



A Lesson on American Explorers by Robert Russell

Grade Level: Grade 5

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours

Lesson Keywords: Lewis and Clark, westward, exploration, Sacajawea

Lesson Description: The purpose of this activity is to show the importance of the exploration of Lewis and Clark. Students will read a short passage to understand the journey westward and the challenges they faced.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2: Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3: Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.8: Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

American Explorers

by

Content: More than 200 years ago, in 1804, two explorers made an important journey. They were named Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Today, people know a lot about the places they visited, but 200 years ago there were no maps of that part of the United States. They would travel by boat most of the way and they would make the first maps of that part of our country. They were going to trace where a great river went. The river they were mapping is a very big one called the Missouri River. They wanted to find out where it went. They hoped it would take them to the ocean.

They took many people with them to help with the exploration. There were more than 40 people on the trip. They also carried many supplies, including a lot of food. They hoped they would find food along the way, but this was long ago and they did not know what the territory would be like. The explorers had three boats to carry them and their supplies. It was summer when they started on this long trip.

They traveled slowly, each day traveling a short distance because they had to row their boats on the river. They would only travel a few miles every day. They traveled for months and were still far from their destination. In winter it was difficult to travel, so they camped along the river. There they would wait for spring when traveling would be easier. Snow and ice made it very hard to travel in winter.

Native Americans helped them along the way. They helped them get food, and they showed them where places were. The explorers had never been to this area before, so they were not sure where to find food or even where the river went. The Native Americans had lived there for many years, so they knew the area and how to survive there, even in the hard winter.

A Native American woman named Sacajawea helped them travel. She became their guide, and she traveled with them for months. It was hard work for everyone, including Sacajawea. The explorers needed her help to find their way to the West. They wanted to find out how to get to the ocean.

As they traveled, they made maps. Their maps showed the way the river went. It passed through grasslands, and then they were in mountains. When they got to the mountains, they had to leave their boats and walk.

It took more than a year for the explorers to get to the ocean. When they got there they had made maps that would help many people. But they had to bring the maps back. It had taken more than a year to make this first part of the trip. It also took a long time to get back. When the explorers came back, in 1806, they had been gone two years, and people said they were heroes. They would not make such a great journey again. They had done their job.

Their maps would help people settle in the new land. Long after their trip, people would build roads to the west. They would travel quickly by car. Today people can travel their route by plane. If you look out the window from the plane you will see those high mountains, you will see what a difficult journey it was.

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Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: Exploration **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in our story says "They took many people with them to help with the exploration." What does the word "exploration" mean in this sentence?

- A: a space ship
- B: traveling through an unfamiliar area
- C: going on a vacation
- D: raising money for a cause

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "exploration" correctly?

- A: The exploration went into a deep sleep.
 - B: The exploration was growling at the people in the wagon.
 - C: The exploration was tired and over heated.
 - D: The exploration provided never before seen information of the region.
- =====

Q: 2 WordPhrase: territory **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story say "They hoped they would find food along the way, but this was long ago and they did not know what the territory would be like." What does the word "territory" mean in this sentence?

- A: unknown area of land
- B: urban legend
- C: soliders
- D: enemies

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "territory" correctly?

- A: The territory was a shooting star.
 - B: The territory ended up being a dog.
 - C: As night fell upon us, we were in unknown territory.
 - D: At the end of the day, we let territory sleep.
- =====

Q: 3 WordPhrase: Destination **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says "They traveled for months and were still far from their destination." What does the word "destination" mean in this sentence?

- A: A country
- B: A horse drawn carriage
- C: a place where someone is going
- D: a brick paved road

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "destination" correctly?

- A: The destination will demand a large crowd.
 - B: New York City is my final destination.
 - C: The destination was trapped in a mouse trap.
 - D: Joe brought in his destination for show and tell.
- =====

Q: 4 WordPhrase: Journey **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in our story says "If you look out the window from the plane you will see those high mountains, you will see what a difficult journey it was." What does the word "journey" mean in this sentence?

- A: traveling from one place to another
- B: a rock and roll band
- C: rock climbing
- D: predicting the future

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "journey" correctly?

- A: Journey is my favorite band
 - B: It would be a long journey and a dangerous one.
 - C: I looked at the stars last night and saw journey.
 - D: Journey was staring at me for over an hour.
- =====

Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - Native Americans

Explain how the Native Americans helped the explorers in their expedition. ?

2 - The unknown territory

Why was this exploration considered so dangerous? What elements did they have to overcome??

3 - Sacajawea

Who was Sacajawea? Why was she so important to the exploration??

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: The exploration of Lewis and Clark was one of the most important journeys in our countries histroy. In 2-3 paragraphs describe the impact their exploration had?on the development of the United States. Give specific examples from the passage.?

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