



TeachersFirst READING TREKS

The Captain's Dog: My Journey with the Lewis & Clark Tribe

Teacher Guide

Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading
Trek Map

Ages: 10–14

Grades: 5–8

Reading Level: 7th grade

Lexile Measure: 890L

Guided Reading Level: V

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): 50

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, social studies (including U.S. history, geography, and Westward Expansion), and STEM connections (including navigation, exploration, and survival).

Synopsis of Book

The Captain's Dog: My Journey with the Lewis & Clark Tribe by Roland Smith tells the story of the historic Lewis and Clark expedition through the eyes of Seaman, Captain Lewis's loyal Newfoundland dog. Written as Seaman's journal, the novel gives readers a vivid, animal-eye view of the journey across the uncharted American frontier. As Seaman travels with the Corps of Discovery, he encounters new landscapes, animals, and Indigenous peoples, offering a unique perspective on exploration, loyalty, and friendship. This engaging work of historical fiction blends adventure with real historical details, helping students connect emotionally and intellectually to one of America's greatest expeditions.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

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

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 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 7: PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, AND CONSUMPTION
- SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

National Core Music Standards

- RESPONDING
- CREATING
- CONNECTING

Next Generation Science Standards

- Earth's Systems
- Earth and Human Activity
- Biological Evolution
- Engineering Design
- Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions
- Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, Dynamics

Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Justice
- 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 how to use 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.
2. Ask students to make an illustrated travel journal by hand. Provide outline maps that students can label and decorate, then have them sketch or write diary-style reflections about what characters experienced or learned at each stop.
3. Issue a class challenge with GooseChase EDU ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Create a digital scavenger hunt where teams earn points for correctly identifying facts or answering questions connected to specific locations on the map.
4. Have students use Adobe Express Video Maker ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to record Postcards from the Past, 30–60 second narrated videos describing what happens at each location and why it matters.
5. Encourage students to make an interactive timeline using Canva's Timeline Infographic Templates ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Each timeline point should connect to a mapped site and include dates, visuals, and short explanations showing how the journey unfolds over time.

Extension Activities:

1. Use Storyboard That ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to recreate key scenes from *The Captain's Dog* in comic format. Each panel can feature a different map location (such as Camp Dubois, Fort Mandan, Lemhi Pass, and Fort Clatsop) and include narration or dialogue that reflects Seaman's loyalty and perspective.
2. Invite students to design a collage that captures the spirit of exploration and discovery using Canva for Education ([TeachersFirst review](#)) or magazine cutouts. Include images, symbols, and phrases representing courage, teamwork, and curiosity. Display the collages as a "Journey of Discovery" gallery in the classroom.
3. Have students work in small groups to create short podcast episodes using Adobe Podcast ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Each group can take on the perspective of a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition, such as Lewis, Clark, Seaman, or Sacagawea, and record a two to three-minute reflection describing discoveries, challenges, and emotions from a specific part of the journey.
4. For a technology-free option, invite students to write and illustrate a captain's journal from Seaman's point of view. Each journal entry should describe one major expedition stop and include sketches of the landscape, imagined smells and sounds, and Seaman's reflections on his bond with Lewis and the crew.
5. Have students use Kialo Edu ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to engage in a structured discussion about themes from the novel, such as leadership, loyalty, and perseverance. Prompts might include, "Was Lewis a good leader?" or

“How did Seaman’s loyalty influence the success of the journey?”

6. Students can use Canva’s Timeline infographic Templates ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to build a visual timeline of *The Captain’s Dog*, where

each entry highlights an expedition event, a quote from the novel, and an illustration or image representing Seaman’s experience along the trail.

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:

- [Teaching Books Resources](#)
- [Mapping Activity](#)
- [The Captain’s Dog Quizlet Flash Cards](#)