



TeachersFirst **READING TREKS**

Buffalo Dance: The Journey of York

Teacher Guide

Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading
Trek Map

Ages: 16+

Grades: 10-12

Reading Level: 10th grade

Lexile Measure: N/A

Guided Reading Level: N/A

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): N/A

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, social studies, and geography.

Synopsis of Book

Frank X Walker learned about York and his contributions to the Lewis and Clark expedition while attending Hasan Davis's Chautauqua presentation as part of the expedition's bicentennial celebration. Walker set out to give voice to York through 57 poems spanning the period before, during, and after the expedition. The word choice and spellings reflect the speaking mannerisms and conventions of the past. These poems provide insight into what York may have felt and thought. Excerpts from individuals add context and a time-stamped perspective to many of the poems.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for 6–12

Reading: Literature

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

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING

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 how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the class by displaying the [Reading Trek map](#) on an interactive whiteboard and highlighting its various layers. Students can identify major waypoints, rivers, and landmarks mentioned in Walker's poems while gaining an understanding of the massive scope of this historic expedition.
2. Use Google Earth's ([TeachersFirst review](#)) historical imagery feature to compare how the expedition route looks today versus the untamed wilderness York would have experienced. To use this feature on a desktop, click on the clock icon in the top toolbar. On a mobile device, tap the layers icon and enable "Historical imagery." Students can examine areas like the Missouri River, the Rocky Mountains, and the Columbia River, discussing how development has changed these landscapes since York's time.
3. Research the Native American tribes York encountered and "won over" during the expedition and map their traditional territories along the route.
4. Have students use Google My Maps ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create a custom map that shows the expedition from York's unique viewpoint, as described in Walker's poems. They can add quotes from specific poems to locations and mark moments of cultural exchange, personal reflection, or conflict.

- Trace York's movements after the expedition, including his time in Louisville, St. Louis, and his eventual freedom. Students can map the locations where York lived after the expedition, examining the

geography of his later life and the challenges he faced transitioning to freedom. Draw on paper or use a digital tool like Google My Maps ([TeachersFirst review](#)).

Extension Activities:

- Have students create collages as a response to an individual poem. Use images from Pixabay ([TeachersFirst review](#)) and assemble with Photo Collage ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
- View the news story "[Visiting Writer: Frank X Walker talks about race in Appalachia](#)." In small groups, ask students to discuss whether and how the media has impacted what people believe about race and culture. Use Case Maker ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to have students complete [Challenge: Brown v. Board of Education](#).
- Select a poem (or allow students to self-select) and identify keywords that may have led the author to the given title. Use a tool like Answer Garden ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to enter the keywords and create a word cloud to show which words are used most frequently. If you're using a digital copy of the text, WordSift ([TeachersFirst review](#)) is another excellent option.
- In the poem "Nomenclature" (Walker 36), a quotation from Meriwether Lewis describes how York gained favor with the Native Americans they encountered. Have students write about a time when their curiosity about an individual's differences led them to change their opinion. Use a digital tool like Telegra.ph, ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create a simple blog post to serve as a written reflection.
- After reading "York Haichu" (Walker 57), have students use Animoto ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to write and illustrate their own allegory or proverbial poem.
- Explore the [Reading Trek](#) and accompanying activities for the picture book version of *The Journey of York*.
- Learn more about York. Students can use an online encyclopedia or read an article from a journal or [another reputable publication](#).

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Building Background Knowledge with Reading Treks](#)
- [OK2Ask: No Passport Required: Cross-Curricular Learning Journeys with Google My Maps](#)

Other Resources:

- [Frank X Walker](#)

- [8 Affrilachian Poetry Collections](#)
- [Filson Historical Society](#)
- [Synopsis of the Expedition](#)
- [Lewis and Clark Timeline](#)
- [Westward Expansion-Lewis and Clark](#)
- [Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition](#)