



**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **Streams to the River, River to the Sea**

Scott O'Dell

**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Streams to the River, River to the Sea

Scott O'Dell

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying and categorizing, evaluating, comparing and contrasting

### Writing

Narrative, acrostic poem, interview, dialogue, log

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, cause/effect, inference

### Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion, drama

### Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot, conflict, theme, mood

### Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms, words in context, root words, prefixes/suffixes

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## Summary

Scott O'Dell tells the story of Sacagawea, who, while caring for her infant son, serves as interpreter and guide of the Lewis and Clark expedition. O'Dell combines the historical record with his talent as a novelist to create a fascinating picture of an Indian heroine.

The novel begins with thirteen-year-old Sacagawea's capture along with her Shoshone cousin by Minnetaree warriors. Her life is troubled by the adjustment to life with another tribe and marriage to a French trader after her owner's gambling loss. The novel is told in a simple first person narration of Sacagawea who is caught between two cultures and torn between conflicting loyalties.

Sacagawea and her French trader husband, Charbonneau, are hired by Lewis and Clark to guide them on their journey to explore the Louisiana Purchase and the Northwest Territories. Sacagawea's courage and strength are tested as she struggles to survive the hardships of the Lewis and Clark expedition of the Pacific—which she makes with a baby strapped to her back. The four thousand mile journey on foot, horseback, and by canoe is a narration of courage and danger.

The author develops the relationship between the Indian girl and William Clark more fully than the journal entries by the explorers. At the conclusion of the novel, Sacagawea puts aside her romantic feelings for Clark, parts from the explorers at the Mandan Village on the Missouri River where the journey began, and returns to her people.

## About the Author

Scott O'Dell grew up in a stilt house on Rattlesnake Island near San Pedro, California. He and his friends paddled around in dugout canoes, searching for abalone the way the Indians did. This early feeling of kinship with Indians eventually led O'Dell to write many children's novels in which Indians played starring roles. O'Dell tells a story using simple language that evokes strong images and feelings. There is much to be read "between the lines" of his novels. While students choose to read O'Dell's books for sheer enjoyment, they learn about history as well—even more if the book is studied in conjunction with applicable history. Putting "real" characters into a historical framework can go a long way toward making history come alive for students.

O'Dell won the 1961 Newbery Medal for *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, his novel about a young Chumash girl who survives alone on an island in the Pacific for eighteen years. He received the Newbery Honor award for *King's Fifth* (1967), *Black Pearl* (1968), and *Sing Down the Moon* (1971). He was also the first American recipient of the Hans Christian Andersen Author's Medal, the most prestigious of all international literary awards for an author of children's books.

His other books include: *Child of Fire*; *The Hawk that Dare Not Hunt by Day*; *The Cruise of the Arctic Star*; *The Dark Canoe*; *Journey to Jericho*; *The Treasure of Topo-El-Bampo*; *Alexandra*; *Black Star, Bright Dawn*; *The Captive*; *Carlota*; *The Feathered Serpent*; *Kathleen, Please Come Home*; *The Amethyst Ring*; and *Zia*.

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## Teacher Information

The term “Indian” is used throughout the book *Streams to the River, River to the Sea* as it was during the early years of the explorers in the New World. Today, some groups prefer the term “Native American.” In our guide, like the novel, we use the word “Indian.” It is important to use the term that is commonly used in your area and to explain to the students the use of both words. The word “Indian” is used by O’Dell and is not intended to be derogatory or prejudicial.

### Sequence of Events in the Lewis and Clark Expedition

Teaching suggestions:

1. Make a large time line with the major events on paper, which may be added to as the novel is read.

1801: Thomas Jefferson is inaugurated president of the United States.

1803: January 18—President Thomas Jefferson sends a secret message to Congress asking approval for an expedition to explore Louisiana and the Northwest.

May 2—The Louisiana Purchase is signed in Paris (dated April 30).

June 20—Jefferson charges Lewis and Clark to explore the Missouri River in search of a route to the Pacific.

August 31—Lewis leaves Pittsburgh in a new keelboat bound for St. Louis.

October—Clark joins Lewis in Indiana Territory.

December—Lewis and Clark establish a winter camp on the Wood River in present day Illinois.

1804: April—The Expedition leaves Camp Wood and begins the ascent of the Missouri River.

August—The first meeting is held with the Indians; Clark holds council with Oto and Missouri Indians at Council Bluffs (Iowa).

September—The Expedition has a confrontation with Teton Sioux near the present day Pierre, South Dakota.

October—Lewis and Clark arrive at Mandan villages in present day North Dakota. They propose alliance between the warring Hidatsa, Arikara, and Mandan Indians against the Sioux.

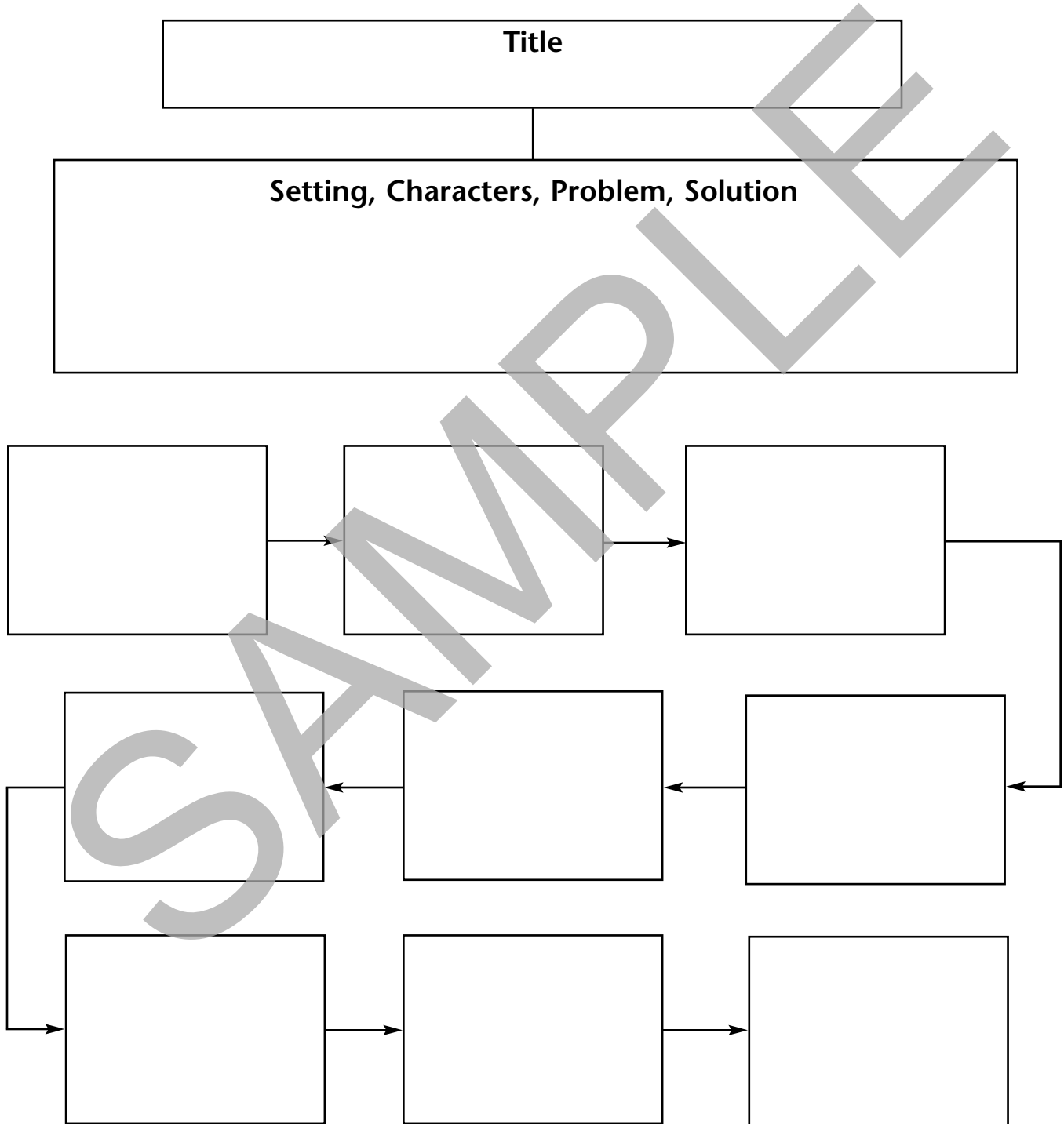
November—Construction begins on Fort Mandan, the winter headquarters of the Expedition. Lewis and Clark make arrangements for Charbonneau, a trader with an Indian wife, Sacagawea, to go with the Expedition.

1805: February—A baby boy is born to Sacagawea and Charbonneau.

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## Episodic Story Map

**Directions:** Fill in the characters, setting (time and place), problem, and solution in the first box. The flow chart boxes below are for the various episodes in the story.



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9. **Prediction:** What will happen to Sacagawea? What are her alternatives?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Draw a picture of Sacagawea.
2. Booktalk: Assume the persona of one of the characters in the novel. Tell just enough about yourself and your problems to make listeners want to read the novel. Create an audiotape or videotape.
3. As a group project, create a mural that summarizes the story using a long piece of butcher paper and watercolor markers. As the viewer walks from the left section of the paper to the right, (s)he should see the story unfold in pictures. These pictures should depict five or six key events in the story in the order in which they occur.

### Chapter Seven: Pages 29-33

### Chapter Eight: Pages 34-39

### Chapter Nine: Pages 40-45

#### Vocabulary

marauding 29

clamor 40

mystical 41

antics 43

omen 44

#### Vocabulary Activity

Words in Context: Ask students to "guess" at the meaning from context, giving reasons for each guess. Make a list of "why answers" to teach context clues.

#### Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What is a survival story? Have you read any other survival stories?
2. Why do you think Sacagawea befriended the buffalo cow? (Page 31, "She was good company. She kept me from thinking about myself.")
3. How had the Shoshones survived when they ran out of food? (Page 31, They ate tree bark and even their moccasins.)
4. Was the man who rescued Sacagawea an Indian? (Page 32, Probably not, because he had a beard. When hair appeared on the face of Indians they plucked it. Page 36, He is half white and half Sioux.)
5. Charbonneau was a trader. Why did Black Moccasin want to keep his friendship with him? (Page 37, The trader brought things that the tribe wanted.)
6. Why do Red Hawk, Charbonneau and Le Borgne all claim that they have the right to marry Sacagawea? (Page 38) How did they plan to settle this dispute? (Page 38, They would play the Hand Game.) Did Sacagawea have anything to say about who she would like to marry?

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7. How do you think Sacagawea felt as the men played the Hand Game to win her as a bride? Do you think Sacagawea wanted to marry any of the men? Who do you think would be the best husband?

8. **Prediction:** How will Charbonneau treat Sacagawea? What will Otter Woman do?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Research marriage customs for the Shoshone Indians.
2. Make up rules and play the Indian Hand Game.

### Chapter Ten: Pages 46-49

### Chapter Eleven: Pages 50-54

### Chapter Twelve: Pages 55-58

### Vocabulary

tipis 46  
sullen 47

wigwams 46  
lank 47

wickiups 46  
hostile 48

hogans 46  
span 52

### Vocabulary Activity

Draw pictures to illustrate each of the vocabulary words.

### Discussion Questions and Activities

1. How did Blue Sky try to protect Sacagawea from Charbonneau? (*Page 46, She tried to put off the time when Charbonneau would marry Sacagawea.*) How much power did Blue Sky have as an Indian woman? (*Page 47, She made the decisions for the family and Black Moccasin was happy not to be bothered.*)
2. How could Charbonneau punish Sacagawea if she ran away and he caught her? (*Page 49, Blue Sky told about another slave woman who had her ears cropped and the tip of her nose cut off. That was the law of the Minnetarees.*)
3. How did Sacagawea's wedding differ from her brother's wedding? (*Page 51, There were no friendly talks nor no nice presents from one family to another. It was not a happy time. Charbonneau's first wife fixed the wedding dinner even though she was not happy about Charbonneau taking another wife. Two days later Charbonneau and the first wife left to trade and Sacagawea stayed behind.*)
4. How did Sacagawea spend her time after Charbonneau left? (*Pages 52-53, getting ready for the baby she was going to have*) How did Charbonneau respond to the news he was going to be a father? (*Page 54, "How can Charbonneau go trading up and down the river with a baby in a cradleboard hanging by his wife's neck?"*)
5. Who brought the news of the white men? (*Page 55, Charbonneau and René Jessaume*)