Get Ready

Vocabulary
Read and review these words to prepare you for reading the play. One of these words is used on page 73. Which one?
expedition—a journey people make to explore
mission—a trip where special work is done
research—careful hunting and recording of facts
system—parts working together
translate—to change from one language to another
wilderness—a wild, natural area

Fluency Warm-Up
Reading with Word Accuracy
Fluent readers read words with accuracy. This means they read the words correctly. Good readers pay attention to the parts of a word so that they can read faster and more smoothly.
Look for letters that blend or make one sound, such as sm, th, aw. Be sure to read the ending of each word, such as -ly, -ed. Then be sure the word makes sense in the sentence. If it doesn’t, go back and try again.

FLUENCY PRACTICE
What parts are alike in these words? Circle them.
1. easing healing underneath
2. sighing frighten sunlight
3. careless shoeless noiseless

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Comprehension Warm-Up

Summarizing

Summarizing means retelling the important parts of a story. When you retell a story, you tell the most important things about the characters and what happened.

Take breaks throughout the reading to check your understanding of the story. Keep notes for your summary.

COMPREHENSION TIP

Ask yourself questions like these when you read.
1. What does the title tell me?
2. What is the main problem or conflict?
3. How is the problem solved?
Readers' Theater

Presents

**Crossing the West**

by

Jerrill Parham

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Narrator 1

President Jefferson

Meriwether Lewis

Narrator 2

William Clark
NARRATOR 1: The year is 1802. In the White House, President Thomas Jefferson is talking with a man he thinks is special.

JEFFERSON: Meriwether, I have a dream! I’ve known you as a neighbor all my life. You help me here in the White House. You’re the one to lead a group that will make my dream happen.

LEWIS: I will do my best. But what is the dream?

JEFFERSON: (sweeping arm) Look at all these maps and books about the huge West. They are only guesses and really tell nothing! Part of my dream is finding a way to take goods by water all the way to China. It must be through the West to the Pacific Ocean. Then we can ship across the ocean.

LEWIS: (looking surprised) So you want me and my group to find a river path and make good maps? We will travel thousands of miles. It will definitely be an adventure.
JEFFERSON: I also want you to learn and write about nature and the native people along the way. There must be hundreds of things to discover. Your mission is to record everything you find.

LEWIS: I hope that my friend will agree to go, too. He was my good leader in the army.

NARRATOR 2: The friend, William Clark, gets a letter from Lewis. Yes, he will go, too!

NARRATOR 1: Now it is 1803. Lewis has a big boat built and sails down the Ohio River before going up the Missouri. He picks up Clark and some men along the way.

LEWIS: Our first surprise happened when France sold the West to the United States.

CLARK: I see you brought another surprise, too. Just what is this beside you? (Points.)

LEWIS: This is Seaman, my new dog.

CLARK: He is a large dog. He will need to eat a lot.
**LEWIS:** Maybe he can help us find food. He might help in little ways.

**NARRATOR 1:** The group sails far up the river and builds a fort for the winter of 1804. Lewis and Clark always share the job of leading the **expedition**.

**NARRATOR 2:** They find more men and gather supplies that fill more boats. They meet a woman named Sacagawea (sah KAH jah wee ah) who knows several Native American languages.

**NARRATOR 1:** It is still hard to talk with the Native Americans. Sacagawea speaks in her native language to tell her husband what people say. Then her husband translates in French to another man. Finally, that man translates in English to Lewis and Clark. And the translating goes the other way when Lewis or Clark speaks. What a talking system!

**LEWIS:** Tomorrow is April 7, 1805. Winter is past, so we can sail away from our fort.

**FLUENCY TIP**

Look for two letters that blend or make one sound. Some here are tr, ch, ea, and ou.
CLARK: We have been learning a lot from the Sioux. They helped us live through the worst winter I've ever seen!

LEWIS: We've already seen amazing animals. Antelopes run fast. Wolves are always close. We've seen thousands of huge buffalo at a time!

NARRATOR 1: The expedition starts into the wilderness. Meanwhile, President Jefferson is pleased.

JEFFERSON: Look! Lewis and Clark sent many things made by the Sioux. Here are some dried plants. They even shipped a live prairie dog and some birds.

NARRATOR 2: And what does the president probably think?

JEFFERSON: The expedition is really helping us learn. The team members seem to be working together well. But I do think of them often and wonder if they are safe. They may not be able to send news now. They can't ask us for help.

NARRATOR 1: In the wilderness, strong winds sometimes stop the explorers. Sand blows into their mouths. Mosquitoes are always biting.
NARRATOR 2: The group meets grizzly bears. The angry bears chase the men on several days! And one night, another big animal becomes a danger in camp.

CLARK: Almost everyone is asleep. I am saying goodnight. Wait. Why is Seaman growling?

LEWIS: Seaman, where are you going? . . . Oh, what is that pounding noise? . . . It's a buffalo! Be quick, everybody! GET UP!

NARRATOR 1: A huge buffalo runs into camp. Just as the buffalo almost smashes the sleepers, Seaman jumps and bites it so it turns away!

NARRATOR 2: Whew! Next the expedition has to walk for miles around crashing waterfalls. Cactus cuts them along the way.

NARRATOR 1: The sore team must go on—up and through the highest mountains in the United States! Soon there is no safe river. There isn't much food left either.

**FLUENCY TIP**

Look for words with the endings -y, -ing, -ly, and -ful. Practice reading those words correctly.
Narrator 2: Things seem bad, but then they get better.

Clark: Sacagawea is a great help. She knows which plants we can eat. People know we come in peace when they see her and her baby.

Narrator 2: Finally, the expedition sees the ocean. Imagine their joy after traveling over seven months!

Lewis: At last! It's wonderful that 31 men, 1 woman, her baby, and 1 dog are all alive and here!

Clark: We could not come all the way on rivers. But our maps and records will help others come someday. Our research about the West will be very helpful.

Lewis: We certainly have learned about nature and people. Now we are all very tired. We must hurry to build a fort so we can rest over the winter.

Clark: And we all know what we must do after that.

Lewis and Clark: We have to find our way home again!
Write your answer to each question on the lines below.

1. What was one of President Jefferson’s goals for the expedition?

2. Give one reason why Sacagawea was an important member of the expedition.

3. Why do you think Lewis and Clark shipped things like dried plants and live birds to President Jefferson?

4. Name three problems the explorers faced during the journey.

5. What do you think was the most important thing that the expedition accomplished?

6. Why was the team able to reach the ocean?

7. Does this story remind you of any other story? Why or why not?
Vocabulary

Write the number of a vocabulary word on the blank before its meaning.

1. mission       ____ Parts that work together
2. wilderness    ____ To change into another language
3. system        ____ A trip to do special business
4. expedition    ____ A natural area where wild animals live
5. research      ____ A journey made for the purpose of exploring
6. translate     ____ To study something very carefully

Extension

1. Imagine yourself exploring with Lewis and Clark. With a partner, talk about your ideas.
   - How are you like someone else in the expedition?
   - What is the biggest problem for the team?
   - What do you enjoy in the wilderness?

2. Use the information in the play and research to make a time line of the Lewis and Clark expedition.