

Shackleton's Endurance

Teaching Resources for Primary

Assembly idea: Explorers

Resources

Explorers Assembly presentation

Explorers Teacher Notes

A large blow-up globe

Introduction

Slide 1. Ask what an 'explorer' is and take some comments from the pupils. Emphasise some of the most useful responses that give the idea of travel and discovery, of new places not previously known. Say that humans have been exploring their world throughout history, trying to find out what it is like and why.

Slide 2. Ask if anyone can name any famous explorers. Also ask what kind of person an explorer is and what kind of person is likely to be an explorer. Do the pupils think there is a 'type' of person that can be an explorer? Again, take some ideas. You can also ask what kind of person probably isn't likely to make a good explorer. For example, you might suggest men or women or both? What about age? Is there a set explorer 'type'? It would be useful to draw out any misconceptions at this point about age, gender, race, background, or disability as the following examples will challenge this kind of thinking.

Slides 3 – 10. These slides give examples of a few of the many polar explorers, some more famous than others. Say that you are going to show a few of the polar explorers- these are people who have tried to reach either the North or South Poles or explored polar regions. Use the globe to show where the North and South Poles are.

Ask pupils why people might want to reach the Poles or explore polar regions? Establish it is a desire to reach remote places that humans do not know well or have even been too. You can then show all or a few of the examples on the slides. (There is further information about each explorer given below). Summarise by establishing that age is no barrier – the oldest successful South Pole adventurer was 79 and the youngest 16 when they achieved that. Neither is gender or background an issue, or disability. Ordinary people can become polar explorers if they are determined enough.

Slide 11. A definition of an 'explorer' is given here. Stress that it simple means to go to a new place or one not well known. Explain that we are all explorers, every day as we may visit somewhere we haven't been before, even if it's just a new road where we live, or perhaps we are exploring somewhere on our doorstep with fresh eyes, making new discoveries about our wonderful world.

Slide 12. Go back to the pupils' earlier ideas about what an explorer might be like and summarise some important qualities, especially the traits of curiosity, determination, self-preservation, as well as the need to work with others, as even solo explorers have back up and work as part of a team.

While most of the world has been discovered by someone, as individuals, we are all discovering the wonder of the world anew each day, if we can only be alert to it.

Some polar explorers

Sir Ernest Shackleton was a famous polar explorer who led the 1914–17 Endurance Expedition to attempt to cross Antarctica from one side to the other. His ship was lost in the ice, but he managed to eventually get all his crew and team members back home safely. [Royal Geographical Society - Geography resources for teachers \(rgs.org\)](https://www.rgs.org/)

Roald Amundsen was as highly regarded for his skills in organisation and planning as he was for his expertise as an explorer, and he kept his plans to head south very secret. His journey to the South Pole saw him go head to head with the British explorer Captain Robert Falcon Scott and the race was on to be the first to claim it.

Amundsen looked to the communities in the places he was exploring for guidance on the best practices. He learnt to use furs, drive dogs and build igloos as he sailed through the North- West Passage, and used these skills when travelling to the South Pole. This kind of preparation and organisation was key to Amundsen.
<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/roald-amundsen>

Keizo Funatsu is a great adventurer, born in Osaka, Japan in 1956. He graduated from Kobe University. He was an office worker for a Japanese business firm but quit in 1984. After he left his regular job, he started his life as an adventurer. In 1985, he moved to Minnesota where he learned about mushing. Keizo Funatsu was the dog handler of the famous Trans-Antarctica Expedition by Jean-Louis Etienne (1989-90) that went from the Antarctic Peninsula to the Russian research base of Mirny.
http://www.explorapoles.org/explorers/profile/funatsu_keizo

Barbara Hillary was the first African American woman on record to reach both the North and South Poles. Born in New York City, New York on June 12, 1931 to Viola Jones Hillary and raised in Harlem, Hillary attended the New School University in New York, N.Y. where she earned both her Bachelor of Arts and Master's degrees. She used her studies in Gerontology to establish a career in nursing, focusing on staff training in the concepts of patient aging and their service delivery systems in nursing homes and similar facilities.

At age 67, Hillary survived lung cancer. As a result, she had surgery that caused her to lose 25% of her breathing capacity. This was her second cancer occurrence, having survived breast cancer the first time in her 20s. After her retirement from nursing, she became interested in Arctic travel. After photographing polar bears in Manitoba, Canada, she fell in love with the beauty of the North. When she learned that no black woman had reached the North Pole, she sought to become the first one. [About | Barbara Hillary \(1931 - 2019\)](#)

Fiona Thornewill (born in July 1966) has become famous together with her husband Mike, are a working couple from Nottinghamshire, who raised £68,000 to fund their record-breaking expedition, raised £100,000 for Marie Curie Cancer Fund and realised their dreams of being the first married couple to walk to both the South and North Poles.

Her major achievements

4/1/2000: 1st British woman to ski - Geographic South Pole.*

5/5/2001: 1st British woman to ski - Geographic North Pole.*

5/5/2001: 1st Woman to ski - both Geographic Poles.*
5/5/2001: Fastest woman to ski - Geographic North Pole in 55 days.*
10/1/2004: 1st British woman to ski solo & unsupported - Geographic South Pole.
10/1/2004: Fastest (man or woman) to ski - Geographic South Pole - unsupported in 41 days 8 hours 14 minutes.
*Record held jointly with Ms. Catharine Hartley.

Awards

2000: Pride of Britain
2001: R.A.D.A.R - People of the Year.
2004: European Woman of Achievement.
2004: Royal Institute of Navigation - Achievement Award.
2004: Explorers Web - Best expedition of 2004.
2004: Midlander Of The Year.
2005 : MBE

http://www.explorapoles.org/explorers/profile/thornewill_fiona/

Preet Chandi, is a polar explorer and army officer thought to have become the first woman of colour to complete a solo expedition across Antarctica. Preet Chandi trekked 700 miles in 40 days, facing temperatures of -50C, poor visibility and fatigue along the way. The 32-year-old, from Derby, said she set the challenge because she wanted to inspire others to "push boundaries".

[Army officer completes remarkable solo South Pole trek - BBC News](#)

Martin Hewitt, is a former paratrooper, from Manchester, who lost the use of his right arm after being shot in Afghanistan. As a disabled military veteran, he reached the South Pole with another polar explorer after skiing more than 400 miles (644km) in 50 days. He completed the trek with former British Army officer Lou Rudd, from Hereford, on 5 January.

"For him to do this with one arm is just absolutely incredible," Mr Rudd said. Martin Hewitt's 45- day trek across Antarctica followed the success of him already having reached the North Pole and climbing Mount Everest.

He made the journey on skis - without huskies, windblown kites or motorised equipment - and with no air-dropped resupplies beyond what he is already pulling in a sled behind him.

Martin Hewitt, 41, kept his right arm in a sling and used his other arm while skiing which he described in a Facebook post as "the one thing I struggle with more than anything else". He added using just one pole and balancing on the ice and snow had been "really challenging" meaning he had fallen "a lot".

The overwhelming feeling he had on finishing, Mr Hewitt wrote, was "gratitude, for the opportunity to come and do this".

The conditions they faced included 40-50mph winds and crevasses in the ice while pulling sleds on skis, covering up to 12 miles (19km) each day.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-59895330>

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Jade Hameister is a young explorer. In January 2018, Jade (aged 16), arrived at the South Pole after an epic 37- day journey via a new route through the Kansas Glacier, from the Amundsen Coast of Antarctica.

Jade's almost 600km route forged a new path through the Transantarctic Mountain Range through the unexplored Kansas Glacier. The Kansas Glacier is one of the most southern glaciers in the world and one of the most easterly in the Transantarctic range.

Following her TEDx talk in 2016, Jade received many messages online from male trolls telling her to "make me a sandwich" – a chauvinistic saying, suggesting a woman's place is in the kitchen. Jade finished her South Pole journey by presenting her trolls with a sandwich and suggesting that they were welcome to eat it if they were capable of completing the same journeys.

<https://www.jadehameister.com/>