

---

# 4: Discovering Descriptions

---

## Based on the Missouri quarter reverse

---



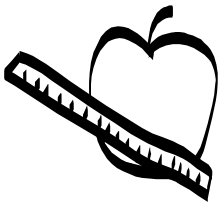
### OBJECTIVES

Students will learn about the Corps of Discovery, and will familiarize themselves with the journal writings of Lewis and Clark. They will practice writing precise descriptions in this same style.



### MATERIALS

- 1 overhead projector (optional)
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the Missouri quarter reverse
- 1 class map of the United States of America
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the Louisiana quarter reverse (see page 22 of the 2002 50 State Quarters® Program lesson plans, grades 2–3, lesson 3: Mapping America)
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the Louisiana Purchase map (see page 19 of the 2002 50 State Quarters Program lesson plans, grades 2–3, lesson 3: Mapping America)
- Copies of age-appropriate texts about the adventures of the Corps of Discovery, such as:
  - *On the Trail of Lewis and Clark: A Journey Up the Missouri River* by Peter Lurie
  - *How We Crossed the West: The Adventures of Lewis and Clark* by Rosalyn Schanzer
  - *The Back of Beyond: A Story About Lewis and Clark (Creative Minds Biographies Series)* by Andy Russell Bowen
  - *The Lewis and Clark Expedition* by Patricia Ryan Quini
  - *Off the Map—The Journals of Lewis and Clark* edited by Peter and Connie Roop
  - *The Incredible Journey of Lewis and Clark* by Rhoda Blumberg
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Descriptive excerpts from the Corps of Discovery journals
- Lined writing paper
- Copies of the “Our Secret Spot” worksheet
- Crayons and/or colored pencils



---

# Writing and Learning from Journals

---



## PREPARATIONS

- Make an overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the Missouri and Louisiana quarter reverses.
- Locate a text about the adventures of the Corps of Discovery (See examples under “Materials”).
- Locate excerpts from the Corps of Discovery journals where the landscape and the inhabitants of a particular area are described clearly. Copies of these journals are available to the public online.
- Arrange for several adult volunteers to assist with supervision of students on the third day of this activity.



## GROUPINGS

- Whole group
- Individual work
- Pairs



## CLASS TIME

Three 45- to 60-minute sessions



## CONNECTIONS

- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Art



## TERMS AND CONCEPTS

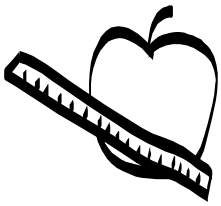
- Corps of Discovery
- Lewis and Clark
- Descriptive writing
- Cardinal Directions



## BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of:

- The order in which states were admitted to the union
- The Louisiana Purchase
- Writing directions



# Discovering Descriptions



## STEPS

Prior to conducting this lesson, it is suggested that teachers introduce students to the Louisiana Territory through the 2002 Louisiana quarter lesson plan that is part of this series.

### Session 1

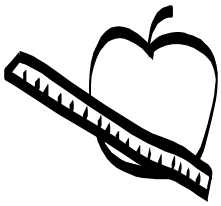
1. Describe the 50 State Quarters Program for background information, if necessary, using the example of your own state, if available. Then display the transparency or photocopy of the Missouri quarter reverse. Select a student to locate Missouri on a classroom map. Note its position in relation to your school's location.
2. With the students, examine the design on this coin's reverse. As a class, identify the objects on the coin's reverse: the Gateway Arch that now stands in St. Louis, MO, and three men paddling down the river in a canoe.

**Note:** At this point, take the opportunity to explain that the Gateway Arch is a recent structure and it did not exist during this time of exploration. It is a symbol of the growth of our country.

3. Examine the words "Corps of Discovery" and explain that this was a name used by the team of American explorers who left from St. Charles, Missouri, to travel westward and explore this new territory.
4. Using the outline of the Louisiana quarter, review the idea that the land purchased as a part of the Louisiana Purchase meant that there were new places within the United States for people to explore and where people could live.
5. Using the classroom map, once again point out the location of Missouri. Display the Louisiana Purchase map transparency to show the outline of the United States after the purchase of the Louisiana Territory.
6. Drawing from previous knowledge, ask students to name some of the states that were part of the United States before Missouri (reference the 50 State Quarters Program and note that the states whose quarters were released before Missouri's were already part of the union). Students should notice that all of these states lie on the eastern half of the United States.

### Session 2

1. Place students in pairs and distribute an appropriate children's text about the adventures of the Corps of Discovery to each pair.
2. Direct the students to read this text quietly with their partners.



---

# Discovering Descriptions

---

## Session 3

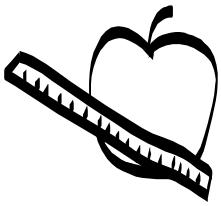
1. With the students, revisit the story about the Corps of Discovery. Conduct a Think-Pair-Share session to determine what students know about the Lewis and Clark expedition (The Corps of Discovery) and what these men were sent west to do.
2. As students share their information, record all comments on chart paper for the entire class to see. Students should note that Lewis and Clark were sent to explore this land and to find the fastest route to the west for purposes of commerce. If not mentioned by the students, explain that while on this expedition, President Jefferson requested that these men take notes on what they saw.
3. Provide students with excerpts from Lewis and Clark's journals where they describe the landscape and the inhabitants of a particular area. Direct students to read these excerpts either silently, or aloud with a partner.

**Note:** This would be an appropriate opportunity to introduce or review the importance of primary source documents with the students.

4. Ask students to share what they noticed about these notes. Students should note the precise descriptions and should be able to imagine what the area looked like in the early 1800s. Why do the students think that Lewis and Clark took such care with their writings? Answers should include the idea that these men were precise with their writings so that people unfamiliar with their travels would be able to follow along their trail exactly, and know what types of encounters they should expect.
5. Invite students to imagine that they have a friend visiting from out of town that wants to come to your classroom. Ask, "If this friend was dropped off in front of the school, what information would your students need to give in order for their friend to find their classroom? What additional information would your students give to be sure that their friends are in the correct classroom?"
6. Supply students with a very vague description of a spot within the school, such as the lunch room or the gymnasium. Distribute lined paper to the students and direct them to write a description of how to get to this location from your classroom, what someone might encounter along the way, and a complete description of the room. Encourage students to use cardinal directions to help others navigate to this location.
7. Invite several students to read their descriptions to the class. Discuss the information students included in order to best describe this location.

## Session 4

1. Divide students into pairs and direct each pair to select a secret location, within the school, that they know very well.
2. Direct students to go to their location and take careful notes on how they got to their location and what they saw along the way and in the actual spot. Again, remind the students to use cardinal directions to describe their journey. Give the students an appropriate time limit by which they must return to the classroom.



# Discovering Descriptions

**Note:** This activity will work best with the support of adult volunteers, particularly if school rules do not allow for students to leave their classrooms unaccompanied. If this is the case, and adult volunteers are unavailable, direct students to work from their memories of this location.

3. When students return to the classroom, distribute one copy of the “Our Secret Spot” worksheet to each pair.
4. Direct students to use their best writing to incorporate their notes into a complete description of this secret location. Students will also need to illustrate several important features of their spot on this worksheet.
5. Once complete, each pair will read their description to the class, and will accept guesses as to the location being described. The person who made this guess will explain what pieces of information helped to determine the correct location.



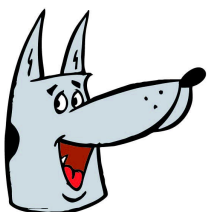
## ENRICHMENT/EXTENSIONS

- Add a “Descriptive Writing” activity center to your classroom. In this center, cut, glued and numbered several magazine pictures onto a separate pieces of construction paper. Direct students to select one of the pictures and clearly describe it on a piece of lined writing paper. They will then write the number of the picture on the back of their description, so that other students can look through all of the images and try to determine which one was being described.
- Invite the students to pretend they are journalists writing articles about the Lewis and Clark Expedition.
- Invite interested students to research the nickname “Gateway to the West” and the Gateway Arch. Why was this name given to the Arch? Why was this monument placed in St. Louis? What interesting information can they find about this monument? Compare and contrast this information to a monument in their home town or state.



## DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTION

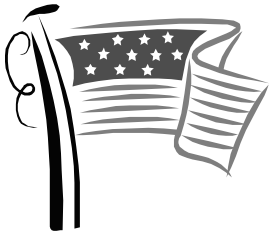
Allow students to create a computer presentation to share the descriptions about their secret locations. Allow students to use a digital or video camera to record images seen on the way to their secret spot. At the end of this presentation, suggest that students include a multiple choice question for the reader to answer about the location of their secret spot.



## HPC CONNECTION

For additional information about the Louisiana Purchase and the land that Lewis and Clark were sent to explore, visit October 2002’s Coin of the Month in the “Coin News” area of HPC (<http://www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?FileContents=/kids/coinnews/cotm/cotm1002.cfm>).





# Missouri Quarter Reverse

