

# Were Lewis and Clark Respectful of the Native Americans they Encountered on their Journey?



Overview: While Lewis and Clark were the first Americans to see much of what would become the western United States, those same lands had long been occupied by native peoples. This DBQ asks if Lewis and Clark were respectful of those Native Americans they encountered.

## The Documents:

- Document A: Jefferson's Letter to Meriwether Lewis
- Document B: William Clark's Diary Entries (1)
- Document C: TIME Magazine Article
- Document D: William Clark's Diary Entries (2)

## Were Lewis and Clark respectful of the Native Americans they encountered on their journey?

The Lewis and Clark Expedition, also known as the Corps of Discovery Expedition, was the first American expedition to cross what is now the western portion of the United States, departing in May, 1804 from St. Louis on the Mississippi River, making their way westward through the continental divide to the Pacific coast.

The expedition was commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson shortly after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, consisting of a select group of U.S. Army volunteers under the command of Captain Meriwether Lewis and his close friend Second Lieutenant William Clark. Their perilous journey lasted from May 1804 to September 1806. The primary objective was to explore and map the newly acquired territory, find a practical route across the Western half of the continent, and establish an American presence in this territory before Britain and other European powers tried to claim it.

The campaign's secondary objectives were scientific and economic: to study the area's plants, animal life, and geography, and establish trade with local Indian tribes. With maps, sketches and journals in hand, the expedition returned to St. Louis to report their findings to Jefferson.

According to Jefferson himself, one goal was to find "the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce." Jefferson also placed special importance on declaring U.S. sovereignty over the land occupied by the many different tribes of Native Americans along the

Missouri River, and getting an accurate sense of the resources in the recently completed Louisiana Purchase.

Although the expedition did make notable contributions to science, scientific research itself was not the main goal of the mission.

References to Lewis and Clark "scarcely appeared" in history books even during the United States Centennial in 1876 and the expedition was largely forgotten. Lewis and Clark began to gain new attention around the start of the 20th century. Both the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, in St. Louis, and the 1905 Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition, in Portland, Oregon, showcased Lewis and Clark as American pioneers. However, the story remained relatively shallow—a celebration of US conquest and personal adventures—until the mid-century, since which time it has been more thoroughly researched and retold in many forms to a growing audience.

A complete and reliable set of the expedition's journals was finally compiled by Gary E. Moulton in 2004. In the 2000s the bicentennial of the expedition further elevated popular interest in Lewis and Clark. Today, no U.S. exploration party is more famous, and no American expedition leaders are more instantly recognizable by name.

Now you must evaluate whether Lewis and Clark completed their mission while maintaining a respectful relationship with the Native Americans. Examine the documents that follow and answer the question: *Were Lewis and Clark respectful of the Native Americans they encountered on their journey?*



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Source:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis\\_and\\_Clark\\_Expedition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_and_Clark_Expedition)

## Understanding the Question and Prebucketing

1. What is the question being asked in this DBQ?
2. In this DBQ, are there any words that need clarification?
3. Restate the question in your own words.

### Prebucketing

**Directions:** As you analyze the documents that follow, determine which bucket/analytic category is supported by the evidence in the document. Place the letter of the document in the bucket.

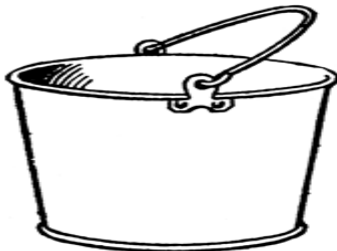


Lewis & Clark WERE respectful Lewis

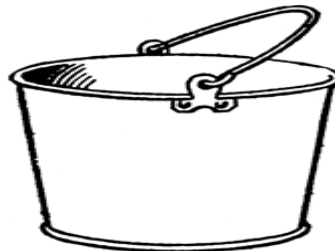


Clark were NOT respectful

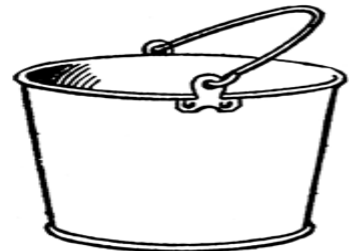
**OR**



Reason #1 Lewis and Clark were/were not respectful of Native Americans



Reason #2 Lewis and Clark were/were not respectful of Native Americans



Reason #3 Lewis and Clark were/were not respectful of Native Americans

## Document A: Jefferson's Letter to Meriwether Lewis (ORIGINAL)

To Meriwether Lewis esq. Capt. of the 1st regimt. of infantry of the U. S. of A.:

....

In all your intercourse with the natives, treat them in the most friendly & conciliatory manner which their own conduct will admit; allay all jealousies as to the object of your journey, satisfy them of its innocence, make them acquainted with the position, extent, character, peaceable & commercial dispositions of the U.S. of our wish to be neighborly, friendly & useful to them, & of our dispositions to a commercial intercourse with them; confer with them on the points most convenient as mutual emporiums, and the articles of most desireable interchange for them & us....

If a few of their influential chiefs, within practicable distance, wish to visit us, arrange such a visit with them, and furnish them with authority to call on our officers, on their entering the U.S to have them conveyed to this place at the public expense. If any of them should wish to have some of their young people brought up with us, & taught such arts as may be useful to them, we will receive, instruct & take care of them. Such a mission, whether of influential chiefs or of young people, would give some security to your own party. Carry with you some matter of the kinexox; inform those of them with whom you may be, of it'[s] efficacy as a preservative from the small-pox; & instruct & encourage them in the use of it. This may be especially done wherever you winter.

Th. Jefferson  
Pr. U.S. of America

*Source: The passage above is from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis on June 20, 1803. The letter gives detailed instructions on how Lewis and Clark should treat Native Americans.*

## Document B: William Clark's Diary Entries (ORIGINAL)

**January 5, 1805**

a Buffalow Dance (or Medeson) (Medecine) for 3 nights passed in the 1st Village, a curious Custom the old men arrange themselves in a circle & after Smoke[ing] a pipe which is handed them by a young man, Dress[ed] up for the purpose, the young men who have their wives back of the Circle go [each] to one of the old men with a whining tone and request the old man to take his wive (who presents [herself] necked except a robe) and -- the Girl then takes the Old Man (who verry often can scarcely walk) and leades him to a convenient place for the business, after which they return to the lodge; if the old man (or a white man) returns to the lodge without gratifying the Man & his wife, he offers her again and again; it is often the Case that after the 2d time without Kissing the Husband throws a new robe over the old man &c. and begs him not to dispise him & his wife (We Sent a man to this Medisan Dance last night, they gave him 4 Girls) all this is to cause the buffalow to Come near So that they may Kill them.

*Source: All the men on the journey kept diaries about their experiences. Above are two entries from William Clark's diary. The first describes the ritual of the "Buffalo Dance" among the Mandan Indians.*

## Document C: *Time Magazine* Article (ORIGINAL)

Prairie grass ripples along the shores of North Dakota's Lake Sakakawea, and a fat rainbow shimmers overhead. Here, if Amy Mossett has her way, an \$11 million interactive museum will soon welcome visitors to the Lewis and Clark trail. Mossett, tourism director for the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara tribes, is building replica earth lodges and planning overnight sleep-in-a-teepee packages with Indian food, cultural and environmental hikes, buffalo-hide painting and talks on tribal trade networks — insect repellent included. Her message: "Come and meet the descendants of the people who provided shelter to Lewis and Clark."

If the Mandan are as friendly today as they were 200 years ago, their neighbors the Teton Sioux, who were bad-tempered in their encounters with Lewis and Clark, remain almost as testy. Traditionalists fear that tourists will loot sacred grave sites. And while the tribe is seeking money for roadside panels (informative signs) and cultural centers, the message will be mixed. "Our people have for too long put on beads and feathers and danced for the white man," says Ronald McNeil, a great-great-great grandson of Chief Sitting Bull. "Yes, we'll show how our ancestors lived when Lewis and Clark came up the trail. But then we must say what happened to them since. I'm tired of playing Indian and not getting to be an Indian."

With conflicting emotions running deep among the tribes, Lewis and Clark supporters hope to bridge the divide by advertising the expedition as "a journey of mutual discovery." Their fear: that Indian protests will ruin the festivities. The National Park Service has chosen a Mandan-Hidatsa, Gerard Baker, to be superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. His traveling exhibit, "Corps of Discovery II," will be "a tent of many voices," he says, focusing on native cultures and their "hope for the future."

It's all very inclusive, but these aren't Disney Indians. "We're not celebrating Lewis and Clark," says Tex Hall, president of the American Congress of Indians, who is scheduled to speak at the January launch of the commemoration at Monticello, in Charlottesville, Va. "Still, people are making money on this, so don't leave out the Indians. It's an opportunity for us to tell our story." And to revive cultures that are slipping away. In Oregon, the Umatilla tribe, whose members told Clark they thought the explorers were "supernatural and came down from the clouds," wants funds for a language-immersion program, as only a handful of tribe members still speak their native language fluently. For more than a century, the history of Lewis and Clark's encounters with the 58 tribes along the trail has been defined by the white men's journals. The Mandan, who fed them, danced with them and offered them sexual favors over the bitterly cold winter of 1804-05, were described as good neighbors. The Lemhi Shoshone, Lewis wrote, were "not only cheerful but even gay, fond of gaudy dress ... generous with the little they possess, extremely honest ... " He admired the Chinook for their canoes, "remarkably neat, light and well adapted for riding high waves" but ridiculed their "well-known treachery."

Today Indians are looking to their own oral histories, as well as reading between the lines of the journals, to re-interpret what happened. Says Ben Sherman, president of the Western American Indian Chamber in Denver: "The upcoming events portray Clark as the benevolent protector of Indians — that's propagandist baloney." The tragic aftermath: as Governor of the Missouri Territory and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Clark presided over President Thomas Jefferson's land-grab policy, which some historians call the cause of "cultural genocide" and "ethnic cleansing."

In his journal, Lewis called the Blackfeet "a vicious lawless and rather an abandoned set of wretches." But today's Blackfeet want no one to forget that two of their warriors were killed in a skirmish sparked by Lewis' talk of selling arms to enemy tribes. "We knew, 'There goes the neighborhood,'" says tribe member James Craven, a professor at Clark University in Vancouver, Washington. Political mistakes also fueled a conflict with the Teton Sioux, whom Clark later called "the vilest miscreants of the savage race." LaDonna Bravebull, a Standing Rock tour guide, says her ancestors' viewpoint was, "We're not taking your trinkets and your great white father. I don't think so!"

Looking back, the Sioux had it right. Jefferson had told Lewis to inform "those through whose country you will pass" that "henceforth we become their fathers and friends, and that we shall endeavor that they shall have no cause to lament the change." But whites brought diseases that killed as many as 90% of some tribes' members. Most of the tribes Lewis and Clark encountered were forced off the rivers that supported their trade and culture and were herded onto reservations with poor soil. Today a third of Native Americans live below the poverty line, and half are unemployed.

The challenge for tribes is to share this history without causing "compassion fatigue" in the tourists they hope to attract. One thing that unites Lewis and Clark enthusiasts and cynics is the growing revival of Native American traditions. For visitors, tribal culture offers a glimpse of the American past. For Indians, it is key to their survival as distinct peoples. At the Boys and Girls Club on Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota, the posters read "Tradition, not Addiction." At an Indian Health Service clinic in Mobridge, S.D., teenage methamphetamine users are introduced to the sweat lodge. The Cheyenne River Sioux run a herd of more than 2,000 buffalo and distribute meat to tribe members, while the Lower Brule Sioux are planning a buffalo museum.

At Standing Rock, the combative past survives in surnames. On radio station KLND — that's Lakota, Nakota, Dakota — the news is from *Mike Kills Pretty Enemy*, the music from *Virgil Taken Alive*. Last month tribe members gathered near the grave site of Sitting Bull, General George Custer's conqueror, to pray at the graves of long-ago chiefs — Thunderhawk, Rain-in-the-Face, Running Antelope. A package event for tourists? Hardly. The Indians got there on horseback and camped in the cold. They wore jeans, t-shirts and sunglasses. When they set fire to a wad of sage, in a purification ritual, it was in a Folger's coffee can. And the graveside speeches touched on the plague of alcoholism and suicide among reservation youth. "We want our children to be proud they are descendants of chiefs," says Sitting Bull kinsman McNeil. "So when they play cowboys and Indians, they'll all want to be Indians."

Indian pride and Indian politics could complicate the Lewis and Clark tribute. In April when 130 tribal delegates gathered in Lewiston, Idaho, at the Lewis and Clark council, the tone veered sharply off the official "reconciliation" trail. The group called on the Federal Government to extend legal recognition to the Chinook, Clatsop and Monacan tribes, noting "their pivotal role in the success of the expedition." Recognition brings federal aid as well as sovereignty — and the right to build casinos. Another resolution condemned vandalism of sacred sites and robbing of Indian graves as "acts of terrorism," adding that the increase in Lewis and Clark visitors could result in "cultural resource desecration [of] catastrophic proportions."

In recent years, Standing Rock's former historic-preservation officer, Tim Mentz, reburied remains from 438 Indian graves that had been disturbed. As federal officials have tinkered with the water levels of the Missouri River, long-submerged Indian villages have resurfaced, luring robbers seeking to profit from a black market in bones and artifacts. "We are not archaeological specimens," says Mentz angrily. Unfortunately his enthusiasm went too far for some tribal officials. Mentz was fired last May. His offense: refusing to uncover hillside graves to make way for a road to the reservation casino.

Many of those graves are Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, village tribes that lived along the Missouri in what is now Standing Rock, when the Sioux were nomadic warriors. But with smallpox destroying their populations, the Indian farmers were herded north to Fort Berthold reservation. There they rebuilt their villages, only to be moved again in 1953 when Garrison Dam flooded their rich bottomlands. If they see an opportunity in the Lewis and Clark commemoration, it is because culture and economics are intertwined. The image of Amy Mossett dressed up as Sacagawea graces North Dakota tourist posters, but she says she isn't "playing Indian." And her teepee sleepovers and earth-lodge exhibits are part of something more significant than attracting tourist dollars.

Like more and more Native Americans, Mossett is reviving traditional culture in her daily life. Three years ago she began growing a garden with a tribal elder to reproduce the ancient crops that Lewis and Clark once enjoyed. "You can't buy Mandan blue corn flour in the grocery store," she says. She is taking a course in porcupine-quill embroidery. And her teenage daughters are studying the Hidatsa language in school. "Our tribes have survived catastrophic events in the past 200 years," she says. "But if we grieve forever, we will never move forward."

*Source: The passage above comes from an article published in Time Magazine in July 2002.*



## **Document D: William Clark's Diary Entries (ORIGINAL)**

**May 11, 1806**

we were crowded in the Lodge with Indians who continued all night and this morning Great numbers were around us. The One Eyed Chief arrived and we gave him a medal of the small size and spoke to the Indians through a Snake boy Shabono and his wife. we informed them who we were, where we were came from & our intentions towards them, which pleased them very much

**August 17, 1806**

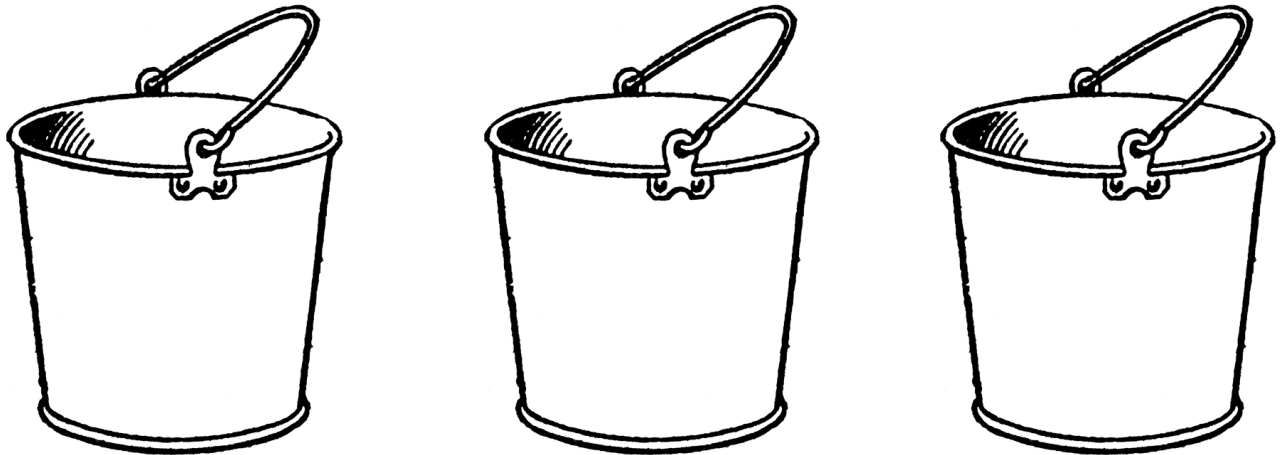
we also took our leave of T. Charbono, his Snake Indian wife and their child who had accompanied us on our route to the Pacific Ocean in the capacity of interpreter and interpreter...I offered to take his little son a beautiful promising child who is 19 months old to which they both himself & wife were willing provided the child had been weaned. they observed that in one year the boy would be sufficiently old to leave his mother & he would then take him to me if I would be so friendly as to raise the child for him in such a manner as I thought proper, to which I agreed &c.

*Source: Many people have heard the name of Sacagawea, the Native American woman who (with her husband and newborn baby) accompanied Lewis and Clark on their journey and served as a translator. Above are Clark's diary entries about Sacagawea.*

## Bucketing—Getting Ready to Write

### Bucketing

Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write final bucket labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents where they belong. It is legal to put a document in more than one bucket.

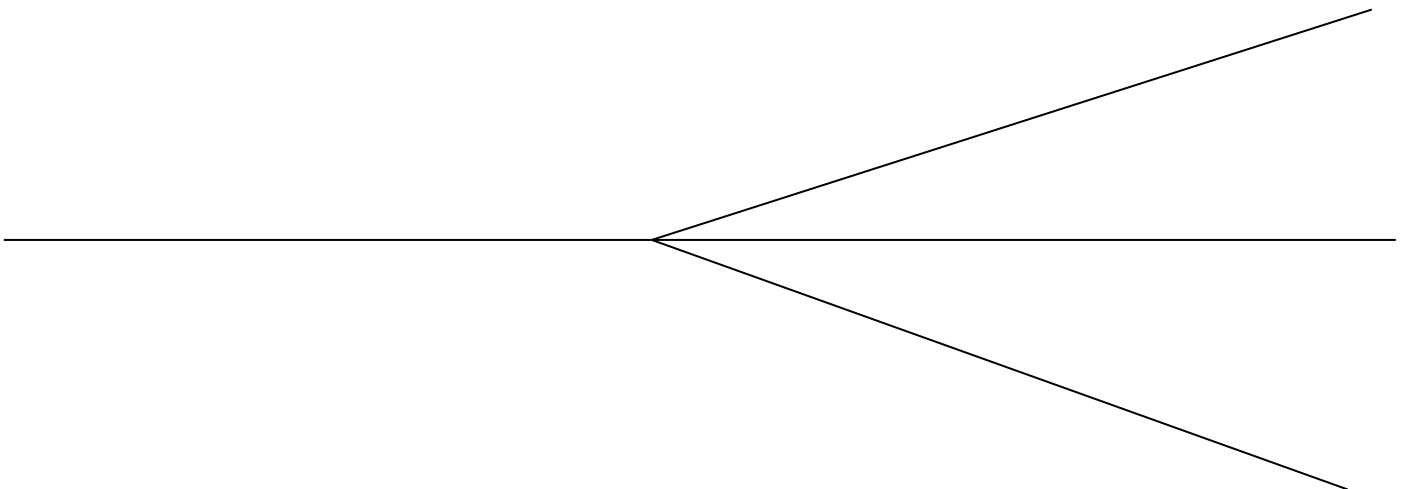


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### Thesis Development and Roadmap

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and roadmap. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the DBQ question. The roadmap is created from your bucket labels and lists

The topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.



ORGANIZING THE EVIDENCE

Use this space to write your main points and the main points made by the other side.

**Lewis and Clark were respectful: List the 3 main points/evidence that support this side.**

1) From Document \_\_\_\_\_:

2) From Document \_\_\_\_\_:

3) From Document \_\_\_\_\_:

**Lewis and Clark were NOT respectful: List the 3 main points/evidence that support this side.**

1) From Document \_\_\_\_\_:

2) From Document \_\_\_\_\_:

3) From Document \_\_\_\_\_:

**Coming to Consensus STARTING NOW, YOU MAY ABANDON YOUR ASSIGNED POSITION AND ARGUE FOR EITHER SIDE. Use the space below to outline your group's agreement. Your agreement should address evidence and arguments from both sides.**

## DBQ Essay

### Introductory Paragraph

**Attention Grabber** (One to two sentences—should be done at the end stage of planning)

**Background**—Provide Time/Place/Story (2-3 Sentences) (Cover who, what, when, where, how. Reword historical context.

**Restate Question** with key words defined.

**Thesis**—Take a position, the thesis answers the DBQ Question (this is your chicken leg).

**Roadmap**—introduce the reasons you are taking this stance

Reason 1:

Reason 2:

Reason 3:

## Body Paragraphs

Topic Sentence—Reason 1 (first chicken toe)

3 pieces of evidence from Documents and outside information to back up Reason 1.

12

Topic Sentence –Reason 2 (second chicken toe)

3 pieces of evidence from Documents and outside information to back up Reason 2.

Topic Sentence—Reason 3 (third chicken toe)

3 pieces of evidence from Documents and outside information to back up Reason 3.

13

### Conclusion

Restate thesis. Use the thesis sentence and then the historical context in your own words. Relate to your life or today's world. Or address counter argument.



