



Polar activity pack

Polar learning activities inspired by books *Poles Apart*, *Shackleton's Journey*, *Brightstorm* and *The Worst Journey in the World*

Age 6-12

CFE First and Second Level

Resource created by Vashti Hardy and Scottish Book Trust

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About this resource

This resource provides activities and information to support the use of four polar-themed books which could be used as part of a polar topic, including:

- *Poles Apart* by Jeanne Willis and Jarvis (aged 3-5)
- *Shackleton's Journey* by William Grill with RRS Discovery (aged 8-12)
- *Brightstorm* by Vashit Hardy (aged 9-11)
- *The Worst Journey in the World* by Sarah Aïress (age 10+)

Included are four activity ideas written by Vashti Hardy to help you explore her book *Brightstorm*. With all our resources, we highly recommend that you **read the book(s) before using them with your class** and use your best judgement on whether teaching about this topic is appropriate for the children in your class.

Poles Apart learning activities

Poles Apart is a picture book written by Jeanne Willis and illustrated by Jarvis. It is a touching story of friendship and adventure. Penguins and polar bears live poles apart, but when a family of penguins get lost, their paths unexpectedly cross. Can they make it home with help from Mr White the polar bear?

Share the book with your pupils and have a discussion:

- Would polar bears and penguins meet in real life? Where do they live?
- What would you do if you got lost?
- Have you ever helped someone find his or her way home?

Activity 1: Draw an extra page

EXA 1-04a/ 2-04a

The penguins visit many different places on their quest to get home. Ask pupils to create and draw an extra page for the book. Where else could the penguins and Mr White visit as they try to get home?

Activity 2: Create a fact file

SCN 1-02a, LIT 1-14a, LIT 1-25a, SCN 2-01a, LIT 2-14a, LIT 2-25a

Research penguins and find out more about where they live, what they eat and how they communicate. Create a fact file to help others learn about penguins. The [World Wildlife Foundation](#) and [National Geographic Kids](#) have some webpages that will help you.

***Shackleton's Journey* learning activities**

Shackleton's Journey is a beautiful non-fiction book, written and illustrated by William Grill. It explores Ernest Shackleton's epic expedition to the Antarctic in the ship Endurance.

Activity 1: How many provisions?

MNU 1-01a, HWB 1-14a

The Endurance had to carry equipment and supplies to keep him and his crew alive in difficult conditions. In *Shackleton's Journey*, William Grill chose to do lots of small drawings to get across how many provisions were needed. Play the estimate game with a friend, then count how many of each provision there are and see who was closest.

Estimate how many dogs are drawn on page 7, how many spades, sacks, ski poles and oars are drawn on page 12, and how penguins there are on page 39.

Activity 2: Build your own Endurance

SCN 1-07a, TCH 1-09a, SCN 2-08b, TCH 2-10a

Read about the incredible engineering that went into the design and building of the Endurance. It was a unique ship! But even so, a year after the expedition set off, the Endurance became trapped in the ice and eventually broke up and sank in 1915.

Watch [the moment the Endurance broke in this video](#).

Design and build your own boat. Agree a challenge as a class, for example each boat must stay afloat with five “passengers” or it must stay afloat in a pool full of ice cubes or in choppy water. What materials will help it float?

Activity 3: Discover the Discovery

SCN 2-01a, LIT 2-04a

Before Ernest Shackleton set off to cross Antarctica, he’d been third officer in Captain Scott’s famous Discovery expedition on the RRS Discovery. This ship is now permanently based in Dundee and is available to visit. Watch a [BBC Live Lesson](#) (28 minutes 9 Seconds) that takes place on the RRS Discovery, which introduces Captain Scott, Shackleton and his crew, as well as exploring the impact of climate change on the icy habitat of harp seal pups. Draw your own harp seal pup and label it to show how its adapted to the cold.

Brightstorm learning activities

In *Brighstorm*, twins Arthur and Maudie Brightstorm receive word in Lontown that their famous explorer father has died in a failed attempt to reach the southernmost point in the world. Not only that, but he has been accused of stealing fuel before he died! The twins don't believe the news, and they answer an ad to join a new attempt

to reach South Polaris. It's their only hope of learning the truth... and salvaging their family's reputation.

You might like to use the fantasy creature, scene creation, and vehicle design activities to generate ideas for the final activity of writing a polar adventure story. You could research real expeditions and find images to help inspire ideas. You can find [printable worksheets on Vashti Hardy's website](#) which you can use for designing a sky-ship or writing your own adventure story.

Activity 1: Create your own polar fantasy creature and fact-file

LIT 2-20a, LIT 2-24a

The *Brightstorm* series includes different fantasy creatures known in the World of the Wide as sapient creatures. In *Brightstorm's* South Polaris, sapient creatures known as thought-wolves live in the frozen Everlasting Forest. The thought-wolves are based on real wolves, except they are much larger and can communicate through their thoughts.

Can you create your own unique polar fantasy creatures and write a fact-file for them? You might adapt a real-life animal, base it on a mythical creature or you might create something entirely new! Think about how they have evolved to live in their unique environment, their features and special skills. Remember to think about your design and layout to make your fact-file exciting to read.

Activity 2: Create a 3D exploration scene

TCH 2-09a, TCH 2-10a

Using Lego or junk modelling, design and create a fantasy exploration scene. This could be inspired by a scene in *Brightstorm*, such as Arthur and Maudie riding the thought-wolves in the Everlasting Forest, or a scene from your own idea for an exploration story.

You could also create 3D versions of a sky-ship design, 4 Archangel Street, the domes of the Lontown Geographical Society, the Slumps, or other scenes from the

series such as the South Polaris mountain caves, the Citadel, the amazing city of Darkwhispers, the jungle tree-top or bubble houses! See [the photos at the end of this resource](#) for ideas.

Activity 3: Design a fantasy polar exploration vehicle

TCH 2-09a, TCH 2-11a

Design and draw your own fantasy exploration vehicle to transport you to the polar regions. Think of the type of vehicle you'd like to choose: does it fly, sail, skate over the ice? What special attachments does it have? You might like to think about how your vehicle is powered. Is it an eco-friendly transport like the Aurora in *Brightstorm*? Label your transport with its features. You could research a variety of real transports and adapt as well as look at fantasy vehicles. You could go on to draw the inside view of your transport and build a 3D model.

Activity 4: Write your own fantasy polar adventure story

LIT 2-20a, ENG 2-31a

In *Brightstorm*, the twins embark on the journey of a lifetime to South Polaris. They meet fantastical animals, perform daring feats of bravery and discover the truth about their lost father. Can you create your own fantasy polar adventure story? Think about the world you'd like to create. Remember if it's your world, you create the rules, so have fun. Think about the hazards in your characters' way, the creatures, and the goal. Is it a race to be the first to the furthest point north or south, a rescue mission, to retrieve a magical object, or to find a mythical creature like a frost dragon?

***Surviving the Antarctic* learning activities**

LIT 2-14a, LIT 2-16a, TCH 2-01a, TCH 2-02a, SOC 2-01a, SOC 2-04a,
SOC 1-12b/2-12a,

Sarah Airriess illustrates graphic novels and her latest title *The Worst Journey in the World* explores Captain Robert Scott's expedition to the South Pole in 1910-1913.

- You can read the prologue and a sample chapter from the Graphic novel on [Patroen](#) for free, or purchase a subscription to read the full graphic novel. You can also [watch a short video on Sarah Airriess' YouTube Channel](#) that introduces *The Worst Journey in the World* (4 minutes, 33 seconds).
- Sarah has pulled together a range of useful videos, articles and photographs that explore similar themes to the graphic novel [on her blog](#).
- You can also read in detail about Sarah's [research trip to the Antarctic](#) in 2019.

During the event, Sarah will discuss her work as a graphic artist and producing *The Worst Journey in the World*. To prepare for the event and to become familiar with structuring and planning a graphic novel, explore our [how to create a comic scene resource](#). It contains lots of ideas and tips for creating your own graphic novel.

Further resources

- Explore our [Polar adventures book list](#), which offers loads of ideas for books to help reader explore the North and South Pole
- For more polar learning ideas, see [our Second Level resource on Catherine Johnson's novel Race to the Frozen North](#)
- For any of the books featured, you can use our 10 things to do with any book series, for [early level](#), [primary](#) and [secondary](#)
- The Antarctic Heritage Trust offer a range of [educational resources](#), as well as [virtual reality experience](#) of historic sites (which pupils can access through a tablet or other smart device)
- The British Antarctic Survey offers a wealth of information about [life at the polar regions](#), as well as videos and information about [wildlife](#) and [their research](#)

Pictures to support with *Brightstorm* Activity 2

Picture examples of the Lego dioramas, vehicles and creatures created inspired by *Brightstorm*

