

ZEBULON PIKE



BIOGRAPHY

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Zebulon Pike was born in New Jersey on January 5, 1779. He became a military man, like his father. He was stationed on the frontier in the Louisiana Territory, which had recently been purchased by the United States from France. In 1805, Pike looked for the source of the Mississippi River. He then looked for the sources of the Arkansas and Red rivers, and tried to make friendly contact with Native Americans.

In 1806, Pike embarked on his most famous expedition, known as the Pike Expedition. The main aim was to explore and map the southwestern area of the land purchased from France.

The expedition took Pike and his men across the Great Plains to the Rocky Mountains in what is now Colorado. Pike called the highest summit they saw 'Grand Peak', but it was later called Pikes Peak in honor of the explorer.

Pike and his men got lost while in Colorado. They wanted to travel on the Red River and join the Mississippi, but they ended up on the river they had originally traveled down. This meant they had wasted time and resources on a journey that got them nowhere. They had to travel through mountainous terrain to get back on track.

Pike ended up building a crude fort in southern Colorado. But he did not realize he was in territory that then belonged to the Spanish. Before long, Spanish soldiers captured Pike and his men, and took them to their leaders farther south. Pike's records of the expedition provided vital information about an area that had not been fully explored officially by the U.S. government until that point. His writing also became popular with later explorers.

In the end, Pike was released, and taken back to Louisiana in 1807. Now a captain, Pike saw action in the War of 1812. He was killed in Canada by retreating British soldiers on April 27, 1813.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'embarked'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'embarked' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'embarked'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'embarked'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'embarked' means.

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: summit	peak

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

In the Rocky Mountains, Pike saw the mountain peak that would later be called Pikes Peak.

The most famous expedition was the Pike Expedition in 1806-1807.

Zebulon Pike was born in 1779, and became a military man.

Pike and his men were then captured by the Spanish, although they were released.

The Pike Expedition crossed the Great Plains and reached the Rocky Mountains in Colorado.

Pike was stationed in the recently-acquired Louisiana Territory.

From there, Pike made exploratory expeditions to map the new territory.

Get to the facts

1 Where was Zebulon Pike first stationed?

2 When did the Pike Expedition set out?

3 What did Pike call Pikes Peak?

4 Who captured Pike and his men?

5 When did Pike return to Louisiana?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Pikes Peak

We had been trekking through mountain terrain for weeks. Before long we saw a great mountain peak rising before us. It must have been the tallest peak yet... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

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For example:

Key word – summit Synonym – peak

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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Get to the facts:

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- 2 When did the Pike Expedition set out?
- 3 What did Pike call Pikes Peak?
- 4 Who captured Pike and his men?
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Make a story...

Pikes peak

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(now complete the story)

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