

# America's Wild West

## "Discovery of a Land" — Video Worksheet What Really Happened | National Geographic Series

### Section 1: Multiple Choice

1. What was the main idea behind the political concept of 'Manifest Destiny'?  
A) The U.S. should remain confined to the eastern seaboard  
B) It was America's God-given right to expand across the entire continent  
C) Native Americans deserved to keep all of their ancestral lands  
D) France had the right to claim the western territories  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How much did the United States pay France for the Louisiana Territory in 1803?  
A) \$5 million  
B) \$10 million  
C) \$15 million  
D) \$20 million  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Approximately how many square miles of land did the United States acquire through the Louisiana Purchase?  
A) About 250,000 square miles  
B) About 500,000 square miles  
C) About 828,000 square miles  
D) About 1.2 million square miles  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which president commissioned the Lewis and Clark Expedition?  
A) George Washington  
B) John Adams  
C) Thomas Jefferson  
D) James Madison  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the Corps of Discovery hoping to find as a primary geographical goal of their expedition?  
A) A mountain pass through the Rockies  
B) A water route (Northwest Passage) connecting the Mississippi to the Pacific  
C) New deposits of gold and silver  
D) Land suitable for cotton farming  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who was the Shoshone woman who served as a guide and interpreter for Lewis and Clark?  
A) Pocahontas  
B) Sacagawea  
C) Sequoyah  
D) Sitting Bull  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
7. According to the documentary, how did European powers legally justify claiming lands that were already inhabited by indigenous peoples?  
A) Through military conquest alone  
B) By paying Native Americans for their lands  
C) Through the 'Doctrine of Discovery'  
D) By establishing trading posts first  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which European nation sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States?

- A) Spain
- B) Great Britain
- C) France
- D) Portugal

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

9. York, who participated in the Lewis and Clark Expedition, held what status in American society at the time?

- A) A hired scout
- B) A French fur trader
- C) An enslaved man owned by William Clark
- D) A volunteer soldier

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

10. How long did the Lewis and Clark Expedition take from start to finish?

- A) About 6 months
- B) About 1 year
- C) About 2 years, 4 months
- D) About 4 years

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: True or False

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11. Before American settlers arrived, the western lands were largely empty and uninhabited.

Circle one: TRUE / FALSE

12. The Louisiana Purchase roughly doubled the size of the United States.

Circle one: TRUE / FALSE

13. Lewis and Clark successfully found an all-water route from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.

Circle one: TRUE / FALSE

14. The Lewis and Clark Expedition encountered and documented over 70 Native American tribes during their journey.

Circle one: TRUE / FALSE

15. York, who helped make the expedition successful, was rewarded with land and freedom after returning east.

Circle one: TRUE / FALSE

## Section 3: Short Answer

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16. Why did President Thomas Jefferson want to purchase land from France in 1803? Explain at least TWO of his reasons.

17. Describe what the documentary reveals about the lands west of the Mississippi River that was different from how many Americans viewed them at the time.

18. How did the Louisiana Purchase affect Native American peoples who were already living in that territory? Use specific details from the episode.

19. What were two important things Lewis and Clark were instructed to do during their expedition, besides finding a water route to the Pacific?

20. Why was Sacagawea's role in the Corps of Discovery considered so valuable? Give at least two reasons.

**Section 4: Critical Thinking: Write 2-3 sentences for each question.**

**21.** The episode is called 'Discovery of a Land.' Why might the word 'discovery' be considered misleading or even controversial? Whose perspective does it reflect — and whose does it ignore?

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**22.** Napoleon Bonaparte sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States partly because of military pressures in Europe and the failure of his army in Haiti. How does this show that events happening far away can have a major impact on American history?

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**23.** The documentary argues that the 'true story' of early America is different from what many people learned. What is one 'hidden truth' from this episode that surprised or challenged something you had previously believed? Explain why.

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**Bonus Reflection**

The documentary series is called What Really Happened. After watching this episode, do you think history textbooks do a good job telling the full story of westward expansion? Who benefits from the traditional telling of this history, and who gets left out? Write a thoughtful paragraph response.

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