

Discussion Guide

Use these questions to help guide discussion after reading “The Vote: ‘Station Camp,’ Washington” by Dayton Duncan.

1. Early in the article, Duncan mentions the fact that there were members of the Expedition who could not swim. Evidently, this was not one of the requirements of joining the Corps. If you were Thomas Jefferson and were selecting the people on whom you would place all of your hopes of finding the Northwest Passage, what would be the recruitment process and what skills or characteristics would you find essential?

Answers may vary. They may include personality traits, physical abilities or particular skills. Possible responses: good work ethic, healthy, strong, previous experience in the wilderness, leadership skills, cartography skills, medical skills, writing skills, language skills, hunting skills, canoe navigating skills, ability to get along with other members, etc.

2. Who did Lewis and Clark hope to meet when they reached the ocean?

English-speaking people (trade vessels)

3. What were some of the greatest challenges faced the Expedition by prior to the winter at Fort Clatsop?

- **Deciding whether or not the Marias River was the Missouri**
- **Nearly a month portaging around the Great Falls**
- **The slow ascent of the Jefferson and Beaverhead rivers**
- **Traveling through the Bitterroot Mountains in poor weather conditions and with little food**

4. What did Clark think he saw at Pillar Rock? What did he really see?

The Pacific Ocean; Gray’s Bay

5. What differences did the party notice between their canoes and those of the Indians? How might they have improved their ability to navigate the rough waters of the Columbia?

The Indian canoes were built to withstand huge ocean waves; the people were incredibly adept at navigating rough water. Answers will vary.

6. What name did Clark give to today's Point Ellice? Why?

Point Distress; they were not able to get around it for four days and it blocked their view of the Pacific Ocean.

7. Who visited the Corps with salmon as they waited out the storm? What was extraordinary about these people?

The Cathlamet indians; they had no trouble paddling through the huge waves that had stopped the Expedition from moving forward.

8. How did Cape Disappointment get its name? Why was it appropriate?

Cape Disappointment was given its name by English sea captain John Meares in 1788; he was not able to find the mouth of the Columbia; the Corps of Discovery was disappointed to not find the trade vessels that they were hoping to see here.

9. How many people chose to accompany Clark on his hike to the ocean? Would you have joined them or elected to stay behind? Why?

11 men; answers may vary.

10. What trade items did the Corps wish they had more of when they arrived at Station Camp? What article did they have to sacrifice to purchase sea otter pelts?

Blue beads; Sacagawea's belt of blue beads

11. What evidence of Indian trade with Europeans did the party find on their way to the ocean?

- **Indians with European goods**
- **Indians who could speak some English**
- **An Indian woman with the name J. Bowmon tattooed on her left arm**
- **Indians with venereal disease**
- **A Clatsop with red hair, light skin and freckles**

12. What nations had "claims" to the Northwest? Was Washington part of the Louisiana Purchase?

The United States and Great Britain had staked claims to the Northwest when their vessels first entered the mouth of the Columbia in 1792; No, the legal

boundary of the Louisiana Purchase extended only to the Rocky Mountains.

13. How did the party leave their mark at Station Camp?

They carved their names into trees.

14. What reasons may Lewis and Clark have had for deciding to conduct a vote on where to spend the winter? Do you agree with their decision?

Possible answers: the Corps may not have responded well to an order because many seemed very eager to leave the coast immediately, they felt a vote would strengthen the group and the decision, etc. Answers may vary.

15. What factors contributed to the party's decision to stay on the coast? Which do you think were given the most weight?

Milder weather, prospect of making salt, finding elk and seeing trade vessels, etc.; answers may vary.

16. Why is this vote at this moment in history so unique? Whose votes were particularly noteworthy and why?

The Corps of Discovery was a military unit, and thus, the captains could have simply issued an order. Sacagawea*, York, Toussaint Charbonneau* and Jean Baptiste LePage- a Native American woman, African American and two French-Canadians; they would not have been allowed to vote in the United States at this time.

***It should be noted that Sacagawea's opinion was recorded, though she was not actually counted in the final tally. No vote was recorded for her husband, Charbonneau, either, though his name is listed. The reasons for these omissions are unknown, but may be interesting to discuss in class. See In Their Words- The Vote for more information.**