

Unit- Westward Expansion

**Lesson #4 Ideas of the West**

**Essential Questions:**

- What ideas and questions led Jefferson to seek out information of the land further west?
- What did Americans think the country looked like in 1800; both in the east and the west?

**Sourcing--**

*Have a student on the overhead display the following:*

- Circle who wrote the ordinance...
- Underline twice when the document was written
- Put a box around the area that gives a general purpose for **why** the document was written

**Contextualization--**

1. Have students take the True/False Test on ideas of the West
2. Read the following background info on Jefferson & his ideas of the west at:

[http://www.earlyamerica.com/review/2004\\_summer\\_fall/jefferson.htm](http://www.earlyamerica.com/review/2004_summer_fall/jefferson.htm)

**Comprehension--**

While reading the letter from Jefferson to Lewis, have students complete a TO SEEK AND TO FIND LIST of the ideas/things that Jefferson wanted Lewis to either do or find as he explored the land west of the Mississippi River.

**Corroboration--**

Several corroborating pieces can be found at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffwest.html>

**Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, June 20, 1803, Instructions**

To <Captain> Meriwether Lewis esq. Capt. of the 1st. regimt, of Infantry of the US. of A.

The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it as by it's course and communication with the waters of the Pacific ocean whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any other river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of commerce....

...Beginning at the mouth of the Missouri, you will take <careful> observations of latitude & longitude at all remarkable points on the river, & especially at the mouth of rivers, at rapids, at islands, & other places & objects distinguished by such <durable> natural marks & characters of a durable <nature> kind as that they may with certainty be recognized hereafter. The course of the river between these points of observation ma be supplied by the compass, the log-line & by time, corrected by the observations themselves. The variations of the compass too, in different places should be noticed...

...The commerce which may be carried on with the people inhabiting the line your will pursue, renders a knolege of those people important. You will therefore endeavour to make yourself acquainted <with> as far as a diligent pursuit of your journey shall admit, with the names of the nations & their numbers; the extent & limits of their possessions; their relations with other tribes of nations; their language, traditions, monuments; their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war, arts & the implements for these; their food, clothing, & domestic accomodations; the diseases prevalent among them, & the remedies they use; moral & physical circumstances which distinguish them from the tribes we know; peculiarities in their laws, customs & dispositions; and articles of commerce they may need or furnish & to what extent...

...Other objects worthy of notice will be the soil & face of the country it's growth & vegetable productions, especially those not of the US. the animals of the country generally, & especially those not known in the US. the remains & accounts of any which may be deemed rare or extinct; the mineral productions of every kind; but more particularly metals; limestone, pit-coal, & salt-petre; salines & mineral waters, noting the temperature of the last & such circumstances as may indicate their character; volcanic appearances; climate, as characterized by the thermometer, by the proportion of rainy, cloudy, & clear days, by lightening, hail, snow, ice, by the access & recess of frost, by the winds prevailing at different seasons, the dates at which particular plants put forth or lose their flower, or leaf, times of appearance of particular birds, reptiles or insects.

<Two copies of your notes at least & as many more as leisure will admit, should be made & confided to the care of the most trusty individuals of your attendants.>

Some account too of the path of the Canadian traders from the Missisipi, at the mouth of the Ouisconsing to where it strikes the Missouri, & of the soil and rivers in its <traverses> course, is desirable.

Should you reach the Pacific ocean inform yourself of the circumstances which may decide whether the furs of those parts may not be collected as advantageously at the head of the Missouri (convenient as is supposed to the waters of the Colorado & Oregon or Columbia) as at Nootka sound, or any other point of that coast; and that trade be consequently conducted through the Missouri & U.S. more beneficially than by the circumnavigation now practised....

Given under my hand at the city of Washington this 20th day of June 1803.\*  
... Th. J. Pr. U.S. of A.

(Contextualization Quiz--- [http://edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=297](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=297))

Have students number their papers from 1 to 10. For each item you name, they should write "T" if they believe the statement to be true, or "F" if they believe it to be false.

Give students a moment to write their response to each of the following statements, all beginning with:

**At the time Thomas Jefferson was living...**

- **there were woolly mammoths roaming the West.**
- **there was a tribe of blue-eyed Indians living in the West who spoke Welsh, the language of people from Wales, a region on the west coast of the island of Great Britain.**
- **there was a river or series of connected rivers, starting at the Mississippi, that crossed the western mountains and reached the Pacific Ocean.**
- **the Blue Ridge Mountains were taller than the Rocky Mountains.**
- **the West had many erupting volcanoes.**
- **unicorns could be found in the West.**
- **there were mountains in the West made of undissolved salt.**
- **some beavers in the West were seven feet tall.**
- **buffaloes were friendly and had slim waists.**
- **Peruvian llamas roamed the West.**

When the quiz is over, tell the students that though all of these statements are false, it is likely that Thomas Jefferson believed many of them to be true because such "facts" were included in books in his library. (Note: The students can put the quiz away. No one will ever have to share answers.)

According to [Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery](#), maps of the West proved as fictitious as the books in Jefferson's library. European geographers, for example, drew maps depicting California as an island. Other maps showed the Rocky Mountains to be narrow and undaunting. Share with the class a copy of [The Aaron Arrowsmith Map of 1802...](#)

[http://iris.lib.virginia.edu/infocomm/LEWIS/test/show\\_item2.pl?template=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lib.virginia.edu%2Fspeccol%2Fexhibits%2Flewis\\_clark%2Ffig\\_html%2FMrSid\\_Tplt.html&width=435&height=189&levels=6%0D%0A&lastx=3477&lasty=1499&originx=0&originy=0&lastlevel=4&image=images%2FArrowsmith\\_Part\\_1\\_final.sid&fullwidth=6957%0D%0A&fullheight=3011%0D%0A&style=test&ref=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lib.virginia.edu%2Fspeccol%2Fexhibits%2Flewis\\_clark%2Fplanning3.html&head=%27Arrowsmith%3A+A+Map+Exhibiting+all+the+New+Discoveries+in+the+Interior+Parts+of+North+America%27&ft=no&level=4&size=2&image.x=260&image.y=107](http://iris.lib.virginia.edu/infocomm/LEWIS/test/show_item2.pl?template=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lib.virginia.edu%2Fspeccol%2Fexhibits%2Flewis_clark%2Ffig_html%2FMrSid_Tplt.html&width=435&height=189&levels=6%0D%0A&lastx=3477&lasty=1499&originx=0&originy=0&lastlevel=4&image=images%2FArrowsmith_Part_1_final.sid&fullwidth=6957%0D%0A&fullheight=3011%0D%0A&style=test&ref=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lib.virginia.edu%2Fspeccol%2Fexhibits%2Flewis_clark%2Fplanning3.html&head=%27Arrowsmith%3A+A+Map+Exhibiting+all+the+New+Discoveries+in+the+Interior+Parts+of+North+America%27&ft=no&level=4&size=2&image.x=260&image.y=107)

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