

\$15 Million Well Spent?

General

Grade Level

Middle School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Cooperative Learning

Duration

1-2 Class Periods

Interdisciplinary Connections

Language Arts: critical reading & categorization

Objectives

Overview

Students will work with a primary document, *Jefferson's Instructions to Lewis* (June, 1803), and a map illustrating the Louisiana Territory to discuss, decide, and document in writing what they feel were the primary purposes of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Prior Knowledge

A general understanding of the Louisiana Purchase and Lewis & Clark expedition would be helpful for students but is not completely necessary for carrying out the lesson.

Teachers will want to have read through the lesson and supporting materials in order to give clear directions and answer clarifying questions. Any background knowledge of the Corps of Discovery will also enrich the lesson.

State Standards

Common Core

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4](#)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6](#)

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8](#)

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Virginia SOL's

USI.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to

- a) Identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history to 1865;
- b) Make connections between the past and the present;
- c) Sequence events in United States history from pre-Columbian times to 1865;
- d) Interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives;
- e) Evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing;

f) Analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events

USI.8 The student will demonstrate knowledge of westward expansion and reform in America from 1801 to 1861 by

a) Describing territorial expansion and how it affected the political map of the United States, with emphasis on the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark expedition, and the acquisitions of Florida, Texas, Oregon, and California;

b) Identifying the geographic and economic factors that influenced the westward movement of settlers.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Students will...

- Decide, for themselves, what qualifies as a “discovery”
- Determine a writer’s intent behind a piece of text
- Understand that a primary document gives a single perspective
- Understand Jefferson’s goals for the Corps of Discovery expedition

Additional Learning Outcomes

Essential Questions

Whose story is being told (and is there more than one)?

What does it mean to discover something?

Procedures

1. 3 min

Begin by setting the context for students: *the year is 1803. The United States end at the Appalachian Mountains. The population is 6 million (314 million in 2014). Ohio is considered to be*

a “northwest frontier.” President Thomas Jefferson has dreamed of finding a water passage connecting the two coasts of the continent. He is deeply curious about the landscape, flora and fauna, trade possibilities, and cultures of the west. In January, he sends a secret letter to Congress asking for \$2500 to fund an expedition to the Pacific Ocean. That spring, he sends his former secretary Meriwether Lewis to Philadelphia for a crash course in cartography, botany, and medicine. In July, the US spends \$15 million (about 3 cents an acre) on 828,000 acres of land known as the Louisiana Territory. 1 year later, on May 14th, 1804, the expedition departed Camp Dubois in St. Louis, Missouri.

*This can be done in any number of ways. Teachers may read aloud, create a timeline of cards for students to arrange, have students read individual pieces, etc. Whatever time permits and fits a particular classroom takes priority.

2. 3 min

Introduce students to the map of US showing the Louisiana Purchase (<http://classroom.monticello.org/teachers/gallery/image/229/Boundaries-of-the-Louisiana-Purchase/>). Discuss the implications of this purchase and how it changed the nation- economically, socially, and politically.

3. 5 min

Identify, discuss, and put up three categories of goals: Political/Social, Economic, Scientific. Allow students to challenge these categories, suggest others, add/omit, etc.

4. 15 min

Introduce students to *Jefferson’s Instructions to Lewis* (sent soon after congress gave approval for funding the expedition). Explain that in small groups, they will be taking on one paragraph of the letter, paraphrasing the goal, sharing their findings with the class, and trying to fit it into one of the three categories.

5. 10 min

When groups are through with their paragraphs & goal work, they will share findings with the class. As a class, decide which category the goal should be put into.

6. 10 min

Mix groups so one student from each paragraph is represented. Students then complete the 10% Summary Worksheet for the document.

7. 5 min

Conclude by returning to the three categories and goals themselves. Facilitate a discussion about what the true purpose of this expedition was. Did it succeed? What do we know is now true because of these events?

Related Assets

Handouts and Downloads

- [10% Summary Worksheet](#)
- [Jefferson's Instructions to Lewis](#)

Assessment

Homework

If students are unable to complete the 10% Summary Worksheet, this can be assigned as a homework assignment. Another extension activity would be for students to create a public address from President Jefferson to either the American public or congress that clearly outlines his goals for the Corps of Discovery.

An alternative homework assignment could also be a writing prompt: *was the word "discovery" an appropriate choice for the expedition?*

Assessment

10% Summary Worksheets are graded for completeness, thoroughness, and spelling/grammar.

Students' participation/productivness in small group work time is informally assessed.

Extension homework assignments may be graded as well.

Accommodations

Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

Students may be given a modified/shortened version of *Jefferson's Instructions to Lewis*.

If there are time constraints and/or concerns about challenging content, teachers may choose to omit the three goal categories section and simply work with the letter to complete the 10% Summary and identify

primary goals of the expedition.

Th. Jefferson
MONTICELLO