

# The Lewis and Clark Dilemma: Good or Bad?

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Lewis and Clark meeting the Nez Perce. The statue is located on the campus of Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston.

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**Objective:** To discuss and analyze the historic and current questions about the effects of Lewis and Clark's expedition.

**Grade level:** Junior high or high school

**Time:** Two to three class periods for research, reading, and analysis.

**Activities:** Students will be divided into three research and debate groups to explore questions about the effects of Lewis and Clark's expedition. Within each group, students form pro and con positions to present to the class.

**Question 1:** Was the Lewis and Clark expedition a success in terms of relations with Native Americans? Subdivide group into pro and con.

1. Research ideas: Pro: look into examples of harmonious relations with the Mandans, help received from Nez Perce and Sacajawea's role which marked a good relationship between whites and native cultures. Con: find accounts of hostility between the Corps and the Blackfeet, the death of tribal chief in Washington D.C. and the killing of Nez Perce dogs for food.
2. Debate: Group presents findings in debate format.
3. Vote: Students in other groups vote on which argument was the strongest.

**Question 2:** Was Sacajawea a hero or did she create the beginning of the end for the Nez Perce by helping Lewis and Clark? Subdivide group into pro and con.

1. Research ideas: Pro: Compare to Squanto and Samoset, Indians who helped the Pilgrims; find current arguments favoring putting her on coin – reasons. Con: Compare to Dona Marina, Aztec Indian who betrayed her people and allowed Cortez to conquer them; find information on Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce War of 1877.

2. Debate: Group presents findings in debate format.
3. Vote: Students in other groups vote on which argument was the strongest.

**Question 3:** Should the bicentennial observance of Lewis and Clark be strictly limited to protect the environment or should free enterprise use the occasion to help the local economy? Subdivide group into pro and con.

1. Research ideas: Pro and Con: Read the Federal Government's brochure on regulations; read Native American ideas about nature vs. white cultural ideas about using nature; incorporate arguments from current issues over roadless areas.
2. Debate: Groups presents finding in debate format.  
Vote: Students in other groups vote on which argument