

The Endurance Test

Time: 1 hour plus further research / finishing off time if necessary

Introduction In this activity the children will research and find out what kind of challenges the first polar explorers faced in their struggle for survival on their expeditions 100 years ago. This activity will focus specifically on Sir Ernest Shackleton.

Learning Objective:

To learn about the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton and his 'Endurance' expedition of 1914-1916, and to recreate the story on a timeline.

Resources:

1. Images and information on Ernest Shackleton using Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Shackleton) and the information sheet (available on www.2041.com)
2. Large sheets of sugar paper for the story timeline and metre sticks
3. The children's story book 'Trapped by the Ice!' about Shackleton's Endurance expedition
4. Further images and information from books and websites on other polar explorers such as Robert Falcon Scott, Douglas Mawson and Roald Amundsen.

1 Read Shackleton's Story at [Insert website URL] and find out what made him such a hero amongst his expedition team. Once the children have read his story, they can recreate it on a timeline. Start the timeline in August 1914 and finish it in August 1916. It will therefore need to be 25 months including both the Augusts at the beginning and the end. The children should measure 3 cm for each month (so 75cm in all) and then start to mark in above and below the line the key events of the expedition. Before drawing out the timeline, what colour paper do they want to use and how will they write in the events? With chalk? In spiky handwriting?

2 When they have finished the timeline, they can add in some pictures to bring the story to life. The book 'Trapped by the Ice' will be very useful for this. They can also write in speech bubbles the thoughts of the crew at various stages of the expedition. What might they be thinking about? Who or what might they be missing?

Differentiation

Assistance may be needed to measure out the timeline and put in the monthly markings. It may help to have some timelines already marked out. Some of the more able writers can put the statements in their own words.

Success criteria

The children begin to appreciate the levels of endurance experienced by Sir Ernest Shackleton and his crew on their expedition nearly 100 years ago, and what made Shackleton such an extraordinary leader.

