

# Exploring Antarctica—The Past

Integration: Health (Mental/Emotional Health, Growth & Development); History; Social Studies

Grade Levels: 4-6

Time: 2-3 class periods (plus time to do research)

Materials:

- *Exploration Cards*
- Research materials such as books, internet, encyclopedias, etc.

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Become familiar with the timeline of exploration in Antarctica.
2. Research famous explorers and their accomplishments.
3. Create a timeline that describes their own lives.

Lesson:

Full group

1. Remind the students that there were no native people living in Antarctica. It was an “undiscovered” land for hundreds of thousands of years, maybe longer.
2. Tell students that since the 1500s, there have been over 300 expeditions to Antarctica.
  - a. Antarctic exploration reached its peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
3. Briefly discuss early exploration.
  - a. In the early years of exploration, explorers were frequently looking for someplace else when they caught sight of Antarctica.
  - b. After the first discoveries of the continent, it became like a race for countries to discover more.
  - c. Early explorers did not have the equipment or the research that today’s explorers have.
4. Individually or in groups, students will help build a timeline of Antarctic Exploration.
  - a. Place the Exploration cards in a box (duplicate them as necessary so that each student or group of students receives one).
  - b. Each student or group of students will choose one card and research the event that it describes.

- c. After researching and writing a short report on the event, the class will assemble a time line by displaying their reports in order and using the distance between them to signify the amount of time that elapsed between each event. A timeline with date markings can serve as the anchor.
- d. These other noteworthy events may be added to the timeline
  - 1935: Caroline Mikkelsen, the wife of a Norwegian whaling captain, becomes the first woman to set foot on Antarctica.
  - 1959: The Antarctic Treaty is signed by 12 nations
  - 1965: Antarctic tourism flourishes.
  - 1978: Emilio de Palma becomes the first person born on Antarctica. He is born at an Argentine base.
  - 1979: A tourist flight from New Zealand crashes into the side of Mt. Erebus, killing all 257 people on board.

ALTERNATIVE: This project can be given as a long-term assignment.

5. Discuss with students the purpose of a timeline.
  - a. Timelines allow for a visual representation of history.
  - b. Timelines make it easy to understand the order in which things have occurred.
6. Ask students what other topics besides Antarctic exploration a timeline could be used for. Tell students that timelines can be used to show any event in history.
7. Ask students if timelines can be used to show the history of someone's life. Instruct students to construct a timeline of the important events in their lives starting from their birth.
  - a. Give students time to work on this project at home with their families.
  - b. Assign students to choose at least five events in their lives.
  - c. Tell students to illustrate the timeline or to attach pictures to signify the events.
8. Display the finished timelines and allow time for students to view one another's.
  - a. This is an opportunity to discuss the similarities and differences in people's lives and the positive nature of diversity.

### Assessment:

Teachers will assess:

1. Student's ability to research and obtain information.
2. Student's ability to synthesize information.
3. Student's ability to judge appropriate events for their timeline.
4. Student's ability to create a timeline of their life.