

Fact or Fiction?

Name: _____

Below is a passage on Meriwether Lewis. On the following page is a chart with ten statements. Indicate whether each statement is fact or fiction.

Frontier Man

Meriwether Lewis was born on August 18, 1774, near Charlottesville, Virginia. Lewis grew up among the forests and wilderness of the Shenandoah Valley and developed a love of hunting and exploring. Lewis became a soldier at an early age and fought in the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. He soon became an officer in the Army and battled the Native Americans in the Northwest Territory of the new nation. Lewis became very educated about the Native Americans and even learned some of their languages.

Jefferson's Personal Secretary

As a neighbor and friend of the Lewis family, Thomas Jefferson appointed Meriwether Lewis as his personal secretary. He prepared Lewis for two years to explore the lands acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. Lewis studied plants, animals, and navigation at the University of Pennsylvania in preparation. Lewis invited William Clark to co-lead the expedition. Although Congress authorized Lewis as the captain of the expedition, he insisted that he and Clark be considered co-captains during the journey.

The Expedition

Lewis and Clark spent over two years exploring the new frontier, mapping the terrain, and learning about and trading with various Indian tribes. Lewis was considered an outstanding leader and was highly respected by the members of the Corps of Discovery. His journal, which recorded many (not all) of the events of the expedition, is one of the most important documents in American history. As Lewis and Clark made their way west, they were the first to confirm that there was no direct water passage across the continent (Northwest Passage).

Mysterious Death

After successfully establishing Fort Clatsop, Oregon, and after discovering over 300 new species of animals and plants throughout the Great Plains and western mountains, the pair returned as heroes. Meriwether Lewis was named the new governor of the Louisiana Territory. On October 11, 1809, Lewis was on his way to Washington D.C., on the famed Natchez Trace when he mysteriously died at a hotel.

	FACT	FICTION
Meriwether Lewis was actually a neighbor of Thomas Jefferson.		
Meriwether Lewis was never actually a military officer.		
Lewis insisted as serving as the sole Captain of the expedition.		
Thomas Jefferson invited William Clark to serve on the expedition.		
William Clark kept an important journal that documented the many discoveries during the expedition.		
Meriwether Lewis was considered an excellent leader.		
One of the discoveries of the Lewis and Clark expedition was that a Northwest Passage did not really exist.		
Lewis and Clark were able to document 300 new species of plants and animals.		
Following the expedition, Lewis was named President of the Louisiana Territory.		
Lewis and Clark were considered national heroes after returning from their adventure.		

Answers:

	FACT	FICTION
Meriwether Lewis was actually a neighbor of Thomas Jefferson.	X	
Meriwether Lewis was never actually a military officer.		X
Lewis insisted as serving as the sole Captain of the expedition.		X
Thomas Jefferson invited William Clark to serve on the expedition.		X
William Clark kept an important journal that documented the many discoveries during the expedition.		X
Meriwether Lewis was considered an excellent leader.	X	
One of the discoveries of the Lewis and Clark expedition was that a Northwest Passage did not really exist.	X	
Lewis and Clark were able to document 300 new species of plants and animals.	X	
Following the expedition, Lewis was named President of the Louisiana Territory.		X
Lewis and Clark were considered national heroes after returning from their adventure.	X	