

The Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1803-1806
Timeline of Events

1801-1802	Meriwether Lewis serves as private secretary and aide-de-camp for President Jefferson; Lewis offered leadership of expedition
<u>1803</u>	
January	Jefferson sends request for \$2,500 for expedition to Congress, Congress approves.
January to June	Lewis studies botany, medicine, astronomy, etc. in Washington, Virginia, and Philadelphia
June 20	Jefferson writes specific instructions to Lewis outlining the "object of your mission" (see handout)
July	Lewis finds out that Napoleon sold Louisiana to the U.S.; Clark accepts Lewis' offer to co-command the "Corps of Discovery"
August	Keelboat leaves Fort Pitt, present-day Pittsburgh
September	At Wheeling, Virginia Lewis picks up ammunition and rifles that had been sent overland from the new armory at Harper's Ferry
October	Lewis meets Clark at Clarksville, Ohio (of all places)
November	Party stops at Fort Massac and Kaskaskia (to choose more personnel)
December	Lewis meets Spanish governor of Upper Louisiana, who refuses permission to let expedition continue until territory transferred
<u>1804</u>	
March	Ceremony finally takes place, transferring Louisiana Territory from Spain to France, then France to the U.S.
May	Clark takes boats and men up Missouri to St. Charles (May 14). Lewis joins party from St. Louis (May 20). Expedition leaves St. Charles (May 21); on May 23, they encounter their first Indian tribe, the Kickapoos
July	Expedition camps near Platte River
August	Sgt. Floyd dies on August 20 near today's Sioux City, Iowa (the only casualty of the trip); on August 25, Pvt. Gass is promoted to Sgt.
September	Tense meeting with the Teton Sioux who controlled river travel.
October	Expedition meets Mandan and Hidatsa tribes
November	Site chosen for winter quarters at Fort Mandan; Touissaint Charbonneau hired as interpreter; his Shoshone wife Sacagawea will accompany him

1805

February to March	Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau born to Sacagawea February 11; Four dugout canoes constructed
April	Expedition leaves Ft Mandan April 7; Corporal Warfington party departs with keelboat for St. Louis; (April 25) Expedition camps on Yellowstone, 2 mi. S. of Missouri River; April 27 party enters present-day Montana.
May	Arrive at Milk River on May 8; on May 20 the expedition reaches the Musselshell River; on May 31 they enter the White Cliffs area
June	Camped at Missouri - Marias Rivers on June 3; after a week, the south fork is chosen- the true Missouri; on June 13 Lewis finds the Great Falls of the Missouri, proving that the captains made the right choice
June to July	Expedition portages the five falls; the 18-mile portage takes one month (June 13 to July 13); the group departs July 15; on July 27 they reach and name the Three Forks of the Missouri; they take the Jefferson, the W. fork
August	On August 10 Lewis reaches forks of Beaverhead River and takes west fork; on August 12 they cross Continental Divide at Lemhi Pass; on August 13 they meet the Shoshones
August to September	They get badly-needed Shoshone horses, meet the Salish at Ross' Hole, and proceed over Bitterroot Mountains; almost starve and freeze in mountains; meet Nez Perce Indians on September 20
September to October	Travelers' Rest Camp, Lolo MT (Sept. 9-11); Canoe Camp, Idaho (Sept. 26-Oct.7); group begins water trip via Clearwater - Snake - Columbia River; Celilo [Great] Falls, Oregon (Oct. 22); The Dalles (Oct. 25)
November	Group reaches Pacific Ocean (Nov 6). Clark estimates they traveled 4142 mi from the mouth of Missouri; pick site for Ft Clatsop, winter quarters.
<u>1806</u>	
March	depart Ft. Clatsop to begin return trip on March 23. 1806
April	Cascades, Oregon/Washington (April 9-12); junction of Columbia and Walla Walla Rivers (April 27-30)
May to June	rejoin the Nez Perce who had been keeping their horses (May 3). Held up at Camp Chopunnish on Clearwater River (May 14-June 10) with the Nez Perce due to weather; depart for mountain crossing on June 10, but cannot find trail due to deep snow; return to Wieppe Prairie to hire 3 guides; set out again (June 24)
July	Camp at Travelers' Rest (June 30-July 3); party splits; Lewis heads northeast, Clark goes south; Lewis meets Blackfeet on Two Medicine River (July 26-27); ensuing fight kills one or two Blackfeet; Clark reaches Pompey's Pillar (July 25)
August to September	Two parties rendezvous at Point Reunion (North Dakota) on August 12; reach present-day Bismarck, ND on August 18; Omaha (Sept. 8); Kansas City (Sept. 15); Corps of Discovery returns to St. Louis September 23