Frozen Kingdom

The Arctic region

The Arctic region is found in the Northern Hemisphere and includes parts of Canada, Alaska, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Greenland and Iceland along with the Arctic Ocean. Temperatures can reach -68°C in the winter months, making it one of the coldest places on Earth.



The Antarctic region

The Antarctic region is found in the Southern Hemisphere and is the world's fifth largest continent. It is covered in an ice sheet that is up to 4.8 km thick. It is the coldest, driest, highest and windiest continent on Earth. Temperatures can reach -89°C, there is no precipitation and wind speeds can reach 80 km per hour in some areas.

Nature in the polar regions

The Arctic region is home to small populations of people and an amazing variety of plants and animals, including the polar bear, the Arctic fox and the walrus.


polar bear


Arctic fox


walrus

There are no people that live permanently in the Antarctic region and only two native kinds of flowering plants, but it has a rich sea life, including the emperor penguin, humpback whale and leopard seal.


emperor penguin


humpback whale


leopard seal

Inuit art

The Inuit live in the Arctic regions of Canada, Alaska, Siberia and Greenland. The early Inuit adapted to the cold, harsh conditions of the Arctic region and became expert builders, hunters, craftspeople and artists. In Canada today, Inuit artists create beautiful sculptures, paintings, prints and drawings that are inspired by the animals, landscape and people of the Arctic region.

Auroras

Auroras are displays of coloured lights seen in the skies near the North and South Poles. The lights are created when electrically charged particles from the Sun collide with oxygen and nitrogen gas particles in the Earth's atmosphere. The Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, can be seen from Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Canada and as far south as Scotland and northern England. The Aurora Australis, or Southern Lights, are more difficult to see as the lights are mostly seen around Antarctica and the southern Indian Ocean.



RMS *Titanic*

On 15th April 1912, the RMS *Titanic* sank in the Atlantic Ocean after hitting an iceberg. The ship was on its first voyage from Southampton, UK to New York, USA. The ship had been labelled 'unsinkable' and only carried enough lifeboats for half the number of people on board. Around 1500 of the 2224 passengers and crew died.



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Robert Falcon Scott

Robert Falcon Scott, or 'Scott of the Antarctic', was a famous polar explorer.

Early life
He was born on 6th June 1868 in Devonport, UK. In 1880, Scott joined the Royal Navy aged just 13.

First expedition
Between 1901 and 1904, Scott commanded his first expedition to the Antarctic. The team, which also included the famous explorer Ernest Shackleton, reached further south than anyone before but failed to reach the South Pole. Scott was disappointed not to have reached the Pole and immediately began to plan his second expedition.

Second expedition
In 1910, Scott set off on his second expedition to become the first person to reach the South Pole. The terrible conditions and lack of working equipment made the journey very difficult. On 17th January 1912, Scott reached the South Pole, only to find that another explorer, Roald Amundsen, had arrived first. Exhausted, Scott and his team members headed home but died of starvation and exposure on 29th March 1912, less than 20 km from their supply depot.



Last Expedition, 1912. Left to right: Capt Oates, Lt Bowers, Capt Scott, Dr Wilson, PO Evans

Robert Falcon Scott's second expedition timeline

1910	
June	Scott and a team of 36 men set sail from Cardiff, Wales, in the whaling ship, *Terra Nova*.
October	Roald Amundsen tells Scott he is heading to the South Pole.
1911	
January	Scott and his team arrive in Antarctica and set up base camp at Cape Evans.
March	Scott and his team place shelters and supplies along the route they will take to the South Pole.
April	The Antarctic winter starts. Scott and his team live in an accommodation hut at Cape Evans.
September	The Antarctic winter finishes. Scott explains his plans for a South Pole march.
November	Scott and his team leave Cape Evans to march to the South Pole.
December	Scott sends some men back to Cape Evans, asking them to provide a rescue team in March.
1912	
January	Scott and his team reach the South Pole and realise they have been beaten by Roald Amundsen.
February	Some men suffer from exhaustion and frostbite. **17th February** Team member Edgar Evans dies.
March	Scott and his team wait at a meeting point. The rescue team from Cape Evans doesn't arrive. **16th March** Team member Captain Oates deliberately leaves Scott's camp to die. **29th March** Scott writes his last diary entry.
October	A search party leaves Cape Evans to look for Scott and his team at the end of the Antarctic winter.
November	The frozen bodies of Scott, Edward Wilson and Henry Bowers are found alongside Scott's diary.

Glossary

expedition	A group journey with a particular purpose.
explorer	Someone who travels to undiscovered places.
glacier	A large body of ice.
iceberg	A floating mass of ice that has detached from a glacier.
ice cap	An ice sheet that covers less than 50,000 square kilometres of land.
ice sheet	A thick sheet of ice covering an extensive area.
ice shelf	A part of a glacier that extends from the land and floats on the sea.
indigenous	People or things that have always been in a country.
Inuit	Indigenous people who live in the Arctic regions.
Northern Hemisphere	The part of Earth that is to the north of the Equator.
particle	A tiny piece of matter that makes up a solid, liquid or gas.
precipitation	Water vapour that falls to the ground as rain, sleet, hail or snow.
RMS *Titanic*	A British passenger ship that sank in the Atlantic Ocean.
sea ice	A thin, fragile layer of frozen sea water.
Southern Hemisphere	The part of Earth that is to the south of the Equator.

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