

DOGS IN ANTARCTICA.

INVESTIGATING HOW DOGS PULLED THE POLAR SLEDGES.

POLAR EXPLORATION KS2

Curriculum mapping:

English

Purpose of study: write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others

Aims: write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences

Lower KS2 - Pupils should be able to write down their ideas with a reasonable degree of accuracy and with good sentence punctuation. Pupils should be beginning to understand how writing can be different from speech.

Upper KS2 - Pupils should be able to write down their ideas quickly. Their grammar and punctuation should be broadly accurate. They should continue to emphasise pupils' enjoyment and understanding of language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and writing

Computing (if writing journal extract using the computer.)

Purpose of study: Ensures that pupils become digitally literate – able to use, and express themselves and develop their ideas through, information and communication technology

Aims: are responsible, competent, confident and creative users of information and communication technology

KS2: select, use and combine a variety of software (including internet services) on a range of digital devices to design and create a range of programs, systems and content that accomplish given goals, including collecting, analysing, evaluating and presenting data and information

Introduction activity

As a class listen to the Journal reading 'Terranova, 21st February 1911'. Explain that these are the words written by Captain Scott describing what could have been a very disastrous event. Show the 'Dog harness worn by sledge dogs' image and/or the 'sledge dogs' image resource.



Explain that this extract shows how the middle dogs who were harnessed and pulling the sledge fell into a crevasse and were hanging in midair. Only because the lead dog 'Osman' managed to cling on, stopping the sledge and the whole team falling into the crevasse, were the sledge and the dogs able to be rescued.

Watch the 'dog harness' video.

Main part of lesson

Discuss what we saw and heard in the video clip.

Discuss the fact that it was very difficult for the polar explorers because they were really fond of the dogs but they had to be very strict with them as it was vital that the dogs worked hard and pulled the sledges and all the equipment. The men might not have liked making the dogs work really hard, and must have found it difficult to make them sleep outside in the snow not to treat them like pets. Many of the men might have had their own dogs at home and so were used to having dogs as pets.

Watch the 'dog whip' video extract explaining that this was not for actually hitting the dogs but the whip would be "cracked" to the side of the dogs as the sledge was pulled. Cracking the whip to the left of the dogs would make them move away from the sound in the opposite direction and so the sledge would steer to the right. A right side crack would steer the dogs left. The sledge driver would crack the whip whilst making sure that the ground they were running over was safe and not liable to break up into a crevasse, as in the journal extract we just explored.

Explain that in this lesson, the class are to imagine that they are one of the explorers driving the dogs, steering the sledge.

Write a journal entry describing taking the dogs and the sledge out, including details of:

- Feeding the dogs
- Packing the sledge in cold conditions, ensuring that anything on the sledge was securely tied on
- Harnessing all the dogs into individual harnesses
- Attaching the dog team all together onto the sledge
- Starting off
- Steering the sledge

- Coping with the weather
- Following the correct directions
- Avoiding crevasses and places where the snow and ice looked unstable

The class can write on paper with pencils like the actual journal entries would be, or use the computer. They could use j2e5 to create the entry.

Pupils could be given the 'sledge dog images' resource to help them consider the task and reinforce the conditions

Plenary

Watch together the 'dog pemmican box' video extract. Discuss how this again reconfirms how important exact planning was on these polar expeditions: not only did Robert Scott have to make sure that they packed provisions for the explorers, they had to plan for and pack everything for the animals –dogs and ponies.