

LEWIS & CLARK IN COLUMBIA RIVER COUNTRY



STUDENT ASSIGNMENT SHEET: THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF MERIWETHER LEWIS



Imagine the life of Meriwether Lewis after he completed the historic and famous expedition, which still bears his name. To think that he successfully traveled all that distance west and back 200 years ago. How well was he received upon his return? How did he adjust to life after the journey?

Why was he found dead only a few short years later?

Why did he die?

How did he die?

Engage

[Explore](#)

[Explain](#)

[Elaborate](#)

[Evaluate](#)

1. Read **The Mysterious Death of Meriwether Lewis**, a background information reading relevant to the death of Lewis. Print the worksheet linked below and answer questions to organize information gained through the above reading.

The Mysterious Death
of Meriwether Lewis

Student Worksheet: The Mysterious
Death of Meriwether Lewis

[Engage](#)

Explore

[Explain](#)

[Elaborate](#)

[Evaluate](#)

2. Explore three pieces of **testimony** relevant to the death of Lewis (linked below). Print the testimony worksheet and answer questions to organize information gained through the above reading.

Major James Neelly's
Letter, October 18, 1809

Alexander Wilson's
Letter, May 28, 1811

Gilbert Russell's Public
Statement, November 26, 1811

Explore: Testimony
Worksheet

3. Explore four **exhibits** relevant to the death of Lewis. Print the Exhibits Worksheet linked below and answer questions to organize information gained through the above reading.

Exhibits 1-4

Student Worksheet:
Exhibits

4. Explore three **theories** relevant to the death of Lewis. Print the Theories Worksheet linked below and answer questions to organize information gained through the above reading.

Engage	Explore	Explain	Elaborate	Evaluate
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1. Review the worksheets you have completed. Pay particular attention to possible connections between Theories and the information you have organized from the Prologue and Summary, Testimony, and Exhibits.
2. On your own sheet of paper, explain how Meriwether Lewis died using the theory you believe is:
 - a. The cause of death for Meriwether Lewis.
 - b. The suspect (who did it?)

Student Reading:
Theories

Student Worksheet:
Theories

Engage	Explore	Explain	Elaborate	Evaluate
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1. Now, almost as if you were to write the first paragraph of an essay, connect your explanation with evidence to support your thesis.
2. Print the organization worksheet linked below and elaborate or expand on the explanation for your choice of theories above.

Thesis Organizer
Worksheet

Engage	Explore	Explain	Elaborate	Evaluate
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1. Write a formal business letter to the NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE in which your purpose is to express your support of the exhumation of Meriwether Lewis' body for forensic analysis.
2. Access: <http://www.niefs.net/resumes/coverletter.htm> to use as an on-line cover letter generator.
3. Enter your name, your school's address (Note, "Province" also means state and "Postal Code" also means Zip Code.)
4. Enter all the appropriate information for "Step #2", leaving the first name blank, using "Sirs" for last name, None or Other for Salutation, "Director" for recipient's position, and "NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE" for organization. (Note, "Province" also means state and "Postal Code" also means Zip Code.)
5. The NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE mailing address can be found easily through a search on their web page – <http://www.nps.gov> .

6. In "STEP #3: BODY OF LETTER," your [introduction paragraph](#), you will express your support (as a forensic scientist) to exhume Meriwether Lewis' body in order to test the theories regarding his cause of death. Here, you will also indicate which theory you believe is most likely the correct one.

7. In "STEP #3: BODY OF LETTER," your [background paragraph](#), you will briefly summarize the date, location, the destination to where Lewis was traveling at the time, and why. Further, list the names of the people who were with him at his time of death. Next, hint at the variety of theories surrounding his cause of death.

8. In "STEP #3: BODY OF LETTER," your [summation and closing paragraph](#), you will write a final attempt to persuade the NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE Director to approve the exhumation you support. You will also thank the Director for reading your letter.

9. In "STEP #4: Choose a style for your letter," select **Style #2**.

10. Click on "**Create Cover Letter**." Button. Review the document you have created.

11. Click on "Edit" then "Select all." Copy and paste into a word processing document (Microsoft Word.)

12. Set [one inch margins](#) by clicking "File," then "page setup," then "margins."

13. Save and print the document.

14. Complete the letter by writing your [signature](#) above your typed name.

15. Turn in the all the worksheets and other pre-write material generated in this activity and the letter to your teacher.



"The Vote" by Roger Cooke portrays a camp scene with expedition members voting to decide the location of the winter campsite. William Clark is conducting the meeting while Meriwether Lewis records the votes.

Washington State Historical Society Collection.