

# Lewis and Clark



by George Sullivan  
genre: social studies nonfiction

**Level R**

**Summary** This book documents the experiences and discoveries of the famous explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark as they made their two-year journey in search of the Northwest Passage. Using primary sources, especially journals kept during their travels, as well as pamphlets, engravings, and sketches, the author brings to life this important expedition from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean and back.

## Background Information

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark to explore the Northwest Territory and to determine whether a water route linking the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean could be found. The journey resulted in mapping out the Louisiana Purchase and detailed cataloging of natural resources.

For more information about Lewis and Clark, see [www.americanhistory.si.edu](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu), the web site of the National Museum of American History.

## Supportive Text Features

Short sentences, a limited number of challenging vocabulary words, and large typeface will help students as they read this 122-page nonfiction chapter book. Captions accompany the photos, sketches, and illustrations to provide additional explanations. A chronology at the end of the book will also assist students in keeping track of the many dates and events discussed in the book. Praise students for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 49 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

## Challenging Text Features

There are a lot of facts to sort out and remember as students read this book. Since it may be difficult to visualize where the explorers are heading on their journey, displaying a wall map of the United States will be helpful to readers. It might be a good idea to put markers on the map as students read.

## Comprehension Strategies

### Making Inferences

Writers don't always directly state everything they want you to know. Sometimes they just give clues and expect you to use them along with your own knowledge to figure something out. This is called making inferences. Tell students that to make an inference:

1. Look for clues as you read, and think about what is happening.
  2. Think about what you know from other experiences.
  3. Put the clues in your reading together with what you already know.
- Have students pause after reading Chapters 1–5. Why do you think people wanted to find a water route to the Northwest? Why did Thomas Jefferson choose Meriwether Lewis to lead the expedition?
  - Have students pause after reading Chapters 6–10. Why did the travelers hope to avoid the Sioux? On page 43, we learn that the sign for Sioux was to draw a finger across one's throat. What does that tell you about the Sioux?

### Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are actual records from the past, such as journals, photos, and speeches. Secondary sources, such as textbooks or encyclopedias, are descriptions of events by someone other than a witness.

- Tell if each of these is a primary or secondary source: letter, magazine, diary, newspaper article, biography.
- How about this book we're reading? Is it a primary source or a secondary source?
- What does the drawing on page 99 show? Who drew it? Is this a primary source or a secondary source? Why do you think the author included it?
- If someone were writing your biography, what could they use as a primary source to learn about your life? What could be used as a secondary source?

## Phonics and Word-Solving Strategy

### Reading Historical Language

Explain that when you examine quotations from another time in history, language can look and sound different. To figure out unfamiliar historical language, look for clues in the words themselves and in the sentences the words are in.

- Guide students in interpreting some of the direct quotations from Lewis and Clark's journals. Tell them to look at the quote on pages 95 and 96. What do they notice about it? How is it different from modern English?
- Have students try to paraphrase the quotation and explain how they figured out what it means.
- Have students skim the book to find other quotations, and repeat the activity.

### Oral Language/Vocabulary

- Ask students where they would go if they had the opportunity to explore any part of the world. Why would they go there?
- Ask students to think about the journals that Lewis and Clark kept. Why was it so important that they documented their trip?

## Extending Meaning Through Reading and Writing

- Have students write a journal entry by someone on the trip at three different times during the reading of the book. **(Narrative)**
- Have students create a time line of Lewis and Clark's expedition to the Pacific Ocean and back. Have each student write and illustrate an important event on the trip to add to the time line. **(Graphic Aid)**

### Fluency Practice

Have students read a few pages from the book chorally. Emphasize the importance of reading each word clearly and accurately.