Heroes of the Antarctic
by Donna Thompson

Fountas-Pinnell Level V
Narrative Nonfiction

Selection Summary
People have explored the Antarctic for over 100 years. Two such explorers, Roald Amundsen and Robert Scott, each wanted to be the first person to reach the South Pole. Today, modern day explorers use the many research stations located in the Antarctic as they are still fascinated by this frozen area.

Characteristics of the Text

| Genre | • Narrative nonfiction |
| Text Structure | • Third-person narrative organized in four chapters |
| • Each chapter describes an aspect of the history of exploration of the Antarctic. |
| Content | • The Antarctic, early explorers and the race to the South Pole. |
| • Stories of exploration and survival. |
| • Antarctica today, tourism and scientific stations. |

| Themes and Ideas | • It takes hard work to reach a goal. |
| • Planning, preparation and dedication can help overcome obstacles. |
| • Antarctica is an important research location for many countries. |

| Language and Literary Features | • Adventure and survival stories build suspense. |
| Sentence Complexity | • A mix of short and complex sentences |
| • Multiple items in series, blizzards, hunger, sunburn, frostbite, snow blindness. |
| • Some dialogue; direct quotation from journals |

| Vocabulary | • Scientific terms, some of which might not be familiar: gusts, regions, continent, glaciers |
| Words | • Some Norwegian names: King Haakon, Fridtjof Nansen |
| • Many multisyllable words: treacherous, frigid, endurance |

| Illustrations | • Photographs and map; captions |

| Book and Print Features | • Twelve pages of text with a table of contents, chapter headings, and illustrations on about half of the pages |
| • Sidebars on Amundsen’s sled dogs and his ship, The Fram. |

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**Build Background**
Help students use their knowledge of places in the world to visualize the text. Build interest by asking a question such as the following: Have you ever wanted to travel to a faraway place? What do you think it would be like to travel to the Antarctic? What challenges might you face if you traveled there? Read the title and author and talk about the men on the boat on the cover. Tell students that this selection is narrative nonfiction about explorers who have traveled to the Antarctic, some successfully and some not so successfully.

**Introduce the Text**
Guide students through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

**Page 3:** Look at page 3. The first paragraph explains the harsh conditions in Antarctica. Why do you think people would still want to travel and explore there?

**Page 5:** Have students look at the map of Amundsen’s and Scott’s route to the South Pole. Explain that it was the vision of two competing explorers, Roald Amundsen and Robert Scott, to reach the South Pole first. **Ask:** What do you think it means to have a vision of greatness?

**Pages 6–7:** Point out that the photo of sled-pulling dogs and the accompanying caption. **Ask:** Why might sled-pulling dogs be helpful in a place like Antarctica, as opposed to the ponies and sledges that were not helpful for polar travel?

**Page 11:** Have students look at the photograph and read the caption on page 11. Explain that Shackleton, Captain of the Endurance and his crew faced the task of returning home safely in a small boat called a whaleboat.

Now turn back to the beginning of the text and read to find out how early explorers reached the South Pole and lived to tell about it.

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**Expand Your Vocabulary**

- **glaciers** – huge masses of ice slowly flowing over land masses, p. 8
- **parka** – a hooded fur outer garment worn in the Arctic, p. 7
- **sledges** – vehicles mounted on low runners drawn by work animals and used for transporting loads across ice, snow, and rough ground, p. 4
Read
Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to use the Summarize Strategy and to think of the important parts of the text as they read.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response
Invite students to share their personal responses to the book.

Suggested language: What is the most fascinating thing to you about the Antarctic? What do you think attracted Amundsen and Scott to the South Pole?

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Early exploration to undiscovered areas of the world was difficult.</td>
<td>• Realizing your dream sometimes takes much hard work and dedication.</td>
<td>• The historic photographs help show the conditions the explorers faced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Roald Amundsen reached the South Pole before Robert Scott.</td>
<td>• The human spirit is capable of many amazing things.</td>
<td>• The author includes lots of descriptions to help the reader visualize the events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ernest Shackleton and his crew faced overwhelming odds to survive the harsh conditions of the Antarctic.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The sequence of dates throughout the text helps clarify when the events happened.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choices for Further Support

• **Fluency** Invite students to choose two pages from the text to read aloud as readers’ theater. Remind them to use volume and expression to reflect inferences about the characters and events. Remind students that they can make predictions while reading and decide how to foreshadow using the voice.

• **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students’ reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.

• **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind students that suffixes can turn a noun into an adjective. The suffix *tic* on the word *dramatic* on page 10 transforms the root noun *drama* into an adjective.
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 13.9.

Responding
Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader’s Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Cause and Effect **TARGET SKILL** Remind students that they can look for key details to determine cause and effect. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

Think Aloud
Roald Amundsen’s team members were expert skiers and they used dogs to pull their supplies. They also brought lightweight winter parkas. These details from the text show that Amundsen’s team was the best prepared. They are the causes for the team being first to the South Pole.

Practice the Skill
Encourage students to share their examples of another book in which cause and effect can be studied.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Assessment Prompts
• The first paragraph on page 11 is mainly about ______________________________.
• What will most likely happen to Antarctica? Why do you think that?
• What is the meaning of sophisticated on page 14?
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions. Provide your response shown.

1. Think within the text: How did Antarctic explorers plan to travel across Antarctica?
   - They planned to use sled dogs and sleds, ponies, motorized sledges, and skis.

2. Think within the text: How did the crew of the Endurance stay alive on Elephant Island?
   - They used lifeboats to build a hut. They also hunted seals and penguins for food.

3. Think beyond the text: Do you think that Roald Amundsen would have been able to win the race to the South Pole if he had grown up in a different place? Explain your answer.
   - I think the fact that Amundsen grew up in a cold, snowy climate prepared him very well for the conditions at the South Pole.

4. Think about the text: On page 10, the author says Shackleton was a remarkable leader. What text evidence does the author provide to support this description?
   - Shackleton was a good leader because he brought his entire crew home safely. He led a small crew across open water to get help. Shackleton worried about the men he left behind and never gave up trying to rescue them.

Making Connections: Think about fictional explorers in movies and books you have read or seen. How are they like the real heroes of the Antarctic?
   - Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.

Heroes of the Antarctic

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Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in two or three paragraphs.

Remember that when you think beyond the text, you use your personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

On page 6, the author points out that Roald Amundsen grew up skiing in the rugged mountains of Norway and sailing the cold Arctic waters off its shores. How do you think these experiences may have added to his success in the race to the South Pole? What qualities or skills did early explorers need to have in order to travel to and survive in the Antarctic?

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Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. **Think within the text**  How did Antarctic explorers plan to travel across Antarctica?

2. **Think within the text**  How did the crew of the *Endurance* stay alive on Elephant Island?

3. **Think beyond the text**  Do you think that Roald Amundsen would have been able to win the race to the South Pole if he had grown up in a different place? Explain your answer.

4. **Think about the text**  On page 10, the author says Shackleton was a remarkable leader. What text evidence does the author provide to support this description?

**Making Connections**  Think about fictional explorers in movies and books you have read or seen. How are they like the real heroes of the Antarctic?

**Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.**
Heroes of the Antarctica • LEVEL V

The first explorers in Antarctica were looking for a new frontier. Explorers had already gone to the heart of Africa and deep into South America. That left only the cold, snowy regions around the poles. Antarctica was the last unknown continent. The danger and the call of the unknown drew some explorers back again and again.

This was a time before airplanes or helicopters. Explorers arrived with sled dogs, ponies, and motorized sledges—sleds with “caterpillar” treads similar to the treads on a tank. Some planned to travel around on skis while others planned to go on foot, hauling supplies and equipment on sleds.

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**Behavior Code Error**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read word correctly</td>
<td>✓ cat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated word, sentence, or phrase</td>
<td>☐ cat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>☐ cat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Accuracy Rate**

\[
\text{Accuracy Rate} = \left( \frac{\text{# words read correctly}}{104} \times 100 \right) \%
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Lesson 13: Heroes of the Antarctic