

Journeys: Using Antarctica in Your Classroom During International Polar Year

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2007 is the International Polar Year and many classes are studying Antarctica within their curriculum.

Choosing a Set text for a Class Studying Antarctica or Journeys:

Because there's not much first hand Antarctic material around in a range of media, YA novel 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' (Lothian) and diary 'Antarctic Writer on Ice' (Common Ground) can make a useful set of texts for those studying the Journeys theme, and specifically Antarctica.

1. **Getting the boys to read** is always a challenge and 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' is written from a bloke's perspective (21 year old Kyle) and questions issues of mateship and how far you'll go for a friend, as well as physical versus psychological courage and the ability to say "No' even in a mutiny situation. Because there's a mystique about Antarctica as one of the last frontiers, the realistic detail of the expedition which was researched on site and includes a chopper crash, hooks the reluctant readers, even though the scientific language is not simplified nor is the Antarctic speak of 'frozen chosen' snotsicles and the Big A (when things go wrong).
2. **A range of media**...audio, electronic, print, TV. Video Antarctica is a hi-tech location where e-mails and digital photos and GPS are the norm. So being able to use 'Antarctic Writer on ice' which is also available as an e-book with colour photos for downloading as well as an audio and print version and a Braille version is useful for teaching media purposes. E-mails to Kyle's girlfriend also feature as a device within the story. And there are narrative, descriptive and technical language usage within the books.
3. **Researched:** on a real and recent expedition with current eco-issues and checked by expert 'boffins'. The stereotype of the eco-terrorist is also challenged.
4. **Fact/Fiction:** One book is YA fiction and the other is factual. One is from the 21 year old male character's perspective; the other is a diary of a 55 year old female writer-expeditioner.
5. **Journey:** the geographic journey in both books is to Antarctica, but the other journey is one of self discovery and how powerful words can be as a way of coming to terms with life threatening or boring situations.

6. **Extra material:** The classroom playscript 'Antarctica Cool or What' in the collection 'Right or Wrong' can be performed as another medium, looking at issues affecting Antarctica from a non human perspective e.g. wildlife.

Create A Scene by getting groups of students to read the novel and then select a scene for dramatising in any medium (web cam/audio/stage/ video) is an effective way of linking the book to other forms of communication.

(Details of suggested scenes with page references in teachers' notes on website www.hazeledwards.com)