

# Lewis and Clark: in the Rockies



## Comprehension

# Lewis and Clark: the Rockies

By September 1805, Lewis and Clark had led their expedition into the Rocky Mountains. The Rockies are a group of mountain ranges close together, and they were difficult to cross. This was partly because of the cold weather and snow, and partly because the men ran out of provisions and could not easily find food in the landscape.

Here are some diary entries by William Clark describing what happened when the expedition crossed a mountain range in the Rockies called the Bitterroot Range. Remember that they are written in the language of the time, and some words might look unfamiliar at first.

## **September 16, 1805:**

"the snow in the morning 4 inches deep on the old snow, and by night we found it from 6 to 8 inches deep...I have been wet and as cold in every part as I ever was in my life...men all wet cold and hungry. Killed a second colt which we Suped heartily on and thought it fine meat.

"To describe the road of this day would be a repetition of yesterday except the Snow which made it much worse to proceed as we had in many places to direct our selves by the appearance of the rubbings of the packs against the trees which have limbs quite low and bending downwards."

## **October 2, 1805 (writing about the crossing after they had made it):**

"We have nothing to eate but roots, which give the men violent pains in they bowels after eating much of them. As I walked out with me gun on the hills which is very steep & high, could kill nothing. Provisions all out, which compels us to kill one of our horses to eate (and make Suep for the Sick men)."

# 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 'heartily'.

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

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

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

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

Try this for other words, too. 

# 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: limbs	branches

# Sequencing

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

The men tried eating roots, but they gave them stomach pains.

In the morning, there were four inches of new snow.

All the men were cold and hungry.

In September 1805, Lewis and Clark led their expedition through the Rocky Mountains.

So they had to kill a horse and make it into soup to survive.

By night, the snow was between six and eight inches deep.



# Get to the facts

1 Who wrote the diary entries?

2 Which mountain range was the expedition crossing?

3 How deep was the snow by night-time?

4 What gave the men violent pains?

5 What did Clark take with him when he walked on the hills?

# Make a story...

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

## Lost in the mountains

Imagine you are one of Clark's men. You are desperate for food, so you leave camp and wander into the hills to see if you can find any food. Before long, you realise you can't see the camp anymore, and you don't know where you are... (now complete the story)

**Below is a plain text version for printing:**

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Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – limbs                      Synonym – branches

## Sequencing:

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

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- 2 Which mountain range was the expedition crossing?
- 3 How deep was the snow by night-time?
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## **Make a story...**

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Imagine you are one of Clark's men. You are desperate for food, so you leave camp and wander into the hills to see if you can find any food. Before long, you realise you can't see the camp anymore, and you don't know where you are... (now complete the story)

# Winter in the Rockies

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