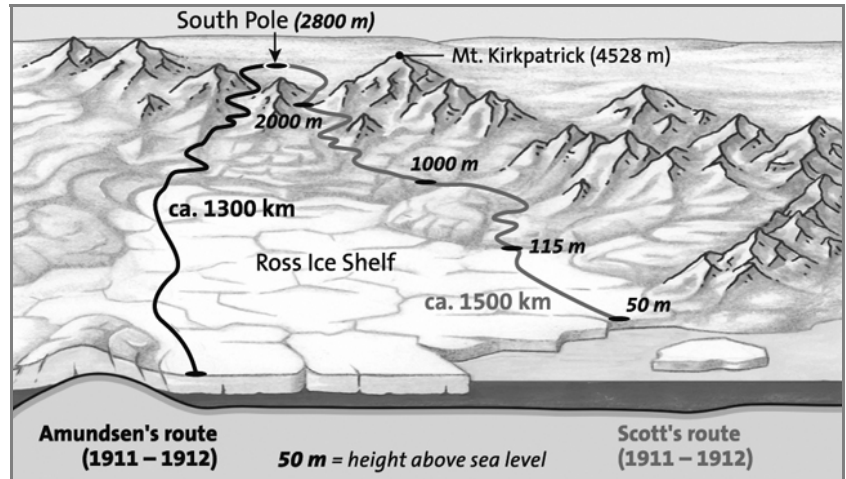


Cold environments

The race to the South Pole

In the 20th century many nations became interested in Antarctica. Explorers started their first expeditions to the unknown continent. One of them was the British Captain Robert Scott. He carried out many experiments in Antarctica, but his real aim was to be the first man to reach the South Pole. When he planned his project in 1910, he found out that another explorer, Roald Amundsen from Norway, also planned an expedition to the pole. A race to the South Pole between these two men started. Do you know who the winner was?



Scott's expedition

Scott arrived in Antarctica in January 1911 and set up his base camp on the Ross Ice Shelf in McMurdo Sound. On November 1st, 1911, he started his trip to the pole with 32 men, 33 husky dogs, 17 ponies and two motor sleds.

The motor sleds soon broke down on the Ross Ice Shelf because of the icy temperatures. When they reached the Transantarctic Mountains the ponies could not go any further and the men had to shoot them.

On January 5th, 1912, Scott started the last and most difficult part of the expedition with four partners. The five-man team walked across the mountains and pulled the sleds with the equipment themselves.

When they finally reached the pole on January 17 the team found the Norwegian flag there: They were 33 days late and had lost the race.

Tired and very sad the men left the pole. On the way back the group got into a terrible snowstorm and could not leave the tent for days. Finally they died because of cold and hunger only 18 miles away from the safe base camp.



Amundsen's expedition

The Norwegian expedition came to Antarctica in January 1911. Their camp was also on the Ross Ice Shelf about 640 kilometres away from the British camp, but 100 kilometres closer to the pole. Amundsen left the camp on October 20 together

with 7 men and more than 50 dogs which pulled the sleds with their food and material.

Amundsen and his men were excellent skiers and there were also two dog experts in the team so they could travel quite fast. On the way they killed most of the dogs and fed them to the rest of the dogs.

Only 11 dogs survived.

At 3 pm on December 14th the group stopped. They had reached the South Pole. They did not see any signs that anyone had been there before and were sure: They were the first people in this lonely, cold place.

Amundsen wrote into his diary: "So we arrived and were able to plant our flag at the geographical South Pole. God be thanked!"

After they had taken some photos, Amundsen led the team back to the base camp. All men arrived safely back home in Norway.



name:

class:

date:

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- 1 Use your atlas: Locate the Ross Ice Shelf where both expeditions started.
- 2 Write down a reason why Scott and Amundsen carried out their expeditions in winter.
- 3 Make a table to compare the two expeditions.

	Robert Scott	Roald Amundsen
nationality		
base camp		
transportation		
team		
success		

- 4 Talk about other explorers or expeditions to the polar regions that you have heard of.

Useful words:

to carry out – ausführen, aim – Ziel, to reach – erreichen

name: _____

class: _____

date: _____