

Lost and found: the extraordinary story of Shackleton's Endurance epic

Level 3: Advanced

1 Warmer

a. Discuss these questions.

1. Who were the first two people to reach the top of Mount Everest?
2. Who were the people in the first NASA mission that landed on the Moon?
3. Who was the first European to circumnavigate the globe?
4. Who reached the South Pole first?
5. Who was the first European to reach Australia?
6. Who were the first people to navigate around the Cape of Good Hope to establish a sea route from Europe to Asia?

2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

barrier biting circumvent clamber convulsed dysentery
decamp floe keepsake outcrop stowaway surge

1. A _____ is someone who hides in a vehicle, ship or plane in order to travel without ticket or permission.
2. A _____ is something that prevents you from making progress.
3. An ice _____ is a large area of ice floating on the surface of the sea.
4. If people _____, they leave a place quickly.
5. A _____ is a small object that you keep in order to remind you of someone or something.
6. An _____ is a rock or group of rocks that sticks up out of the ground or the sea.
7. If you are _____ with an illness, your body moves in an uncontrolled way.
8. _____ is a serious disease that makes you go to the toilet very frequently and become very weak.

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9. To _____ means *to climb something with difficulty using your hands and feet*.
10. A _____ wind is so cold that it makes you feel very uncomfortable.
11. A _____ is a sudden, sharp rise.
12. If you _____ something, you avoid it by going round it.

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Vessel located more than a century after it sank on voyage of exploration in the Antarctic

Harriet Sherwood

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- 1 The *Endurance* left South Georgia for Antarctica on 5 December, 1914. Onboard were 27 crew members plus a stowaway, 69 dogs and one cat. Sir Ernest Shackleton, the expedition leader, was aiming to establish a base on Antarctica's Weddell Sea coast and then keep going to the Ross Sea on the other side of the continent.
- 2 Within two days, the ship encountered the barrier of thick sea ice around the Antarctic continent. For several weeks, the *Endurance* made painstaking progress, but in mid-January, a gale pushed the ice floes hard against one another and the ship was stuck – “frozen like an almond in the middle of a chocolate bar”, according to a crew member, Thomas Orde-Lees.
- 3 The men could do nothing but wait. After nine months of being stuck in ice, they abandoned the badly damaged ship, decamping on to the ice. From the ship they took food, bibles, books, clothing, tools, keepsakes and – crucially – three open lifeboats. The cat and some of the dogs were shot.
- 4 A few weeks later, on 21 November, 1915, almost a year after they had set out, the *Endurance* finally sank. Using basic navigational tools, Frank Worsley, the ship's captain and navigator, recorded its location. Without that information, it would almost certainly never have been found.
- 5 The men formed a plan to march across the ice towards land. But after travelling just seven and a half miles (12km) in seven days, they gave up. “There was no alternative but to camp once more on the floe and to possess our souls with what patience we could till conditions should appear more favourable for a renewal of the attempt to escape,” wrote Shackleton.
- 6 When the ice broke up the following April, the crew took to the lifeboats, rowing to Elephant Island, a remote and uninhabited outcrop. The men were exhausted, some afflicted by sea sickness, others convulsed with dysentery. “At least half the party were insane,” wrote Frank Wild, Shackleton's second in command.
- 7 But they made it. On 15 April, they clambered ashore on Elephant Island. It was the first time the men had stood on solid ground in almost 500 days.
- 8 After nine days of recuperation, Shackleton, Worsley and four others took one of the boats another 800 miles (1,300km) across rough seas and in biting winds to South Georgia. “The boat tossed interminably on the big waves under grey, threatening skies. Every surge of the sea was an enemy to be watched and circumvented,” wrote Shackleton. It took 16 days to reach their destination.
- 9 It was an extraordinary feat of survival, but their epic journey was not yet over. Three of the men, including Shackleton, then crossed South Georgia's peaks and glaciers to reach a whaling station on the other side of the island. In August, after several failed attempts, a rescue party set out for Elephant Island, where the remaining 22 crewmen were waiting.
- 10 In early 1922, Shackleton launched a new expedition to the Antarctic. On 5 January, while his ship was docked at South Georgia, he died of a heart attack, aged 47.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. How many people were on board the *Endurance* when it left South Georgia?
2. What was the purpose of the expedition?
3. How long were the crew stuck in the ice before they abandoned the ship?
4. What significant information did the ship's navigator record?
5. What was the population of Elephant Island at the time?
6. How long had it been since the men had stood on solid ground?
7. How many men rowed from Elephant Island to South Georgia?
8. How long did that journey take?
9. How many men crossed South Georgia to the whaling station?
10. Where did Ernest Shackleton die?

4 Key language

a. Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. establish | a. your destination |
| 2. make | b. a ship |
| 3. abandon | c. an expedition |
| 4. form | d. a base |
| 5. reach | e. a plan |
| 6. launch | f. progress |

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "Why do people need to go to Antarctica? There's nothing there."
- "Travel broadens the mind."
- "In the 21st century, there is nothing left to explore."

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6 In your own words

- a. Use the internet to find more information about famous shipwrecks. For example, a sunken Roman cargo ship (possibly containing valuable cargo) has recently been found near the Spanish island of Mallorca. Other areas you could search for shipwrecks include:
- Scapa Flow, Scotland
 - the Aegean Sea, Greece
 - the Bermuda Triangle
- b. Use the information you find to write a short report to present to the class.