

Analyzing Multiple Viewpoints – The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Fast Facts

Curriculum Area Social Studies
Grade Level: High School
Suggested Duration: Two 50-minute class periods

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

Students will view and analyze multiple American Indian perspectives regarding the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Social Studies Standard 4, Benchmark 12.6 Students will investigate, interpret, and analyze the impact of multiple historical and contemporary viewpoints concerning events within and across cultures (SS4:12.6).

Understandings

- History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised.
- History told from an Indian perspective frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell. (EU 6)

Essential Questions

- Which Montana tribal nations discovered Lewis and Clark coming through their territory?
- Do the perspectives given in the video conflict with what you have previously learned?
- Why is it important to examine historical events from multiple perspectives?

Students will be able to...

- Briefly describe some American Indian perspectives regarding the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Students will know...

- Students will be introduced to the multiple American Indian viewpoints regarding Lewis and Clark.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Students will view the DVD entitled: *View from the Shore: American Indian Perspectives Regarding Lewis and Clark* (the Office of Public Instruction has sent a copy of this DVD to every Montana school library. Check with your school librarian).

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Day 1

Save at least 35 minutes of class time to allow for viewing the entire DVD.

Briefly introduce students to the topic of Lewis and Clark. Lead a class discussion/brainstorming session to see what they already know. List out topics/issues on the board.

Tell students they will be watching a film that includes interviews with several American Indians offering their perspectives on the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Ask students to write up a one-page reaction paper to the film. Did they learn anything new? Did this conflict with what they have been previously taught? Do these perspectives differ from what is in your history textbook?

Tell them their one-page reaction papers will be due at the next class.

Things to keep in mind as you hear/read primary sources from a tribe about a particular event in history:

- With regard to events such as Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery, Montana tribal histories offer differing points of view as compared to those expressed in your American history book.
- Your history book and a tribal history each represent “points of view”; the point of view changes, depending on whose story is being told.
- Identifying and respecting another culture’s viewpoints of historical events is basic to your understanding of how histories can influence our ideas and points of view.
- Events from the past, and how they are viewed by tribes and by the US government, still cause issues of concern today.
- The “discovery” of an area is not necessarily a discovery. Indigenous people had been in the area explored by the expedition for hundreds of years.

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Day 2

Handout select quotes from the film (entire transcript can be found on the Indian Education Web site – see resources)

Have students work in small groups of two or three. Distribute quotes and have them discuss in their small group what the main point is and also ask them to share their reaction to the statement.

After students have had a chance to read and discuss the quote have them read it to the class and share their observations and insights. Allow time for class input after each quote is read.

Lead a class discussion on the major issues covered in the film. List on the board new information gained as a result of watching this film.

Allow students time to add to or revise their one-page reaction papers and have them hand in at the end of the period.

Resources

View From The Shore. [DVD](#) This may also be available in your school library.

[Complete transcript of the DVD](#)

[TrailTribes.org](#) has some excellent information for further research.

[Lewis and Clark journals](#)

Select Quotes

Darrell R. Kipp: We are negotiating the reality of what has been presented in textbooks and history books and movies and television and even in the Lewis and Clark journals themselves over the years. And so I see the Lewis and Clark expedition commemorative as an opportunity, as an excellent opportunity, that Indian tribes are able take advantage of, should take advantage of, to present their renegotiation of reality and set the record straight. (page 1)

Raymond Cross: And I think that Lewis and Clark can be seen, at least from my tribe's perspective, at a number of different levels. They can be seen as real flesh and blood people, an ill-equipped pair, and ill-equipped duo to really work with the Indian people. On the other hand, I think you see them as sort of symbol and icon, as sort of a collective memory of the American people that put so much stock in those journals as sort of the true story of how it was back then. So Lewis and Clark, I think the flesh and blood characters, are now overshadowed by this sort of bicentennial characterization of their contribution. I don't think in that light one should blame Lewis and Clark too much. I think the battles engage when you have the Lewis and Clark heritage, when you think of all these thousands of Lewis and Clark books that sort of seek to reenact that conquest of the West. I think that is were the Indians are put at a disadvantage. It is forgotten how much the Indians made possible this expedition. (pages 1-2)

Julie Cajune: They could have never made it, they did not know where they were going, they did not know how to feed themselves, and so Indian people guided them. Shoshone women I think transported their baggage, you know, on mountain passes. So they didn't know where the passes were, where to go. And then horses – you weren't going to get one set of horses that are going to last you the whole way, you know, who had the horses? – the Indian people. The river routes, the best portages and everything, all of that information was really provided by Indian people. (page 2)

Dick Little Bear: I am really ambiguous about this expedition, because while it was a big place that they were coming through, it was kind of hostile to them, they called it wilderness and they called it discovery. It wasn't wilderness to Native Americans and it certainly was already discovered. (page 2)

Henrietta Mann: Expedition. I don't like to call it the Corps of Discovery, I really abhor the word discovery. It is simply because - what did they discover that we already did not know? It is more than a matter of semantics, it could have called something else except the Corps of Discovery, because we were here, and if there was a discovery, we discovered them. (page 2)

Julie Cajune: For some people it was an invasion into their homeland. The idea that the expedition didn't realize that they were entering a very old tribal world – it didn't seem to be in their thinking. They realized that they were encountering people, but there was still the belief that we are exploring our new purchase, you know, we are exploring our own country, was still paramount in their mind and looking for what benefit we can get from this new acquisition, you know, what are we going to get out of this, what resources can we exploit? (page 2)

Raymond Cross: I think the stories have always been fairly one-sided, presented from the sort of coonskin cap brigade if you will. I think the stories really haven't allowed the Indian perspective, the Indian voices, to speak on these issues. And it ranges from the fined-grained to the large-scale. If you look at Blackhead's speaking at the expedition, he asked for a wide variety of goods, a wide variety of trading relationships. Meriwether Lewis said look, you know, we are going to set the tone, we want you to come back with us and visit Washington, D.C., we want to show you the majesty of what this new American world is like and you understand that you got to become part of it or you will be swept away. And Blackhead said, no, you know, I don't want to go down the river and visit your world, I like mine just fine. And I think that has always been this tension, is that as if there is two Americas, one Indian and one nonIndian and as if there has never been a fairly reciprocal influence between the two. There has never been a willingness on part of non-Indians to come and experience that Indian world. It has always been the other way around, you come down and see the majesty, what we created, we don't really want to deal with your own issues and interests and values. (pages 2-3)

Dick Little Bear: Here they purchased land from another government that had no ownership of it. They didn't even consult with the tribes that were already here. Maybe they did not own the land in European terms where you have to have a piece of paper, but they had left artifacts; they had an experience here; their stories were here; their people that they loved and cherished were buried here; their sacred sites were here. If that isn't a sign of ownership, I don't know what is. (page 4)

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Darrell R. Kipp: One of the things that happened to Indian tribes within the Lewis and Clark journals is that you have an outside group coming along and seeing things and putting their own identity or their own nomenclature, their own labels on what they see, and those labels or those definitions reflect their definitions, their standards, and not of the subject itself. And so consequently when the journals indicate as they are identifying plants, as they are identifying rivers, they gave them names. For example, the Marias River, in the journals of Lewis and Clark that name is given, and yet amongst this tribe, my tribe, it is the Bear River. And everything around them already had names, everything around them already had been identified for thousands of years in longstanding oral tradition and identity. And yet we know then from the time of Lewis and Clark on we didn't lose our identity, we just simply overwhelmed by the identification and the labels that others placed upon us. (pages 4-5)

[Additional possible resource](#)

Josephy, Alvin M. Jr. Ed. *Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. 192 pp. ISBN 1-4000-4267-4