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# Family Activity Guide

## LEWIS & CLARK GREAT JOURNEY WEST



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[www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lewisandclark)

# Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West

## Activity 1: Planning For a Journey

In 1803, President Jefferson commissioned Meriwether Lewis to lead an important expedition. His assignment: Find an all-water route to the Pacific Ocean, following the Missouri River as far as possible, and map uncharted areas of western North America. Lewis and his co-captain, William Clark, planned for the journey for months, but because they had no idea what to expect, it was hard to decide what to take.



LEWIS AND CLARK PLANNING THE EXPEDITION'S ROUTE, BY LISA TRUITT © NGT&F (COVER)  
HAULING A PIROGUE, BY MARK THIESSEN © NGT&F (ABOVE)  
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*" . . . all in health and readiness to set out. Boats and everything Complete, with the necessary stores of provisions . . . tho' not as much as I think [necessary] for the multitude of [Indians through] which we must pass . . . "*

William Clark —  
May 13, 1804

## Where would you like to travel?

- Plan a trip to somewhere you've never been.
- What would you need to bring? Make a list of questions you would have to answer to help you plan what to bring. Answer as many questions as possible by using an atlas or encyclopedia, or other sources of information.
- List the things you would need to do to prepare for your trip. How would you get there? What sights might you see while you're there?
- Make a travel brochure about the place you'd like to go. Draw pictures and write about things you might see. You could describe the people you might meet, or animals, landscapes, plants, or the weather. You could also make a map of the place.
- Find a travel brochure of the area, and compare your brochure to the real one. What is different? What is the same? Why do you think there are differences?

# Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West

## Activity 2: Overcoming Obstacles



RUNNING RAPIDS ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER, BY JOHN LIVZEY © NGT&F

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was long and difficult. The group had to overcome many obstacles. They braved steep, snow-covered mountains. They suffered hunger, illness, and mosquitoes. The Corps of Discovery succeeded in reaching their goals by using problem-solving skills, determination, and perseverance.

"... all appear perfectly to have made up their minds to Succeed in the expedition or perish in the attempt. We all believe that we are about to enter on the most perilous and [difficult] part of our Voyage . . . "

William Clark — June 20, 1805

### Have you ever had to overcome a problem or obstacle?

- Think of a time you had to solve a problem or overcome an obstacle while traveling. Talk with your family about what you had to do to solve it.
  - What was the problem?
  - What different options did you come up with to solve the problem?
  - Which option did you use to solve the problem?
  - Did this solution work? Why or why not?
  - What did you learn while trying to solve this problem?
- Using a road map or atlas, figure out the number of miles or kilometers to a nearby town.

\_\_\_\_\_ Miles (kilometers) to \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of town)

Double the number of miles or kilometers above to figure how far it is from your house to the town, then back to your house:

\_\_\_\_\_ Miles (kilometers) X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_ Miles (kilometers)

- Lewis and Clark traveled over 8,000 miles (12,874 kilometers)! How many times would you have to travel back and forth to the town you chose before you would travel as many miles or kilometers as Lewis and Clark did on their journey? How long do you think this many trips would take you:

In a car? \_\_\_\_\_ On foot? \_\_\_\_\_ By boat? \_\_\_\_\_

What problems might you have during all these trips?

# Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West



WILLIAM CLARK ON THE KEELBOAT,  
BY MARK THIESSEN © NGT&F

## Activity 3: Observation Journal

President Jefferson asked Lewis and Clark to keep journals throughout the trip, and to make detailed records of all the things they saw. They were instructed to make maps, describe the people they met, and draw pictures of the animals and plants they found.

*"The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river . . . you will take careful observations of latitude & longitude . . . Your observations are to be taken with great pains & accuracy; to be entered distinctly & intelligibly for others as well as yourself . . . Several copies of these . . . should be . . . put into the care of the most trustworthy of your attendants . . ."*

— Excerpt from President Thomas Jefferson's instructions to Meriwether Lewis, June 20, 1803

### Have you ever kept a diary or journal?

- Make a journal for each member of your family. You can make a journal from a notebook, or by folding paper in half, then stapling it. You could make covers for the journals with cloth or a cut-up paper bag.
- Find a place in your community to take a nature walk with your family.
- Take your time as you walk along the nature trail. Start your journal by recording the location, date, time, and the weather conditions. As you walk, record everything you see, hear, feel, touch, and smell in your journal. Sketch the plants and animals you see. Describe people you encounter. Make a map of the route you walk. (A good way to organize your information is to take notes on half of a journal page and use the other half of the page for sketches and maps.)
- Compare your journal with the records the other members in your family kept. Did everyone see and record the same things? How are your journals similar? How are they different?
- How hard do you think it would be to keep a detailed journal of everything you saw and did for a long period of time? Do you think you would enjoy it? Why or why not?
- Try This: If you see the large-format film *Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West*, write in your journal about your trip to and from the film.

# Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West

## Activity 4: The First Inhabitants



SACAGAWEA AND HER SON, JEAN-BAPTISTE CHARBONNEAU, BY MARK THIESSEN © NGT&

Lewis and Clark met many different Native Americans on their journey. Most of them generously welcomed the expedition into their homes. Without their friendship and contributions, it is likely that Lewis and Clark would never have reached the Pacific Ocean or returned home safely.

*"a party of [Oto] and Missourie Nation Came to Camp, . . . Sent them some roasted meat, . . . in return they sent us Water [melons]."*

William Clark — August 2, 1804

### Who were the first people to settle in the area where you live?

- Look at a map of your town, city, or state. Make a list of interesting names of rivers, towns, counties, or other places. Using the local historical society or library, try to find out how these places were named. Were they named by the original inhabitants of the area? Or by people who came later? Do these place names give you clues about the history of the area?
- Using information from a library or the local chamber of commerce, research the history of your community.
  - Who were the first explorers in the area where you now live?
  - Who were the first people to live in your area?
- Over the years, most communities have been home to a variety of people who lived there for different reasons. Make a timeline of different people who have lived in your area.
  - Why did people come to the area? What were they looking for?
  - How did different groups interact?
- What do you think different tribes of Native Americans might have thought about Lewis and Clark? Make a list of questions that you think Native Americans may have wanted to ask Lewis and Clark.