



Montana Outdoors Magazine Literacy Evaluation Program

“The Corps of Botanical Discoveries”

name: _____

1. The first paragraph provides four reasons why the Corps of Discovery’s botanical discoveries were important. List them here.

2. Besides the obvious commercial and expansionist goals, what were five other objectives that President Jefferson established for the Lewis and Clark Expedition?

3. What did President Jefferson have Lewis do in order to strengthen his botany background before embarking on the expedition?

4. The place where Lewis and nine men crossed the Continental Divide on July 7, 1806 is called Lewis and Clark Pass, even though Clark was never there. Why was this such a productive day in terms of botany?

5. Plant specimens were sandwiched between sheets of blotting paper and then pressed in a book. What was the purpose of the blotting paper?

6. How many plant specimens from the expedition are still preserved today, and why is this so impressive?

7. Describe the fleet that the expedition was using as they set off on the Missouri River from St. Louis in May of 1804. Include the types of boats and numbers of each.



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8. What were two important uses of cottonwood trees during the expedition?

9. Besides traveling over mountainous terrain, give two reasons why crossing the Bitterroot Mountains in September 1805 was such a hardship for the expedition on their journey west?

10. What plant, fed to the men by the Nez Pierce, caused them to experience considerable discomfort due to bloating?

11. Camas and cous biscuit-root were important sources of food for the Natives. Why else were they important?

12. What plant did Sacajawea give to the men to help alleviate the gas problem caused by eating the quawmash (boiled blue camas)?

13. Montana's state flower is *Lewis rediviva*. What is its common name and why was it given that common name?

14. Why were the dried cakes of serviceberries and chokecherries probably important to the health of the men?

15. A poultice is a moist mass of material that is placed on an injured part of someone's body to aid healing. Explain one of the ways that a poultice was used in the expedition. Be sure to tell what the poultice was made of.

16. Lewis collected many plant specimens as they travelled from central North Dakota to the Great Falls of the Missouri. He stored these near Great Falls in 1805, planning to pick them up on the way back to St. Louis in 1806. What happened to this cache of specimens?

17. Browse through the photographs and captions on pages 11, 13 and 15. Which plant was found closest to where you live. Give both the scientific name and common name.



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Teachers:

1. Here are some possible bell-ringers:
 - a. The article mentions the “commercialist and expansionist goals” of the expedition. Explain these goals.
 - b. There are several terms in the article that may be new to students. Ask them if they know what these words mean: botany, horticulture, cache, pirogue, exotic plants
2. Give students a copy of the article. Have them read it silently, read it as a class, or read it to them.
3. If the assignment seems to be too much for the grade level you teach, consider assigning a certain number of questions (you decide how many, and each student gets to pick which ones they answer). Any questions they answer correctly beyond the required number can count as extra credit.

Answer Key

1. They advanced the scientific study of botany and provided food, medicine, and transportation for the expedition.
2. Here are several possible answers. (Students should list five of these.) Exploring and mapping the Missouri River, finding a water route to the Pacific Ocean, studying the native Indians and their customs, and observing wildlife. The president also instructed the explorers to record the minerals they found, keep climate and weather tables, and maintain journals.
3. Jefferson had Lewis spend time learning from Dr. Benjamin Barton, America’s leading botanist at that time.
4. Lewis found at least seven new plants new to science (Indians had known about them for thousands of years) that he was able to collect and preserve.
5. The blotting paper kept the specimens dry and discouraged the growth of mold.
6. There were roughly 230 specimens preserved. This is impressive because the preservation required a considerable amount of maintenance to keep them dry (and intact while traveling by foot or river hundreds of miles in all kinds of weather).
7. The fleet included one large keelboat and two 40 ft. pirogues. (They also packed an unassembled portable iron boat.)
8. Cottonwood trees were used to make the dugout canoes and also used to make the wheels that were used to transport everything around the Great Falls of the Missouri (“The Portage”).
9. It was cold, and everyone was wet and hungry.
10. Quamash or blue camas
11. The Natives could use them to trade for other things that they needed.
12. Yampah (of the parsley family)
13. It is called the bitterroot, and was so-named because the roots taste bitter.
14. They were a source of vitamin C and may have helped prevent the men from getting scurvy.
15. There are two possible answers: A poultice of hot, wild onion was used to treat a swelling on the neck of Jean Baptiste. Another poultice made from the root of Cowes and ginger was used to treat a knife wound on the leg of John Potts.
16. Answers will vary depending on where you live.