northwest. Article source: [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)*