

Ernest Shackleton

Ernest Shackleton was a polar explorer. He went on three expeditions to the Antarctic and made many scientific discoveries.

Early Life

Ernest Henry Shackleton was born on 15th February 1874. He was the second of ten children born to Henry Shackleton and Henrietta Gavan. Ernest's father, Henry, was a **landowner** at the time of Ernest's birth but began training to be a doctor when Ernest was six years old.



Joining the Merchant Navy

As a child, Ernest loved to read; he enjoyed reading adventure stories. Although Ernest was very clever, he found school boring. He did not want to hear about the world, he wanted to see it for himself.

Ernest left school at the age of 16 and joined the **merchant navy**. He spent four years learning how to sail before becoming a **Second Mate** and, four years after that, a Master Mariner. This meant that he was able to sail a British ship anywhere in the world.

Discovery

Ernest was invited on the National Antarctic Expedition. This was a journey of discovery led by Robert Falcon Scott – a successful explorer. This would be Ernest's first expedition to the Antarctic. The team set sail aboard a ship named 'Discovery' on 31st July 1901. They arrived at the Antarctic coast over five months later on 8th January 1902.

Unfortunately, lots of things went wrong for the team during the journey. Ernest became very poorly and was sent home early on 4th January 1903.

Nimrod

In 1908, Ernest attempted his second Antarctic expedition. He set sail aboard a ship named 'Nimrod' on 1st January. On this expedition, Ernest and his team climbed Mount Erebus – the second-highest volcano in Antarctica. They came even closer to the South Pole than they had before. Ernest received an award from King Edward VII when he returned home.

Endurance

Ernest put an advertisement in the newspaper asking for men to join him on another expedition. More than 5,000 people applied. In 1914, Ernest chose a crew of 56 men. They were split between two ships named 'Endurance' and 'Aurora'. Both ships set sail on 8th August.

Unfortunately, the extreme weather meant that the ship 'Endurance' became stuck in the ice on 19th January 1915 and sank nine months later. Ernest and his crew abandoned the ship and lived on top of the Antarctic ice for almost two years before they were finally rescued on 30th August 1916.

Glossary

landowner: A person who owns a large amount of land.

merchant navy: The ships which transport goods to and from a country.

Second Mate: An assistant on a merchant ship.



Questions

1. Which of these jobs did Ernest's father have at the time of Ernest's birth? Tick one.

- ☐ doctor
- ☐ Second Mate
- ☐ Master Mariner
- ☐ landowner

2. How many people applied to go on Ernest's third expedition with him? Tick one.

- ☐ 19
- ☐ 56
- ☐ 1,914
- ☐ 5,000

3. Draw lines to match the name of the ship to the date that Ernest set sail on it.

'Endurance'

31st July 1901

'Discovery'

1st January 1908

'Nimrod'

8th August 1914

4. Number these events to show the order they happened in Ernest's life. The first one has been done for you.

- ☒ 1 Ernest Henry Shackleton was born on 15th February 1874.
- ☐ Ernest became very poorly and was sent home early.
- ☐ Ernest left school at the age of 16.
- ☐ Ernest was invited on the National Antarctic Expedition.
- ☐ Ernest received an award from King Edward VII.

5. Find and copy the name of the second-highest volcano in Antarctica.

6. Give one thing that Ernest enjoyed doing as a child.

7. Explain why Ernest's first polar expedition ended early.

8. Do you think that Ernest was a successful polar explorer? Give a reason for your answer.

Answers

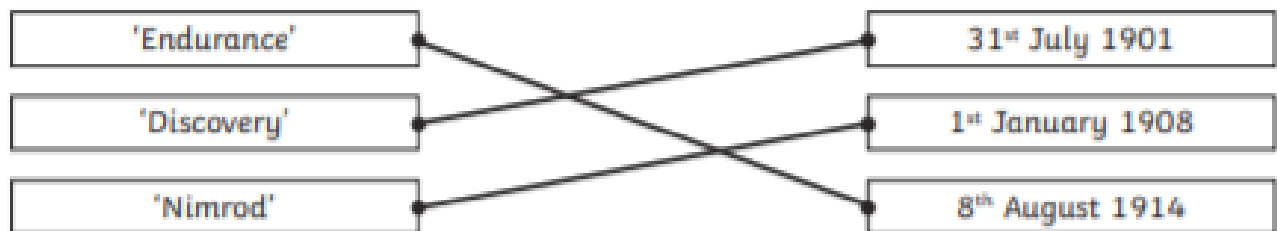
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- 5** Ernest received an award from King Edward VII.

5. Find and copy the name of the second-highest volcano in Antarctica.

Mount Erebus

6. Give one thing that Ernest enjoyed doing as a child.

Ernest enjoyed reading adventure stories as a child.

7. Explain why Ernest's first polar expedition ended early.

Ernest's first polar expedition ended early because lots of things went wrong for the team and Ernest became very poorly.