TeachersFirst READING TREKS

Sacajawea

Teacher Guide

Access Reading Trek Map

Grade Level & Content Areas

Ages: 10–14
Grades: 5–8
Reading Level: 5th grade
Lexile Measure: 840L
Guided Reading Level: Y
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA): 60

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, social studies (including U.S. history, indigenous studies, geography, women's history, and cultural studies).

Synopsis of Book

Sacajawea by *Joseph Bruchac* is a historical novel that recounts the Lewis and Clark Expedition through alternating chapters from the perspectives of Sacajawea and Captain William Clark, incorporating excerpts from Clark's journals. Kidnapped from her Lemhi Shoshone community as a child and living among the Hidatsa, Sacajawea later traveled with the Corps of Discovery with her husband, Toussaint Charbonneau, and their infant son, Jean Baptiste. Sacajawea becomes an essential guide, cultural intermediary, interpreter, and peacemaker during the difficult journey west. Her presence and knowledge of the land, languages, plants, and Native culture help the expedition survive and enable her to communicate with the people they encounter. Blending documented historical details with Native oral traditions, the novel highlights Sacajawea's courage, resourcefulness, cultural identity, displacement, survival, and important role in one of the most significant explorations in United States history.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Reading: Informational Text

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Draw Evidence from Literary or Informational Texts

Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Common Core State Standards for 6–12

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Analyze Point of View and Perspective
- Compare Fictional Portrayals with Historical Accounts

Literacy in History/Social Studies

- Cite Specific Textual Evidence
- Determine Central Ideas
- Analyze Primary and Secondary Sources
- Integrate Visual Information with Other Sources
- Compare and Contrast Sources

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Draw Evidence from Literary or Informational Texts

Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
- Integrate Multimedia and Visual Displays

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 4: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY
- Theme 5: INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS
- Theme 6: POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE
- Theme 9: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- PRESENTING
- RESPONDING
- CONNECTING

Next Generation Science Standards

- Earth's Systems
- Earth and Human Activity
- From Molecules to Organisms
- Engineering Design

Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Justice
- Diversity
- Action

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying Reading Trek map as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for using this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class by displaying the Reading Trek map on an interactive whiteboard and highlighting its various layers. Ask students what they notice about the route, distances, waterways, landforms, and Native homelands represented on the map.
2. Assign students or small groups a location such as a river, mountain range, fort, or Indigenous homeland represented on the map. Using Canva Infographic Maker (TeachersFirst review), have students explain its geographic features, historical significance, connection to the novel, and importance to Native communities connected to that place. Students can also explain any challenges faced there. Students should access at least two credible sources.
3. Assign small groups a mapped location and have them create a survival plan for the expedition. Students can research the location's climate and geography and develop two possible solutions involving supplies, shelter, food, clothing, transportation, and skills needed. Groups can use Adobe Express for Education (TeachersFirst review) to present their recommended solution and explain how Sacajawea's knowledge could help the travelers.
4. Have students create a map-based timeline using Padlet Timeline (TeachersFirst review). Students can trace significant events in Sacajawea's journey, connecting each event to a location on the map. Each entry should include a date, short summary, evidence from the novel, and explanation of how one event led to another.

5. Students can use Book Creator (TeachersFirst review) to write a diary entry from Sacajawea's perspective at a specific map location. Entries should describe the setting, challenges faced by the expedition, Sacajawea's thoughts, and how her knowledge or actions helped the group. Students can add illustrations or historical images.

Extension Activities:

1. Ask students to write and illustrate a letter from Sacajawea to a member of her Shoshone family. The letter should describe the expedition, the places she traveled, the challenges she faced, and her hopes of returning home. Students should include an author's note identifying which details came from the novel or historical sources and which details they imagined.
2. Using Adobe Express Video Maker (TeachersFirst review), students can create a short video titled "Sacajawea: More Than a Guide." The video should explain why Sacajawea is described as the expedition's guide and include evidence from the novel.
3. Using Storyboard That (TeachersFirst review), students can create a comic strip showing a significant challenge from the novel. Dialogue, captions, and illustrations should reveal how Sacajawea and the other characters respond to the situation.
4. Students can use Canva Infographic Maker (TeachersFirst review) to illustrate the translation chain used during meetings with the Shoshone. The infographic should show how Sacajawea translated between Shoshone and Hidatsa, Toussaint Charbonneau translated from Hidatsa to French, and another expedition member translated from French to English. Students should explain why Sacajawea's language skills were essential to communication and the expedition's ability to obtain horses.
5. Conduct a Survival Supply Challenge. In small groups, have students choose a limited number of supplies for an expedition across unfamiliar land. Groups can explain their choices and compare them with the supplies, skills, and natural resources Sacajawea and the expedition members used.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps
- TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps
- OK2Ask: Engage & Inspire with Reading Treks
- OK2Ask: No Passport Required: Cross-Curricular Learning Journeys with Google My Maps

Other Resources:

- EdHelper.com
- Book Rags
- TeachingBooks with Joseph Bruchac