

Ernest Shackleton

Ernest Shackleton was a famous polar explorer, who took part in three expeditions to the Antarctic and made many important scientific discoveries.

Childhood

Ernest Henry Shackleton was born in Ireland on 15th February 1874. His father was Henry Shackleton, a landowner at the time, and his mother was Henrietta Gavan. Ernest's father began training to become a doctor when Ernest was six years old. Four years later, when his father had finished his training, the family moved to Sydenham, London, in search of better jobs.



Education

Ernest was schooled at home until he was 11 when he began at Fir Lodge Preparatory School in Dulwich, in southeast London. At the age of 13, he went to Dulwich College.

Ernest was a keen reader. He particularly enjoyed reading about fictional adventures, which made him want to go on adventures himself. Although Ernest was very clever, he found school boring and did not enjoy learning about the world by reading about it. Ernest wanted to experience everything for himself.

The Merchant Navy

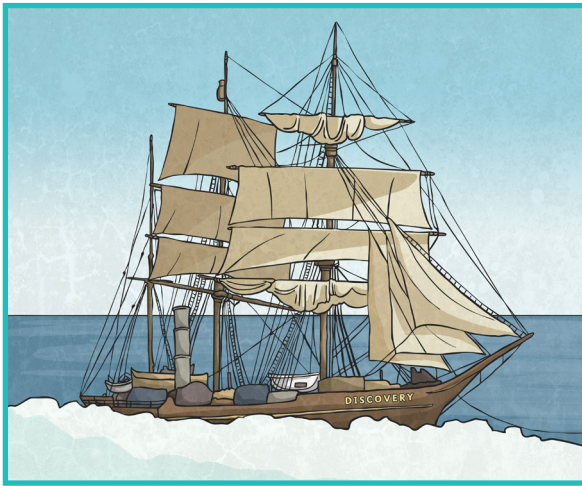
To be able to explore the world, Ernest left school at the age of 16 and joined the merchant navy. He spent four years learning how to sail before becoming a Second Mate or assistant. Four years later, Ernest became a Master Mariner. This meant that he was able to sail a British ship anywhere in the world. Although Ernest travelled to places around the world, he never saw the Antarctic – something he had always wanted to do.

Expeditions

Ernest got the job of third officer to the National Antarctic Expedition's ship, 'Discovery'. This was to be a voyage of discovery led by Robert Falcon Scott and it would be Ernest's first expedition to the Antarctic. The team set sail on 31st July 1901, arriving at the Antarctic Coast over five months later.



With Scott and one other team member, Ernest trekked towards the South Pole in extremely difficult conditions, getting closer to the Pole than anyone had come before. Unfortunately, the team experienced many hardships during the expedition, including snow blindness, frostbite and illness. Ernest became very poorly so was sent home early on 4th January 1903, never having reached the South Pole.



Five years later, Ernest attempted his second Antarctic expedition and set sail aboard a ship named 'Nimrod' on 1st January 1908.

On this expedition, Ernest and his team climbed Mount Erebus – the second-highest volcano in Antarctica – and came closer to the South Pole than they had before (only 180 km from the Pole).

When Ernest returned home, he received an award from King Edward VII. A few months later, the King made him a knight – so he became Sir Ernest Shackleton.

Ernest was eager to go on another expedition so he put an advertisement in the newspaper asking for men to join him; more than 5,000 people applied. In 1914, Ernest selected a crew of 56 men, who were split between two ships named 'Endurance' and 'Aurora', which set sail on 8th August.

Conditions were slow and hazardous and on 19th January 1915, the ship 'Endurance' became stuck in a large sheet of ice. Ernest and his crew abandoned the ship and lived on top of the Antarctic ice for almost two years before they were finally rescued on 30th August 1916.

Questions

1. **Unfortunately, the team experienced many hardships during the expedition...**

What does **hardships** mean? Tick one.

- severe suffering
- total ease
- minor difficulties
- complete success

2. Match the event to when it happened:

Ernest Henry Shackleton
was born in Ireland.

31st July 1901

The ship 'Discovery' set
sail.

15th February 1874

The ship 'Endurance'
became stuck in a large
sheet of ice.

19th January 1915

3. Name one thing that Ernest liked and one thing he disliked as a child.

4. Fill in the missing words:

To be able to explore the world, Ernest left school at the age of _____ and joined the _____, spending four years learning how to _____.

5. Find and copy a word or phrase which shows that Ernest was still keen to go on more expeditions after the 'Nimrod' expedition.

6. Why do you think that the King made Ernest a knight?

7. Summarise Ernest's final expedition in 30 words or less.

8. How do you think Ernest felt when he first visited Antarctica? Explain your answer.

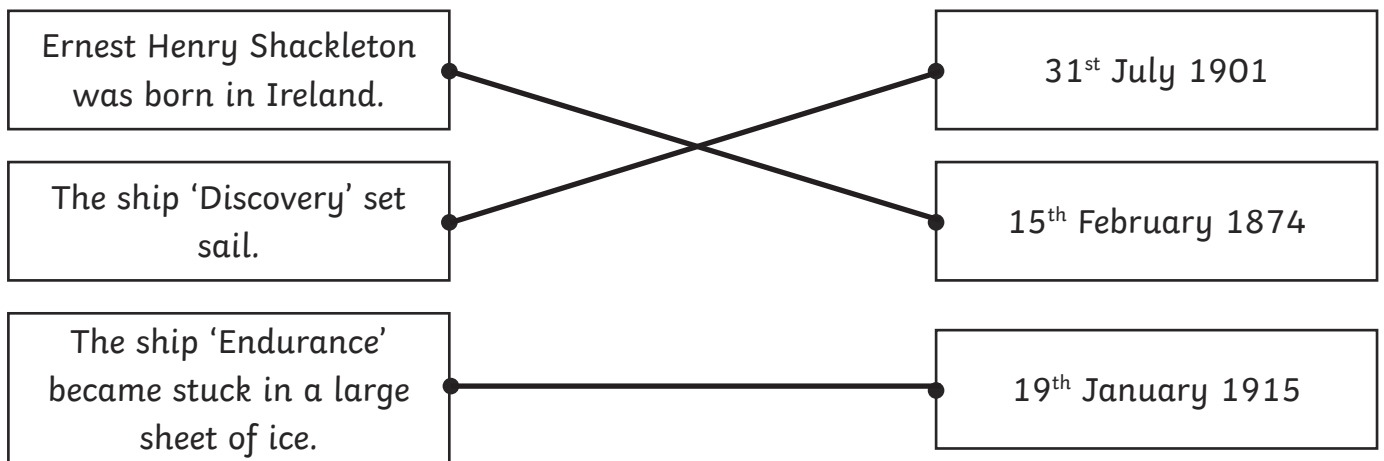
Answers

1. Unfortunately, the team experienced many hardships during the expedition...

What does **hardships** mean? Tick one.

- severe suffering**
- total ease
- minor difficulties
- complete success

2. Match the event to when it happened:



3. Name one thing that Ernest liked and one thing he disliked as a child.

Ernest liked reading.

Ernest disliked school/learning about the world by reading about it.

4. Fill in the missing words:

To be able to explore the world, Ernest left school at the age of **16** and joined the **merchant navy**, spending four years learning how to **sail**.

5. Find and copy a word or phrase which shows that Ernest was still keen to go on more expeditions after the 'Nimrod' expedition.

(Ernest was) eager (to go on another expedition)

6. Why do you think that the King made Ernest a knight?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Ernest had completed something that many people never do, so he deserved the title of 'Sir' for his hard work.

7. Summarise Ernest's final expedition in 30 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: In 1914, 'Endurance' and 'Aurora' set sail but conditions were slow and difficult' 'Endurance' became stuck on an ice sheet meaning that the crew had to live on the Antarctic ice for almost two years before being rescued.

8. How do you think Ernest felt when he first visited Antarctica? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Ernest would have been so pleased to have finally realised his dreams of visiting the Antarctic; he would have felt ecstatic.

Ernest Shackleton

Ernest Shackleton was a renowned polar explorer, who participated in three expeditions to the Antarctic and made many important scientific discoveries.

Early Life

On 15th February 1874, Ernest Henry Shackleton was born in Ireland. He was the second of ten children born to Henry Shackleton, a landowner at the time, and Henrietta Gavan. Ernest's father began training to become a doctor when Ernest was six years old and four years later, the family moved to Sydenham, London, in search of better jobs for his father - now a doctor.



Ernest was schooled by a **governess** at home until he was 11 when he began at Fir Lodge Preparatory School in Dulwich, in southeast London. At the age of 13, he attended Dulwich College. During his childhood, Ernest was a keen reader. He particularly enjoyed reading about fictional adventures, which made him want to go on escapades himself. Although Ernest was very clever, he found school boring and did not enjoy learning about the world by reading about it. Ernest wanted to experience everything for himself.

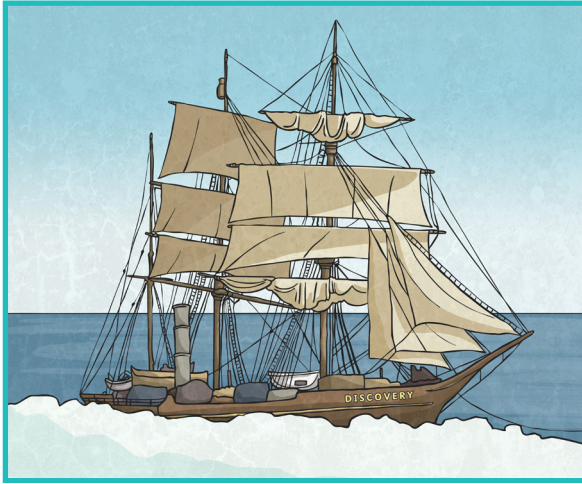
The Merchant Navy

In order to explore the world, Ernest left school at the age of 16 and joined the **merchant navy**. He became an **apprentice** on a ship and spent four years learning how to sail before becoming a **Second Mate**. Four years later, in 1898, Ernest achieved the title of Master Mariner. This meant that he was able to sail a British ship anywhere in the world. Although Ernest travelled to places around the world, he never saw the Antarctic – something he was eager to do.

Expeditions

Ernest was appointed as third officer to the National Antarctic Expedition's ship, 'Discovery'. This was to be a voyage of scientific and geographical discovery, led by the explorer Robert Falcon Scott, and would be Ernest's first expedition to the Antarctic. The team set sail on 31st July 1901, arriving at the Antarctic Coast over five months later on 8th January 1902.

With Scott and one other team member, Ernest trekked towards the South Pole in extremely difficult conditions, getting closer to the Pole than anyone had come before. Unfortunately, the team experienced many hardships during the expedition, including snow blindness, frostbite and **scurvy**. Due to becoming very



poorly, Ernest was sent home early on 4th January 1903, never having reached the South Pole.

Back in Britain, Ernest spent some time as a journalist before he attempted his second Antarctic expedition and set sail aboard a ship named 'Nimrod' on 1st January 1908.

On this expedition, Ernest and his team discovered the Beardmore Glacier, climbed Mount Erebus – the second-highest volcano in Antarctica – and came even closer to the South Pole than they had before (reaching a point only 180 km from the Pole). Their return journey was a race against time and

they arrived at Hut Point just in time to catch the ship.

On Ernest's return home, he received an award from King Edward VII and a few months later, the King made him a knight – so he became Sir Ernest Shackleton.

Determined to go on another expedition, Ernest put an advertisement in the newspaper asking for men to join him; more than 5,000 people applied and in 1914, Ernest selected a crew of 56 men, who were split between two ships named 'Endurance' and 'Aurora', which set sail on 8th August.

Conditions in the Weddell Sea were slow and hazardous and on 19th January 1915, the ship 'Endurance' became stuck in a large **ice floe**. Ernest and his crew abandoned the ship (which eventually sank ten months later) and lived on top of the Antarctic ice for almost two years before they were finally rescued on 30th August 1916.

Glossary

apprentice: A beginner who is learning a trade.

governess: A woman employed to teach children in their homes.

ice floe: A sheet of floating ice.

merchant navy: The ships which transport produce to and from a country.

scurvy: A disease caused by a lack of vitamin C.

Second Mate: An assistant on a merchant ship.

Questions

1. How old was Ernest when his family moved to Sydenham? Tick one.

- four
 six
 ten
 eleven

2. Order the following statements from 1-5 to show the order they happened.

	Ernest's ship 'Endurance' became stuck in a large ice floe.
	Ernest joined the merchant navy.
	Ernest set sail aboard a ship named 'Nimrod'.
	Ernest achieved the title of Master Mariner.
	Ernest was appointed as third officer to the National Antarctic Expedition's ship, 'Discovery'.

3. Which other famous explorer was important in Ernest's life?

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

Ernest advertised for men to join him on his expeditions and more than _____ people applied; in 1914, Ernest selected a crew of _____ men, who set sail on _____.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that Ernest was keen to visit Antarctica.

6. Sum up Ernest's time in the merchant navy.

7. Why do you think that Ernest went on multiple Antarctic expeditions?

8. How is Ernest similar to another famous explorer or scientist?

9. Why did lots of the crew get scurvy?

Answers

1. How old was Ernest when his family moved to Sydenham? Tick one.

- four
 six
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2. Order the following statements from 1-5 to show the order they happened.

5	Ernest's ship 'Endurance' became stuck in a large ice floe.
1	Ernest joined the merchant navy.
4	Ernest set sail aboard a ship named 'Nimrod'.
2	Ernest achieved the title of Master Mariner.
3	Ernest was appointed as third office to the National Antarctic Expedition's ship, 'Discovery'.

3. Which other famous explorer was important in Ernest's life?

Robert Falcon Scott

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

Ernest advertised for men to join him on his expeditions and more than **5,000** people applied; in 1914, Ernest selected a crew of **56** men, who set sail on **8th August**.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that Ernest was keen to visit Antarctica.

something he was eager to do

6. Sum up Ernest's time in the merchant navy.

Pupils' own responses, such as: After joining the merchant navy at 16, Ernest became an apprentice; he spent four years learning how to sail before becoming a Second Mate and, after four more years, becoming Master Mariner (so he could sail British ships around the world).

7. Why do you think that Ernest went on multiple Antarctic expeditions?

Pupils' own responses, such as: He had always wanted to explore the Antarctic and loved adventures so he kept going back for more exciting escapades; he was striving to reach the South Pole.

8. How is Ernest similar to another famous explorer or scientist?

Pupils' own responses which compare Ernest to another famous explorer or scientist, such as Scott or Amundsen.

9. Why did lots of the crew get scurvy?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Scurvy is a disease caused by a lack of vitamin C, which we get from fruit and vegetables, so many of the crew got ill with scurvy because they were at sea for a long time so had limited fresh food.

Ernest Shackleton

Ernest Henry Shackleton was born in Ireland on 15th February 1874, at a time when exploration was very important. He was the second of ten children born to Henrietta Gavan and Henry Shackleton, a landowner at the time; however, when Ernest was six years old, his father began training to become a doctor and four years later, the family moved to Sydenham, London, in search of better jobs for his father - now a newly qualified doctor.

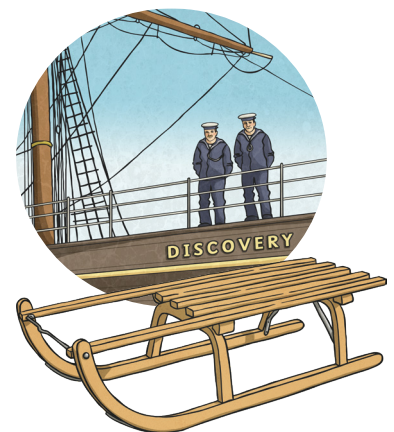


As a young boy, Ernest was schooled by a governess at home and showed great enthusiasm for reading - he particularly enjoyed books about fictional adventures, which inspired him to plan his own escapades. At 11, he began at Fir Lodge Preparatory School in Dulwich, in southeast London before moving on to Dulwich College at the age of 13. Although Ernest was very clever, he found school boring and did not enjoy learning about the world by reading about it; Ernest wanted to experience everything for himself so continued to plan his great adventures, including to his favourite place - The Antarctic.

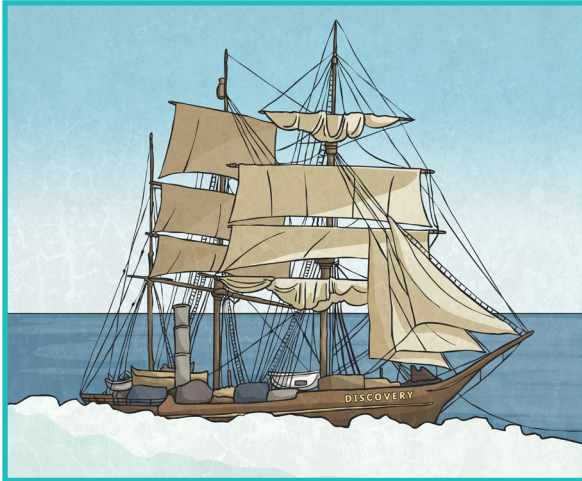
In order to explore the world, Ernest left school at the age of 16 when he joined the merchant navy (the ships which transport produce to and from a country), becoming an apprentice (a beginner who is learning a trade) on a ship and spending four years learning how to sail before becoming a Second Mate (an assistant on a merchant ship). Four years later, in 1898, Ernest achieved the title of Master Mariner, which meant that he was able to sail a British ship anywhere in the world. His job took him across the globe, but he still didn't reach the Antarctic.

Expeditions

As Ernest knew the son of one of the main organisers of the National Antarctic Expedition, he managed to obtain an interview and his enthusiasm gained him a job as third officer to the expedition's ship, 'Discovery'. This was to be a voyage of scientific and geographical discovery led by Robert Falcon Scott and would be Ernest's first, much awaited, expedition to the Antarctic. The team set sail on 31st July 1901, arriving at the Antarctic Coast over five months later on 8th January 1902. After landing, Ernest took part in an experimental balloon flight and also completed the



first sledging trip, with two scientists, from the expedition's winter quarters to the Great Ice Barrier (the largest ice shelf of Antarctica) to establish a safe route.



With Scott and one other team member, Ernest trekked towards the South Pole in extremely difficult conditions, getting closer to the Pole than anyone had come before (reaching the Farthest South latitude of $82^{\circ} 17'$). Unfortunately, the team experienced many hardships during the expedition, including snow blindness, frostbite and scurvy (a disease caused by a lack of vitamin C). Due to becoming very poorly, Ernest was sent home early on 4th January 1903, never having reached the South Pole.

Back in Britain, Ernest spent some time as a journalist before he attempted his second Antarctic expedition and set sail aboard a ship named 'Nimrod' on 1st January 1908.

On this expedition, Ernest and his team discovered the Beardmore Glacier, climbed Mount Erebus – the second-highest volcano in Antarctica – and, on their 'Great Southern Journey', came even closer to the South Pole than they had before (reaching the Farthest South **latitude** of $88^{\circ} 23'$, a point only 180 km from the Pole). Their return journey was a race against starvation, on half-rations most of the way and they arrived at Hut Point just in time to catch the ship.



On Ernest's return home, he received an award from King Edward VII and a few months later, the King made him a knight – so he became Sir Ernest Shackleton.

Determined to go on another expedition, Ernest put an advertisement in the newspaper asking for men to join him; more than 5,000 people applied and in 1914, Ernest selected a crew of 56 men, who were split between two ships named 'Endurance' and 'Aurora', which set sail on 8th August.

Conditions in the Weddell Sea were slow and hazardous and on 19th January 1915, the ship 'Endurance' became stuck in a large ice floe (a sheet of floating ice). Ernest and his crew abandoned the ship (which eventually sank ten months later) and lived on top of the Antarctic ice for almost two years before, in April 1916, Ernest took five crew members to find help. They spent 16 days crossing 1,300km of ocean in a small boat to reach the island of South Georgia, where they trekked to a whaling station for help. The remaining crew were finally rescued on 30th August 1916.

Ernest planned a fourth expedition in which he aimed to circumnavigate (travel all the way around) the Antarctic continent. Sadly, on 5th January 1922, Ernest died of a heart attack off South Georgia; he was buried on the island.

Glossary

latitude: The distance north or south of the equator measured in degrees.

Questions

1. ...reaching the Farthest South **latitude** of 82° 17'...

What does **latitude** mean? Tick one.

- The distance north of the equator measured in degrees.
- The distance north of the equator measured in degrees.
- The distance north or south of the equator measured in degrees.
- The distance east or west of the equator measured in degrees.

2. Which of these titles is the highest rank that Ernest achieved whilst in the merchant navy?

Tick one.

- Second Mate
- apprentice
- Master Mariner
- third officer

3. Find two words in the second paragraph which mean 'an exciting or daring experience'.

- _____
- _____

4. Find two things that Ernest enjoyed doing as a child.

- _____
- _____

5. What did Ernest and his team 'discover'?

6. ...**Ernest's first, much awaited, expedition to the Antarctic.**

Why does the author use the words 'much awaited' in this sentence?

7. Summarise Ernest's second expedition in 40 words or less.

8. Why was Ernest 'determined to go on another expedition...'?

9. Explain why Ernest trekked across the Antarctic ice in April 1916. Give detailed reasons.

10. Which part of Ernest's life do you think was the most important? Give evidence to support your answer.

Answers

1. ...reaching the Farthest South **latitude** of 82° 17'...

What does **latitude** mean? Tick one.

- The distance north of the equator measured in degrees.
- The distance north of the equator measured in degrees.
- The distance north or south of the equator measured in degrees.**
- The distance east or west of the equator measured in degrees.

2. Which of these titles is the highest rank that Ernest achieved whilst in the merchant navy?
Tick one.

- Second Mate
- apprentice
- Master Mariner**
- third officer

3. Find two words in the second paragraph which mean 'an exciting or daring experience'.

- **adventures**
- **escapades**

4. Find two things that Ernest enjoyed doing as a child.

- **reading (books about fictional adventures)**
- **planning his own escapades**

5. What did Ernest and his team 'discover'?

Ernest and his team discovered the Beardmore Glacier.

6. ...Ernest's first, much awaited, expedition to the Antarctic.

Why does the author use the words 'much awaited' in this sentence?

'Much awaited' gives the impression of something that Ernest has waited a long time for – he always wanted to visit Antarctica and had been planning his adventure since he was a child.

7. Summarise Ernest's second expedition in 40 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: During the 'Nimrod' expedition, Ernest discovered the Beardmore Glacier, climbed Mount Erebus and came closer to the South Pole than before. They completed their homeward journey on half-rations, arriving just in time to catch the ship.

8. Why was Ernest 'determined to go on another expedition...'?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Ernest had still not reached the South Pole, something he was keen to do, so he wanted to go on another expedition to attempt to complete his adventure.

9. Explain why Ernest trekked across the Antarctic ice in April 1916. Give detailed reasons.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Ernest trekked across the Antarctic ice in April 1916 to find help to rescue his crew who were stranded on an ice sheet due to 'Endurance' having become stuck; Ernest was their captain and so probably felt responsible to save his crew.

10. Which part of Ernest's life do you think was the most important? Give evidence to support your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Ernest's second expedition on 'Nimrod' was the most important part of his life because he achieved something that nobody else had achieved before – he reached the Farthest South latitude of 88° 23', a point only 180 km from the Pole.