

# THE NANSEN COOKER

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NANSEN COOKER IN POLAR EXPEDITIONS THEN AND NOW

## POLAR LIFE KSI/2

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### Curriculum mapping:

#### Computing

**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

#### History

##### Aims:

- Know and understand how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
- gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales

##### Introduction activity

Talk about how we cook at home. What type of pots and pans and cooking equipment do we use?

Ask the class if they think that on polar explorations they would have a full kitchen like we have at home?

Modern day explorers use the same style of cooking equipment that Robert Scott and his team used. Discuss why they think this is. Why have we not moved on with a better way of cooking with new technology?

Look at the image 'explorers using a Nansen cooker' on page 39 of the Encyclopedia of Artefacts:  
[http://polar.lgfl.org.uk/encyclopaedia\\_of\\_artefacts.html#book/41](http://polar.lgfl.org.uk/encyclopaedia_of_artefacts.html#book/41)



Can the class describe what they see?

The explorers are cooking something – what does the class think they are cooking?

It is cocoa - what are they using?

Why are they making cocoa?

What are they wearing?

Discuss the image with pupils.

#### Main part of lesson

Watch the Primus stove video clip on page 42 of the Encyclopedia of artefacts ([http://polar.lgfl.org.uk/encyclopaedia\\_of\\_artefacts.html#book/45](http://polar.lgfl.org.uk/encyclopaedia_of_artefacts.html#book/45)) which discusses the use of the primus stove in Scott's expeditions.

The “primus” camping stove was used by the Terra Nova and later expeditions. Fuelled by kerosene, its design provided heat to simultaneously heat food and melt snow for drinking water.

The primus was 6 times more fuel efficient than previous models of stove, reducing the amounts of fuel that needed to be carried. Modern camping stoves have changed little since.

Discuss the differences between this stove and the ones that campers use when they are camping nowadays.

Also discuss the essential fact that it was important that expedition members drank plenty of fluids. The primus design efficiently allowed snow to be melted for hot drinks at the same time as food was heated.

Watch the video clip of the Nansen cooker on page 38.

In this video clip, the narrator talks about a Nansen cooker. The Nansen cooker was used alongside the primus camping stove because it was an efficient way of cooking food and melting snow for water at the same time and it also kept the tent warm as it was heating up the meal.

The Nansen cooker's multi-use nature meant that it was ideal for use on polar expeditions. It was compact and was made of lightweight aluminum which allowed it to be easily packed and carried on a sledge. It allowed people to travel much further distances than before in the Antarctic.

Ask half of the class to imagine that they are preparing a meal in the Antarctic and are using this equipment.

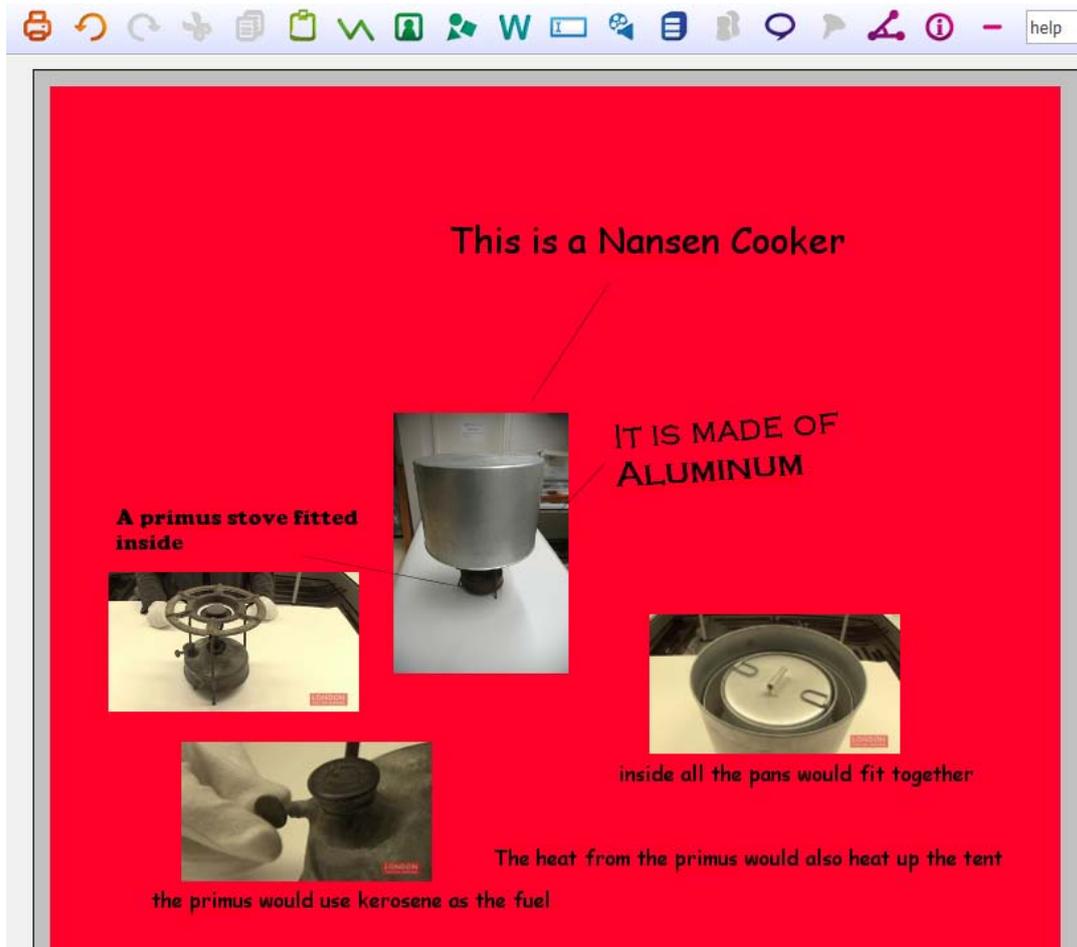
Ask them to write down instructions for making cocoa.

They can work in pairs to create a simple recipe or instructions for cocoa that uses melted snow as its major ingredient. Also remind pupils that as they are preparing the meal they would be wearing clothing like the explorers in the image they looked at – e.g. wearing thick fur gloves or gauntlets, all their protective snow wear and perhaps even goggles if the weather was really against them.

The rest of the class can import images from the 'primus stove and Nansen cooker images resource' into j2e5.

J2e5 can be located here [www.j2launch.lgfl.net](http://www.j2launch.lgfl.net).

Pupils should use the tools within J2E to produce a labelled diagram with instructions of how to use this equipment.



## Plenary

Listen to the extract from the journal of Robert Falcon Scott from his Discovery Voyage ([http://polar.lgfl.org.uk/journal\\_readings.html#book/6](http://polar.lgfl.org.uk/journal_readings.html#book/6)), whilst showing the 'Meares and Capt Oates at a stove' image.

*'...Hooosh. This is a moment to be lived for – one of the brief incidents of the day to which we can look forward with some real pleasure. The hot food seems to give new life, its grateful warmth appears to run out to every limb, exhaustion vanishes, and gradually that demon within, which has gripped so tightly for the past hour or two, is appeased. The 'hooosh' is followed by an equally delightful drink of boiling hot cocoa, but even as we gulp it down we feel that pleasure is drawing to an end, for the Primus is now out, the steam of cooking that has not passed through the ventilator has frozen in glistening crystals on the side of the tent, and the chill of the outer air is again finding its way through the thin canvas.'*



Explain to the class that 'hooosh' was a mixture of pemmican (dried beef and lard), ship's biscuits and perhaps some curry powder or sultanas (whatever was available).

Ask the class to close their eyes and imagine that they are really cold, they have been exploring on ice all day and are now in front of a warm stove, eating comforting hooosh.

Ask the class to give you some single words to describe this feeling.

Make a collection of these words for future use and reference.

Discuss the words of Robert Falcon Scott and what how what he writes really gives us an insight into the expedition, the coldness and also the pleasure of having a hot drink or some hot food after a day on the ice.