

Lesson Background

In 400 BC Pytheas, a Greek explorer, sailed from Marseilles to Britain, up to the north of Scotland and then onwards for about 6 days to a land he called Thule. It is not known whether the land was Iceland, Scandinavia or Britain.

As the lands of the north were discovered and mapped the name Thule was given to the most recently discovered northern land – Britain, Scandinavia, Iceland, Svalbard, Greenland and the Baltic coast.

This unit will explore the concept of exploration. The explorers of the past went to unknown places. Modern explorers know more about where they are heading and have more resources to support their journey but look for other ways to push boundaries.

Outcomes

Students will gain an appreciation of what makes an explorer.

Preparation

- Investigate the word 'Thule' and find out what it has referred to at different times in history.
- Investigate the word 'Terra Nullius' and note whether lands 'discovered' by westerners (people coming from Europe or the United Kingdom) were already inhabited by people or not.
- Review 'adventurestats' (see links) to identify significant features of the history of Arctic (or Antarctic) expeditions.

Student Activities

Student Activity 1. What is Exploration?

Brainstorm with students a list of explorers they know. Discuss, describe and define what an explorer is.

Consider the following questions:

- Is an explorer a person who goes somewhere that no one has ever been before?
- Is a person an explorer if they are going somewhere they themselves have never been before?
- Modern explorers have information about a place no one has ever been to because of satellite imagery – how does this effect the concept of 'exploration'?

- Many early European, British and American explorers had information from indigenous people to help them travel and map lands they had not been in before. Inuit people helped early arctic explorers. Aboriginal people helped early Australian explorers. How does the help they provided effect the concept of 'exploration'? Is it really exploration if there are already people living there?

Student Activity 2. Who has been to the North and South Poles?

Look at the Arctic Explorers Map (Attachments) and the North Pole adventure statistics (Links). Further investigate some of the explorers to complete this data chart (Attachments). Note the following:

- How the types of travel reflect technology and interests of the times.
- How the length of time for an expedition changed
- Which nationalities are most often represented
- The number of women who have been expeditioners

Information obtained from 'adventurestats' – complete the details in table A and B. (north and south tables attached at the back of the document labeled A and B consecutively).

Extension

Research another type of explorer and use the above data chart to help organise your research.

You could learn about –

- Australian explorers
- Space explorers
- Sea/Ocean explorers
- Local explorers
- Mountain explorers



How to be an explorer

Research the skills and resources that a particular type of explorer needs.

Why explore?

- Has the reason that people explore changed over the years?
- Why did people go to new lands and why did they sometimes settle there?
- Why do people now go to remote places or places that are very difficult to get to?
- Were the initial explorers 'adventurers' and are the modern adventurers 'explorers'?

What continent of the world has no indigenous people?

Think about how you would prepare for an exploratory expedition. How would you know how much food to take or what to bring with you? What other preparations would you need to make? Make an expedition plan showing what you would have to organise and make a list of items to take.

Resources

Diaries by explorers – Robert Scott, Edward Wilson, Roald Amundsen,

Expedition stories or films including :

- Into Thin Air – Jon Krakauer;
- On Thin Ice – Matty McNair;
- South Pole 2000 – Caroline Hamilton
- Icetrek - Eric Phillips;
- In the Ghost Country - Peter Hillary;
- The Wind in My Hair – Brigitte Muir
- The Ascent of Rum Doodle – W E Bowman (humour);

Attachments

Map of Arctic Explorers' Routes

(from www.arthropolis.com/map6.htm)

Polar Expedition statistics - Who has been to the North and South Poles (from www.adventurestats.com – see link following)

Links

www.adventurestats.com for statistics of all North and South Pole expeditioners.

Arctic explorers

Map of routes of arctic explorers

<http://www.arthropolis.com/map6.htm>

Timeline of arctic explorers over the past 3000 years

<http://www.allthingsarctic.com/exploration/timeline.aspx>

North West Passage exploration

<http://www.allthingsarctic.com/exploration/nwpassage.aspx>

