

Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan Polar Expeditions

Subject

World History

Grade level

6-8

Duration

Two or three class periods

Objectives

Students will

- discuss the hardships and obstacles the four polar explorers faced and how they overcame them; and
- create a scrapbook highlighting the journey of one of these explorers.

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access
- World map
- Library resources
- Paper, pens, pencils
- Tape or glue

Procedure

1. Begin the lesson by asking for volunteers to point out the location of the North and South Poles on a world map. Ask students to compare the geography of the two poles. How are they similar? How are they different?
2. Ask students how difficult they think it would be to get to one of the poles. Brainstorm how explorers could travel there, and what supplies they would need to survive in the extreme polar environment.
3. Review with students the historic polar expeditions of the early 1900s, when four explorers set out on perilous journeys to a pole, all competing to be the first to reach their destination. Make sure students understand that Admiral Robert Peary and Dr. Frederic Cook were in a race to reach the North Pole, while Captain Robert Falcon Scott and Roald Amundsen were in a race to reach the South Pole. Ask students to recall specific examples of hardships and obstacles the explorers and their crews faced.
4. Tell students that, working individually or in pairs, they will research one of these four explorers and create a scrapbook documenting the explorer's experiences. For each explorer, students should answer the following questions:
 - When did he and his crew set out on their journey?

- What modes of transportation did they use to reach the pole?
 - What supplies did they take?
 - What obstacles did they face during their journey?
 - How did they overcome these obstacles?
 - Was the explorer considered a hero? Why or why not?
5. Students may use library as well as Internet resources for their research. They should be sure to include pictures in their scrapbooks. The Web sites listed below have both printed information and pictures about each explorer.

Admiral Robert Peary

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/ice/sfeature/peary.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/northpole2001/explorers.shtml>

<http://robertepeary.com/index2.htm>

<http://matthewhenson.com>

Dr. Frederic Cook

<http://www.cookpolar.org/about.htm>

<http://www.cookpolar.org/verdict.htm>

<http://polarcontroversy.com/page3.htm>

<http://polarcontroversy.com/lostboxploy.htm>

Robert Scott

<http://www.south-pole.com/p0000089.htm>

<http://home.earthlink.net/~kcrawfish/scott.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Canopy/8947/scott.htm>

<http://www.coolantarctica.com/Antarctica%20fact%20file/History/Robert%20Falcon%20Scott.htm>

Roald Amundsen

http://iaia.essortment.com/roaldamundesn_reiv.htm

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/a/amundsen.shtml>

<http://www.south-pole.com/p0000101.htm>

http://www.iol.ie/%7Ejomerps/HomePage/Projects/World_Explorers/Roald_Amundsen.html

6. Students may wish to take materials home and work on their scrapbooks there. When they have finished, have students share their scrapbooks with the class.
7. In a final discussion about the four polar explorers, ask students why they think Robert Peary beat Frederic Cook to the North Pole. In the race to reach the South Pole, what advantages did Roald Amundsen have over Robert Scott?

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students actively participated in class discussions; completed their research carefully and thoroughly; made highly creative and informative scrapbooks.

2 points: Students participated somewhat in class discussions; completed their research; made somewhat creative and informative scrapbooks.

1 point: Students participated little, if at all, in class discussions; had difficulty completing their research; did not complete their scrapbooks.

Vocabulary

Roald Amundsen

Definition: The Norwegian explorer who became the first person to reach the South Pole on December 14, 1911

Context: Capt. Roald Amundsen's Norwegian team beat the British team led by Capt. Robert Scott, ending the century-long race for the South Pole.

Frederic A. Cook

Definition: An explorer who claimed to have reached the North Pole first; most historians believe he was an impostor.

Context: Frederic A. Cook first explored the North Pole with Robert Peary, but later became his biggest adversary.

North Pole

Definition: A term used to identify several invisible points in the Arctic region; the best known is the north geographic pole, which lies near the center of the Arctic Ocean where all Earth's lines of longitude meet.

Context: The North Pole is a cold, desolate spot, and it took hard work and perseverance for explorers to reach this region.

Robert E. Peary

Definition: An admiral in the United States Navy who took a leave of absence from naval service to search for the North Pole

Context: Although Robert Peary claimed to have reached the North Pole on April 6, 1909, a recent examination of his diary and notes has cast some doubt on this assertion.

Robert Falcon Scott

Definition: The head of the British team striving to reach the South Pole; he lost out to Norwegian Roald Amundsen.

Context: Robert Falcon Scott's team reached the South Pole on January 7, 1912, five weeks after Roald Amundsen.

South Pole

Definition: A region used for several invisible points in the Antarctic region; the south geographic pole, the one referred to most often, lies near the center of Antarctica at the point where all Earth's lines of longitude meet.

Context: Located on 9,200 feet (2,800 meters) of glacial ice, the South Pole is a frigid, remote place.

National Standards

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of the NCSS, or to view the Standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environments
- Individual Development and Identity
- Science, Technology, and Society
- Global Connections

Credit

Marilyn Fenichel, education writer and editor