

Is There a Northwest Passage?

In the year 1803, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to lead an expedition. Its mission was to find a northwest passage—a water route—from what was then the United States to the Pacific Ocean.

Shortly before, representatives to France had arranged for the Louisiana Purchase. This was a huge parcel of land that included all or major portions of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Montana. The United States paid only fifteen million dollars to Napoleon and France for this land.

The original party of thirty-one people included Clark's slave, York. Lewis brought along his Newfoundland dog, Seaman. They left St. Louis, Missouri, which was then the western boundary of the United States, in May of 1804. They would not return to civilization until September of 1806. They began their journey up the Missouri River with one keelboat. It had a pointed bow, sails, a cabin, cargo compartments, and running boards where men walked and pushed with long poles. If the wind was blowing in the right direction, the sails were helpful. The party also used canoes and pirogues (hollowed-out logs).

In the winter of 1804, Toussaint Charbonneau and his wife, Sacagawea, were hired as interpreters. Members of the party spoke seven languages among themselves: Indian sign language, English, French, Hidatsa, Shoshone, Omaha, and Shawnee. In Montana, the party met up with Flathead Indians. One of the captains first spoke in English, and one of the men translated to French. Charbonneau then translated to Hidatsa, and Sacagawea translated to Shoshone. Finally, a ten-year-old boy translated to Flathead for the Indian chiefs.

Incredibly, when the expedition ended after almost two-and-a-half years, only one member had died. He died three months into the journey, probably from acute appendicitis. Lewis's dog, Seaman, survived. The expedition never found the northwest passage because one didn't exist.

Reading Comprehension

1. In paragraph one, the word *expedition* means _____.
 - A. a trip to explore
 - B. something that needs to be done quickly
 - C. a party
 - D. none of the above
2. Number these events in the order they took place.
 - ___ The expedition left St. Louis, Missouri.
 - ___ Captains Lewis and Clark were commissioned by Thomas Jefferson.
 - ___ Representatives of the United States arrange for the Louisiana Purchase.
 - ___ One member of the expedition died.
3. The Louisiana Purchase included these states:
 - A. Missouri, Florida, and Iowa
 - B. Arkansas, Texas, Kansas, and Missouri
 - C. North Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and Idaho
 - D. none of the above
4. Which of the following best defines the word *parcel* in paragraph two?
 - A. an amount of land
 - B. a wrapped package
 - C. a piece of food
 - D. none of the above
5. Which of the following might best tell why President Jefferson and others were interested in finding a northwest passage?
 - A. They had never been to the Pacific Ocean.
 - B. They wanted to make trade by boat with foreign countries easier.
 - C. People wanted to be able to take long boat rides.
 - D. The United States wanted to be the first to find the passage.

Job Chart

In my house we have five children. I am the oldest; Justin is four years younger. Whitney, the only girl, is in fourth grade, and Isaac and Marcus are twins. They are in kindergarten. Mom says they are a whirlwind.

In my house we make our beds every day. We also have a job chart because Mom says things get messy and dirty really fast around here. This is what our job chart looks like. (We get Sundays off!)

	Jordan	Whitney	Justin	Isaac	Marcus
Monday	Vacuum living room and hall	Dust living room and family room	Wash dishes	Dry dishes	Take out garbage
Tuesday	Wash dishes	Clean children's bathroom	Vacuum family room	Sweep kitchen floor	Dry dishes
Wednesday	Take out garbage	Wash dishes	Dry dishes	Pick up family room	Clean bathroom mirror
Thursday	Wash dishes	Vacuum living room and hall	Sweep kitchen floor	Take out garbage	Dry dishes
Friday	Vacuum and dust family room	Take out garbage	Dust living room	Clean bathroom mirror	Sweep kitchen floor
Saturday	Clean children's bathroom	Wash dishes	Take out garbage	Dry dishes	Pick up family room

Reading Comprehension

- Which of the following statements is true based on the information given?
 - Everyone has one job to do each day.
 - Marcus and Isaac are good workers.
 - Whitney's jobs are easier because she is a girl.
- From the story you can tell that _____.
 - the narrator is a boy named Jordan
 - Whitney is nine years old
 - boys are messier than girls
- The main idea of this narrative is _____.
 - the house is messy and dirty
 - everyone helps to keep the house clean
 - Sundays the house is a disaster area
- A good title for this story would be _____.
 - "The Disaster on Hill Street"
 - "Cooperation at Home"
 - "How to Make a Job Chart"
- In paragraph one, another meaning for *whirlwind* would be _____.
 - delight
 - breeze
 - very messy
 - comfort

A Jack-of-All-Trades

Interviewer: No other American has done so many things so well. Tell us about some of your accomplishments.

Mr. Franklin: One thing I am most pleased with is that I am the only person who signed all four of these key documents in American history: the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Alliance with France, the Treaty of Peace with Great Britain, and the Constitution of the United States.

Interviewer: Mr. Franklin, can you please tell us a little about your early years?

Mr. Franklin: I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 17, 1706, the sixteenth of seventeen children. After I spent two years in school, my father needed me in his candle shop. So I taught myself algebra, geometry, grammar, and the sciences. I also learned several languages, including French, German, and Spanish. I tried to practice what I wrote in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

Interviewer: Can you tell us about your most famous experiment?

Mr. Franklin: Yes, that would be the electrical experiment at Philadelphia in 1752. I flew my homemade kite in a thunderstorm to prove that lightning is electricity.

Interviewer: And did you prove it, Mr. Franklin?

Mr. Franklin: You bet I did! That lightning struck a pointed wire I had fastened on the kite. Next, it traveled down the kite string to a key fastened at the end, and then it caused a spark. After that, I invented the lightning rod. It helped keep buildings and homes from burning down if they were struck by lightning. The rod worked—it prevented my own home from being damaged. You know what I say, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Reading Comprehension

1. Which of these statements is an opinion?
 - A. No other American has done so many things so well.
 - B. After I spent two years in school, my father needed me in his candle shop.
 - C. I flew my homemade kite in a thunderstorm to prove that lightning is electricity.
2. Because he had to work in his father's candle shop,
 - A. he wrote a book of sayings.
 - B. Ben flew a kite in a thunderstorm.
 - C. Ben was only able to go to school for two years.
3. The author uses an interview format mainly to
 - A. inform people about American history.
 - B. entertain readers with Mr. Franklin's wit.
 - C. explain that Benjamin Franklin was able to do many things well.
4. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is one way to say
 - A. a lightning rod prevents fires.
 - B. preventing something bad is better than trying to fix it after it happens.
 - C. a cure weighs more than prevention.

How to Make Your Own Paper

Have you ever been stuck inside with nothing to do on a rainy day? To make things worse, your mom wants you to get the recycling ready to go to the recycling center. I have something for you that will "kill two birds with one stone." Did you know you can make your own paper and recycle too?

Step 1: Get some cardboard egg cartons, newspaper, or scrap paper. Then tear the cartons or paper into small pieces. You should have an adult help you with the rest of the steps.

Step 2: Put a little water in a large, heavy pan. Then add the paper pieces and some detergent. There is no exact recipe—papermaking is not rocket science.

Step 3: Cook for two to three hours on the stove on low. Be sure to stir often. Add a little water once in a while. This will keep the mixture from burning or sticking to the pan. When the paper is mushy and time is up, take the pan off the stove. Turn off the burner.

Step 4: When the mush is cool, blend small amounts in a blender using the puree button. Do this until it is smooth.

Step 5: Next, you might want to add a little water to the mix and a touch of food coloring, a little glitter, or some confetti. When your mixture is the way you want it, put an old window screen over the kitchen sink. Spread the mush evenly onto the screen and flatten the mixture with your hands to squeeze out the water and shape the paper.

Step 6: While this is draining, put layers of newspaper down on a flat, towel-covered surface. Next, carefully flip the screen over onto the newspaper. Then put more newspaper and towels on top.

Step 7: Finally, cover with heavy books and wait twenty-four hours. Remove the books and newspaper. Peel off the handmade paper, and place it on a flat surface for twenty-four more hours. Now it is ready to make into whatever you can imagine.

Reading Comprehension

1. In paragraph one, the phrase "kill two birds with one stone" is another way to say
 - A. your mom is killing any fun with chores.
 - B. you can throw rocks at birds outside in the rain.
 - C. get the recycling done and do something fun at the same time.
2. In step two, the clause "papermaking is not rocket science" probably means
 - A. rocket scientists don't make paper.
 - B. it is easy, and you don't have to be exact.
 - C. you don't need paper in space.
3. Number the following steps in the order they are done.
 - ___ Blend small amounts in the blender.
 - ___ Spread the mush evenly onto a screen.
 - ___ Tear the cartons or paper.
 - ___ Turn off the burner.
4. To keep the mixture from burning or sticking, you should
 - A. add water.
 - B. stir often.
 - C. cool the mixture.
5. The author's purpose in this article is
 - A. to explain how to make homemade paper.
 - B. to entertain you while it rains.
 - C. to persuade you to do the recycling.