

# Disaster on the Ice

Inspired by true events from explorer Ernest Shackleton's harrowing Antarctic expedition

## About the Story

**Lexile:** 860L (captions)

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

**Learning Objective:** After learning about the expedition, students write diary entries as if they are members of Ernest Shackleton's crew.

**Key Skills:** text structure, text features, inference, character, author's purpose, key ideas and details

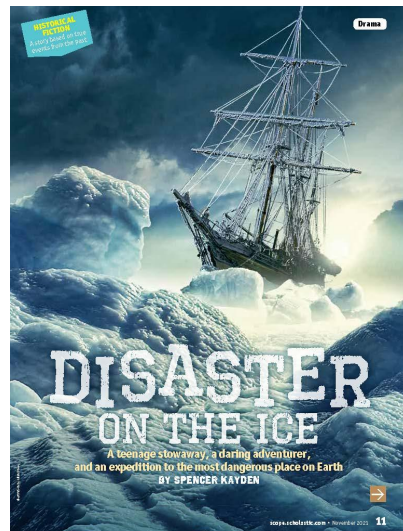
### Essential Questions:

- What drives human exploration?
- What does it take to be a leader?
- What does it take to survive?

### Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.5, R.7, R.9, R.10, W.3, W.9, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at [scope.scholastic.com](https://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

### Slideshow:

- Background Builder

### Connected narrative nonfiction from the Scope Archives:

- "Frozen Dreams"
- "Disaster in Space"

### Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Preparing to Write: An Antarctic Adventure
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- **Core Skills Workout:** Inference
- Choice Board
- Quiz\*
- Contest Entry Form

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

## 1. Preparing to Read

15 minutes

### Do-Now: Make a list. (5 minutes)

- Ask students to flip through the play and study the illustrations and photographs of Antarctica. Then give students two minutes to list words and phrases that describe the Antarctic environment.
- Invite students to share their lists. Then let them know that they're going to read a play about a crew that survived being stranded in Antarctica for nearly two years.

### View a Slideshow (5 minutes)

- Project our **Background Builder** slideshow, which provides information about Ernest Shackleton's ship and nautical terms as well as features of the Antarctic environment.

### Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. (Optionally, have students complete the practice activity for homework.) Highlighted words: *balked*, *chloroform*, *frostbite*, *ill-advised*, *montage*, *perish*, *swabs*

## 2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

- Have a volunteer read the As You Read box on page 12 of the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Assign parts and read the play as a class.
- Break students into groups to discuss the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions.

### Close-Reading Questions

(15 minutes)

*The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.*

- 1. In the chronology of the story, when do the events of Scene 1 take place? Why might the playwright have chosen to start the play this way?** (text structure) *In terms of chronology, the events in Scene 1 take place near the end of the story, just before Scene 6. The playwright likely begins the play this way to start the story at a dramatic moment and raise questions in the reader's mind about what led to this moment as well as what will happen next.*
- 2. How does information in the caption titled "The Place" contribute to the play?** (text features) *The caption provides additional information about the play's setting, Antarctica. For example, the caption states that Antarctica is almost completely covered in ice and that the coldest temperature recorded there was 144 degrees below zero. Such details help readers understand the extremely harsh conditions that Shackleton and his crew were up against during their expedition. The details also help readers better imagine the setting of the play.*
- 3. In Scene 6, after Perce falls, Shackleton tells him to get up. Perce replies that he cannot because of his feet. After the exchange, SD3 says, "Shackleton looks ashamed." Why might Shackleton be ashamed at this moment?** (inference, character) *Shackleton might feel ashamed at this moment for several reasons. For one thing, he might be ashamed for not realizing the extent of Perce's frostbite and harshly demanding that he stand up. On a deeper level, Shackleton may feel that as the leader of the expedition, he is to blame for Perce's injury.*
- 4. What is the purpose of the dialogue about food in Scene 7?** (text structure, author's purpose) *In Scene 7, Bakewell, Perce, Green, and Wild are having a conversation about what they will eat first when they get home. Answers will vary, but students may say that this conversation reveals that the men have not given up and are still hopeful that they will be returning home. The playwright may have included this dialogue to show the crew's resilience and mental fortitude, and especially Perce's ability to remain positive and lift the crew's spirits.*
- 5. What kind of person does the playwright portray Shackleton to be? Support your answer with details from the play.** (character) *The playwright portrays Shackleton as selfless and determined. In Scene 4, after the Endurance begins to sink, Worsley asks, "But what about the expedition?" Shackleton replies, "All that matters now is saving the crew." By having Shackleton respond this way, the playwright shows Shackleton to be a selfless leader who cares more about his crew than his professional goals. Later in the scene, Shackleton says, "The ice may have gotten our ship, but that doesn't mean it will get us." This shows Shackleton's determination to save his crew. In Scene 6, Shackleton announces that he and five crew members will venture into the open ocean in search of help, promising those he is leaving behind that he will not abandon them. In the next scene, we learn that he has kept his promise when he returns and rescues the crew. Here,*

*Shackleton is again presented as selfless and determined. Students may also say that the playwright portrays Shackleton as determined when she includes in the Epilogue that he set out on another expedition to the South Pole five years after the events in the play.*

### Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

*The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.*

1. **What qualities make someone a good leader? Would you classify Shackleton as a good leader? Why or why not?** *Answers will vary. Many students will likely say that Shackleton was a good leader because he kept his crew alive throughout a harrowing experience. Students may also say that Shackleton was a good leader because he was the one to bring back help to save his crew.*
2. **Why do you think humans have a desire to explore the world and, in particular, dangerous places like Antarctica?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that humans explore because we are curious about our world. Another reason could be that we are looking for something in particular, the way early European Arctic explorers wanted to find an ocean route to Asia. Humans may also be driven to explore by a desire for fame and accolades.*

## 3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: An Antarctic Adventure**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 16 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.

**Connected narrative nonfiction from the Scope archives that explore how people overcome extraordinary circumstances:**

- [“Frozen Dreams” \(February 2020\)](#)
- [“Disaster in Space” \(December 2016/January 2017\)](#)