

Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World

1. Question & Research Task

The book *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World* relates the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton and his crew's harrowing expedition to Antarctica in 1914.

In this Slam Dunk, you will use informational sources to answer these questions:

1. What environmental risks and obstacles were faced by the crew of the *Endurance*?
2. What were the crew members' roles and responsibilities?
3. Imagine you were a member of the crew. How would you survive?

Then, you will use your new knowledge to write a letter in response to the inquiry question:

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

Which strengths, skills and characteristics would Sir Shackleton look for in selecting crew members?

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Your teacher will select the image above to show a trailer for the 2001 film, *Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure*.

*Teacher will need to show or provide student access to this YouTube video.

2. Information Sources

Use these information sources to gather information and take notes related to questions #1-3 on Slide 1.

***Your teacher/librarian will give you the database login if needed.**

- Encyclopedia articles: [Antarctica](#) | [Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton](#)
- [Antarctica: Facts About the Coldest Continent - LiveScience.com](#)
- [Antarctica's exploration history timeline](#)
- [Extraordinary 1915 Photos from Ernest Shackleton's Disastrous Antarctic Expedition \(scroll down to the gallery of images\)](#)
- [Frank Hurley's Antarctica: images of early 20th century polar exploration](#)
- [Frank Wild: Antarctica's Forgotten Hero](#)
- [Trans-Antarctica Expedition 1914-17, Endurance](#)
- [Explore Shackleton's Antarctic Hut](#)
- [Antarctic Exhibition Huts](#) from Google Arts & Culture
- [Shackleton's notes](#)

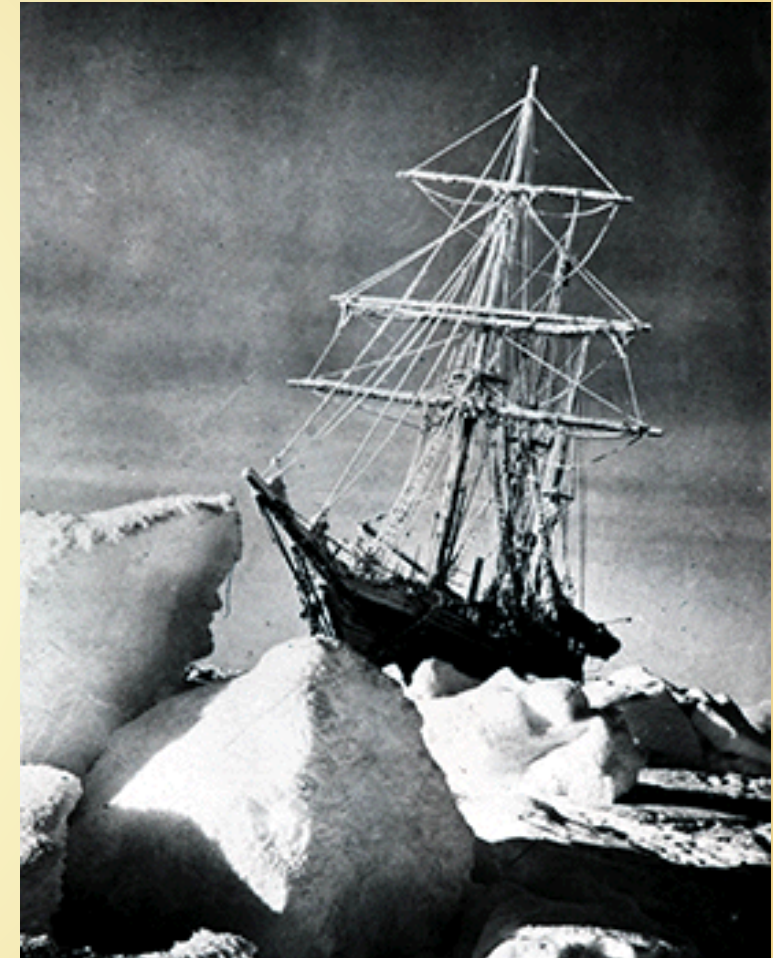


Image Source: © Popperfoto/Getty Images

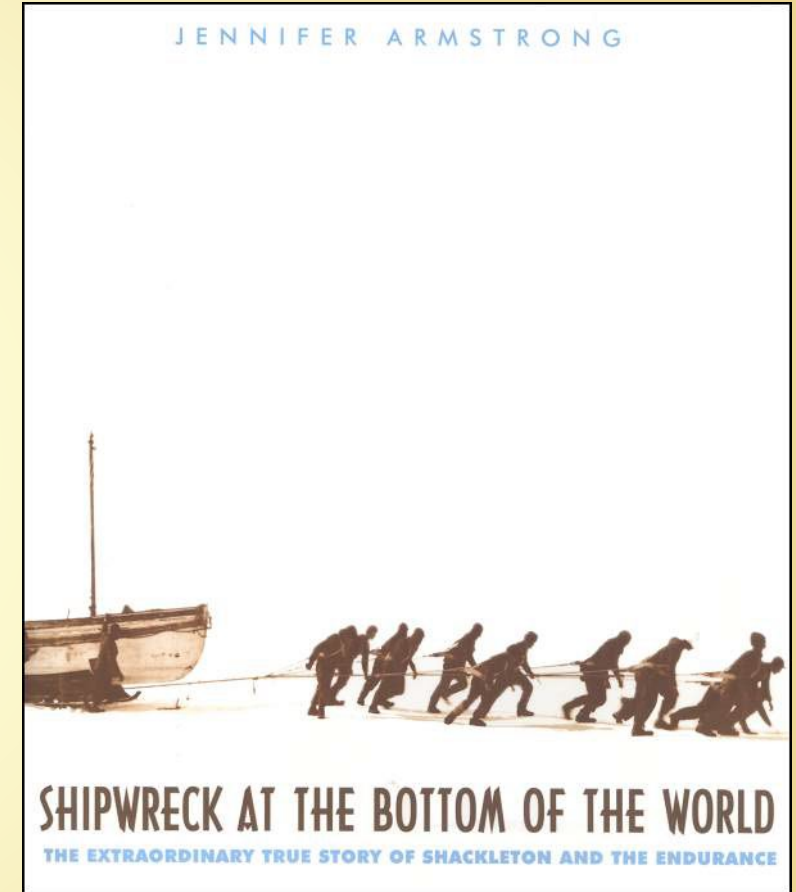
3. Student Activity

Now that you have read Jennifer Armstrong's *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World* and have done some research...

Think about what you know about Antarctic exploration and risks. Think about what you know about each crew member's role and responsibilities. Imagine that Sir Shackleton was still alive and was planning another Antarctic voyage. What skills and attributes could you contribute?

Write a letter to Sir Shackleton to persuade him to sign you on as a crew member on his next expedition!

Organize your ideas



4. Assessment Activity

Which strengths, skills and characteristics would Sir Shackleton look for in selecting crew members?

1. Review these resources:



Watch a BrainPOP video about how to write a business letter.

Scoring Tool

Refer to these guidelines for your letter.

2. Refer to your research notes and Student Activity organizer.
3. Use Google Docs to type your letter to Sir Shackleton!



There are many tales of how many people applied to join Shackleton on this expedition and how keen and eager to go many of them were. It seems that then as now for Antarctic expeditions, the majority were inexperienced and / or unsuited to the job they were applying for, and while for some positions, there were many takers, for others there were hardly any, just a single qualified applicant who in some cases may have had to be cajoled into applying. Shackleton ended up therefore with a very mixed crew, from the capable who were ready to await and take orders, to others, who while capable of doing their own job, were prepared to question or cast doubt on decisions made or were potential agitators. All of the men proved themselves in the end though it was a difficult journey in all respects. It is Shackleton himself who comes through as being the force that held it all together.

5. Enrichment Activities

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Take a look at the
[Royal Museums Greenwich's Exhibit on Sir Ernest Shackleton](#)



Watch the Discovery Education video [Polar Expeditions](#) to learn about other brave explorers who took dangerous treks to the north and south poles.

Read about some of the crewmembers. Try your hand at navigating with a sextant! Would you have survived?



6. Teacher Resources

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GT 5 Reading

Time Frame: four to five 50 minute periods

Differentiation strategies for this lesson:

- Have students use learning supports provided in any BCPS Digital Content in the [Apps Portal](#) included in this lesson.
- Refer to [Digital Content Snapshot/Support pages](#) as needed.

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- This Slam Dunk is the GT 5 Reading performance task for Jennifer Armstrong's *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World*.
- The Scoring Tool has been revised to reflect Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts
- Watch [the National Geographic video Survival: The Shackleton Story via Expedition Anarctic Blanc](#) for teacher background information about Sir Ernest Shackleton and the *Endurance* (~26 minutes).
- You will need to read the summary of the picture on slide 4 to any students who need reading supports

Learning Standards Alignment

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

P21 Framework: 21st Century Student Outcomes

3. Information, Media & Technology Skills: Information Literacy: Access information efficiently and effectively; Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

ICT Literacy: Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information.

Last updated: July 2022 Report broken links to BCPS Library Media Programs using the [Library Media Broken Link Form](#).

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