

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

### Level 2: Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

a. When did these historical events happen? Write the year next to each one.

1. Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first people to reach the summit of Mount Everest.
2. The first man walked on the Moon.
3. Christopher Columbus reached America.
4. Roald Amundsen and his group became the first to reach the South Pole.
5. Howard Carter discovered the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun.
6. Dutch explorers became the first Europeans to reach Australia.

#### 2 Key words

a. Find the following words in the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

1. a noun meaning *someone who hides on a vehicle, a ship, or a plane in order to travel without ticket or permission* \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
2. a two-word noun meaning *a large piece of ice that floats on the surface of the sea*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2)
3. a verb meaning *leave a place, especially when it is dangerous or difficult to stay there*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3)
4. a noun meaning *someone whose job is to plan the direction in which a ship or plane should travel*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (4)
5. an adjective meaning *far away from other places or people* \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
6. a noun meaning *a serious disease that makes you go to the toilet a lot and become very weak*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (6)
7. a noun meaning *a period when you get better after being ill or injured*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (8)
8. a noun meaning *something impressive and often dangerous that someone does*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (9)
9. a noun meaning *a very large mass of ice that moves very slowly on land*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (9)
10. a verb meaning *start a major activity or project* \_\_\_\_\_ (10)

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**9 March, 2022**

- 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 planning to establish a base on Antarctica's Weddell Sea coast and then continue to the Ross Sea on the other side of the continent.
- 2 Within two days, the ship ran into the thick sea ice around the Antarctic continent. For several weeks, the *Endurance* made slow progress, but in mid-January, a strong wind pushed the ice floes hard against one another and the ship became 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 and moved onto the ice. From the ship, they took food, bibles, books, clothing, tools and – most importantly – 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. Frank Worsley, the ship's captain and navigator, recorded its location using basic navigational tools. 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 be patient until conditions were more favourable for an attempt to escape,” wrote Shackleton.
- 6 When the ice broke up the following April, the crew took the lifeboats to row to Elephant Island, a remote and uninhabited rock. The men were exhausted, some had sea sickness, others had dysentery. “At least half the men were insane,” wrote Frank Wild, Shackleton's second in command.
- 7 But they made it. On 15 April, they reached 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 freezing winds to South Georgia. 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 mountains 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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First published in *The Guardian* 09/03/2022

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#### 3 Comprehension check

a. Are these statements True (T) or False (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. There were twenty-seven people on board the *Endurance* when it left South Georgia.
2. They were planning to establish a base on the Ross Sea.
3. The ship was stuck in the ice for nine months.
4. They shot the cat and all the dogs.
5. The ship finally sank almost a year after they had set out.
6. The ice broke up in April.
7. Not many people lived on Elephant Island at the time.
8. They rowed 800 miles from Elephant Island to South Georgia.
9. Shackleton and three other men crossed the mountains to the whaling station.
10. Shackleton died at South Georgia.

#### 4 Key language

a. Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

1. side the island on of the other
2. of stuck nine after being months
3. had almost out a after set they year
4. seven half a in miles seven and days
5. feat an survival extraordinary of
6. almost five time the first in hundred days

#### 5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "There is still so much of the world to explore."
- "Why do people want to go to Antarctica? There's nothing there."

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### 6 In your own words

- a. Use the internet to find information about another famous expedition. You can choose one of the expeditions mentioned in the Warmer (Activity 1) or another famous expedition to a remote part of the world. Make notes.
- b. Report your findings to the class.