

Famous Women
Selections from the Journal of William Clark
*(a work of historical fiction inspired by Clark's real journal
and biographies of Sacagawea)*

February 28, 1805

Today our party was joined by Charbonneau, the French **fur trader**,¹ and his family. I cannot imagine how we could succeed without them. Lewis and I are eager to go west. We do not fear the unknown. But we are glad to have with us guides who will allow us to speak with the natives. I am told that Charbonneau's Indian wife, Sacagawea, is familiar with these lands from her childhood. She will lead us through. She may prove more valuable than her husband!

August 17, 1805

This morning we met a friendly group of Shoshone Indians. We were surprised to learn the chief of this tribe was Sacagawea's brother! She has not seen her family in some five years. In truth, I feared she would leave our journey to stay with her tribe. Instead, she arranged for us to buy much-needed horses from the Shoshone. Then, she continued to lead us on our way. Her loyalty is **striking**.²



¹ **fur trader** – a person who buys and sells animal furs

² **striking** – noticeable; remarkable

October 19, 1805

Every day I am glad for the presence of Sacagawea and her baby. A group of men as large as ours might be thought a war party. However, when the Indians see a woman and child they know at once that we are friendly.

January 6, 1806

This morning some local Indians told us that a whale had been stranded on the beach just a few miles south of our fort. I assembled a group of men to go to the beach to collect whale **blubber**³ to help us through the winter. As we left, Sacagawea begged to come along. She said that she had helped us much and had a right to see the great waters we have traveled so long to reach. I could not disagree. Today Sacagawea set eyes for the first time on the great ocean of the west.

December 31, 1812

I have received word that Sacagawea died at Fort Manuel earlier this month, shortly after giving birth to a second child. Though six years have passed since our journey, I am filled with great sadness. In leading us across **uncharted**⁴ lands and back, Sacagawea gave much to our nation, more than she could ever have known.

August 16, 1812

It has been eight months since Sacagawea's death. The image of the baby boy she brought with her on our travels has not left my mind. Without Sacagawea to tell them of our adventure, I feared her children might never learn of the great gift she has given to our country. But the adoption has at last been settled. I am now the official guardian of Sacagawea's two children. I will tell them the stories that she now cannot. May God help me to be as good a parent to them as their mother would have been.

³ **blubber** – a thick layer of fat

⁴ **uncharted** – not represented on a map; unknown

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Who adopted Sacagawea's children after her death?
 - a. William Clark
 - b. Meriwether Lewis
 - c. Charbonneau, the French fur trader
 - d. the Shoshone Indians

2. Which of the following happened last?
 - a. Sacagawea and her husband joined Clark's group.
 - b. Sacagawea gave birth to her second child.
 - c. Clark's group bought horses from the Shoshone Indians.
 - d. Sacagawea saw the Pacific Ocean for the first time.

3. Clark writes of Sacagawea, "She may prove more valuable than her husband!" What does he mean by this?
 - a. Sacagawea's connections with the Shoshone Indians may be helpful to his group in avoiding attacks during its journey.
 - b. Sacagawea's familiarity with the area may be more useful to the group than her husband's knowledge and skills.
 - c. Sacagawea is a smart businesswoman who may be willing to use her skills to raise money for the group as it travels west.
 - d. Sacagawea can serve as a translator for the group in its dealings with the Shoshone Indians, but her husband knows only English.

4. In the second journal entry, why does Clark describe Sacagawea's loyalty as "striking?"
 - a. He considers it distracting and irritating.
 - b. He considers it exceptional and noteworthy.
 - c. He considers it unusual and suspicious.
 - d. He considers it a betrayal of her Shoshone tribe.

5. Which of the following best describes Clark's attitude toward Sacagawea?
 - a. nervous and fearful
 - b. angry and hostile
 - c. lighthearted and playful
 - d. impressed and caring

6. What are three ways in which Sacagawea helped Clark’s group on its trip?

7. What might have happened to the group without Sacagawea’s help?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

Sacagawea died _____ giving birth to her second child.

- a. before
- b. while
- c. instead of
- d. after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Sacagawea helped Lewis and Clark during their journey west by serving as a guide.

Who? _____

(did) What? helped Lewis and Clark

How? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** uncharted: not represented on a map; unknown.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 800

Featured Text Structure: Sequence – the writer provides an order of events or steps in a process

Passage Summary: This passage is a series of fictional journal entries by William Clark. They chronicle his journey west across North America, focusing on the help he and his party received from the Native American Sacagawea.

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 - a. nervous and fearful
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 - c. lighthearted and playful
 - d. **impressed and caring**

6. What are three ways in which Sacagawea helped Clark's group on its trip?

Suggested answer: Answers may vary. Students could mention Sacagawea's help as a guide through unfamiliar land, her assistance in obtaining horses from the Shoshone, and her role in preventing Clark's group from being seen by Indians as a threat.

7. What might have happened to the group without Sacagawea's help?

Suggested answer: Answers may vary. Students could mention that Clark's group might have gotten lost and been attacked by Indians.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

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Who? **Sacagawea**

(did) What? helped Lewis and Clark

How? **by serving as a guide**

When? **during their journey west**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** uncharted: not represented on a map; unknown.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.