

## American Explorers

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSSR2: Determine **central ideas or themes** of a text and analyze their development; **summarize** the key supporting details and ideas.

More than 200 years ago, in 1804, two explorers made an important journey. They were named Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Today, people know a lot about the places they visited. But 200 years ago there were no maps of that part of the United States. They would travel by boat. They were going to see where a great river went. They were traveling on a river called the Missouri River.

They took many people with them to help. There were more than 40 people on the trip. First they had to pack a lot of food. They took many supplies with them. They had three boats. It was summer.

They traveled slowly. They had to row their boats on the river. They would only travel a few miles every day. They traveled for months. Then it was winter. They made a camp for the winter. They camped along the river. They waited for spring. Snow and ice made it hard to travel in winter.

Native Americans helped them along the way. They helped them get food. And they showed them where places were. The explorers had never been to this area before. The Native Americans had lived there for many years.

A Native American woman helped them travel. She became their guide. Her name was Sacajawea. She traveled with them for months. It was hard work. The explorers needed her help to find their way to the West. They wanted to find out how to get to the ocean.

As they traveled, they made maps. Their maps showed the way the river went. It passed through grasslands. Then they were in mountains. When they got to the mountains, they had to leave their boats and walk.

It took more than a year for the explorers to get to the ocean. When they got there they had made maps that would help many people. But they had to bring the maps back. It had taken more than a year to make this first part of the trip. It took a long time to get back. When the explorers came back, they had been gone two years. In 1806, they returned. They were heroes. They would not make such a great journey again. They had done their job.

Their maps would help people settle in the new land. Long after their trip, people would build roads to the west. They would travel quickly by car. Today people can travel their route by plane. If you look out the window from the plane you will see those high mountains. You will see what a difficult journey it was.

### EXPLAIN WHAT YOU LEARNED

- Underline the most important information in each paragraph.
- Write a short summary that tells what the passage explains. Include only the most important information.

*Start your summary this way:*

The main idea of the passage is \_\_\_\_\_.  
Here is information that helps you understand that idea.

Then finish the summary. Include the information that helps explain the main idea.