Book Summary
To the early colonists, the western region of North America was an unknown land. In 1803, the president appointed Lewis and Clark to lead a team to explore this area. This book follows Lewis and Clark’s amazing expedition.

Features of the Book
- Historical recount of exploration
- Maps and photographs
- Labelled diagram
- Interactions between explorers and Native Americans
- Timeline

Investigation Tools
- What’s the Background? – Reasons for the Expedition, page 4
- Digging Deeper – Sacagawea, page 9
- Step by Step – Making a Canoe, page 15
- Looking Closer – An Explorer’s Equipment, pages 18–19
- Weighing Both Sides – Guns and Horses, page 25

The Guided Reading Lesson
- Visualising
- Evaluating information
- Examining how early explorers helped to open up new land for settlement, determined new trade routes, and found new natural resources
- Analysing how the nation we know today owes much to the endeavours of early explorers

Purpose
Into the Unknown: The Lewis and Clark Expedition can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:
- Visualising
- Evaluating information
- Examining how early explorers helped to open up new land for settlement, determined new trade routes, and found new natural resources
- Analysing how the nation we know today owes much to the endeavours of early explorers

Introducing the text
Ask the students to imagine that it’s 1803 and they have been asked by the president to lead an expedition into unknown territory. They would have none of today’s communication aids, no modern transport or equipment, and no idea of what lay ahead.

- How would you feel? Would you be excited, fearful, or both?
- What would you need?

Tell the students that they are going to read about Lewis and Clark’s expedition in the early 1800s and they will be using the strategy of visualising.

Check how much the students already know about the expedition. For the students who are unfamiliar with the story, ensure they are able to follow it as they read.
Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read to the end of page 5 silently, then discuss the What's the Background? investigation tool.

- Examine the map carefully. What do you imagine Lewis and Clark were thinking when they agreed to the expedition?
- This map would have been made after the journey. What might it have looked like before the expedition?
- What details might have been missing? (Missouri River beyond Mandan, Columbia River beyond the river mouth, the river and overland routes)

With the students, examine the map on page 6. Explain that maps will be a feature of the book and will help them to visualise the explorers’ progress.

- As you read this chapter, look out for how the author helps the reader to visualise the journey.

After the students have read the chapter, discuss what features helped them to visualise. Examples could include the photographs and illustrations, the descriptions of the supplies and the dangers of the river on page 6, the celebration on page 7, and the information about Sacagawea on page 9.

Read page 10 with the students and model how the text evoked the mental images and feelings. Encourage the students to use all of their senses and emotions to try to imagine the challenges (and the rewards) of the journey.

Ask the students to use this strategy, particularly on pages 13 to 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, and 26. Encourage them to use the map insets to track the expedition’s progress and use their prior knowledge to help them understand the terrain.

When the students have finished reading, ask them to evaluate the text.

- How well does the book fit with what you already know about Lewis and Clark or the route they travelled?
- Is there anything you disagree with? How could you determine whether the information is correct?
- How well has the author conveyed the importance of the expedition?
- What was the best part of the book? Why?

Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

Visualising

Some students may find that the descriptions inspire them to draw or show the journey in a creative way. Allow those students to do this as a follow-up activity and share their efforts with the class.

Examining how early explorers helped to open up new land for settlement, determined new trade routes, and found new natural resources.

The students can use the blackline master to chart the highlights of Lewis and Clark's journey. These include the challenges, important milestones, incidents, and meetings. The map on pages 4 to 5 and the timeline on page 30 provide useful information. The chart could then form part of a larger display for the classroom.

The students can look closely at how the keelboat is loaded with supplies and crew. They can examine pages 18 to 19 as a model, then reread page 6 for detailed information.