

Polar Explorers

School Session Overview

October 2025

Key information	
Length of session: 90 mins Key Stage: KS2 Location(s) of session: National Maritime Museum – Fastnet room & Polar Worlds gallery	
Learning objectives	Curriculum links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will: Learn about significant polar explorers Understand the geography and challenges of polar environments Discover the tools and equipment needed for a polar expedition Carry out hands-on investigations in the gallery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KS2 History, Geography, Literacy Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources Describe and understand key aspects of physical geography: climate zones Build vocabulary articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
Key words	
exploration, indigenous, the Arctic, Antarctica, infer	
Overview of the session	
<p>Introduction Learners are introduced to the polar regions and the indigenous peoples of the Arctic.</p> <p>Gallery Visit and Activity In groups, learners explore the Polar Worlds gallery to find objects and artefacts used for survival in extreme conditions relating to themes of Food, Travel, Shelter, Clothing and Leisure.</p> <p>Object handling Learners explore mystery objects and discuss how they relate to survival in the polar regions. They also learn the importance of indigenous knowledge.</p> <p>Challenges of exploration Learners consider the choices explorers made when faced with tough options. They also hear the story of Mathew Henson, Robert Peary, Ooqueah, Ootah, Engingwah and Seeglo and the first recorded successful expedition by westerners and Inuit to the North Pole.</p>	
Suggested pre visit knowledge/ activities	Suggested post visit activities
<p>Learn about the environment in the polar regions</p> <p>Read 'Race to the Frozen North' by Catherine Johnson as a class</p>	<p>Use the link below 'Stories from the Sea: Exploration' for story-writing ideas.</p>

Links to useful resources
Stories from the Sea: Exploration Royal Museums Greenwich Polar Exploration Royal Museums Greenwich
Content guidance
Conversation on extreme survival and racism/discrimination.