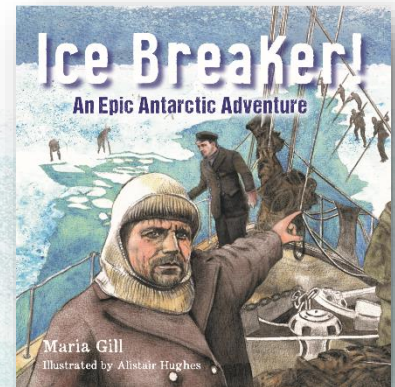


# ICE BREAKER!

by Maria Gill, Alistair Hughes

The day war broke out on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 1914, 'Endurance' slipped its London mooring and sailed for South America. The crew were about to make history – traversing the Antarctic continent for the first time. But instead the 'Endurance' ship became stuck in the ice and later sunk. New Zealander Captain Frank Worsley together with famous expedition leader Sir Ernest Shackleton guided the crew along icebergs, across a wild and dangerous sea to two Sub-Antarctic Islands. The expedition had become a fight for survival.



This is the true nail-biting story of how the exceptional sailing and navigation skills of Captain Frank Worsley and the legendary leadership skills of Sir Ernest Shackleton saved all 28 men.

Combining Maria Gill's extensive research and action-packed writing with Alistair Hughes' stunning watercolour illustrations, this captivating creative non-fiction story tells the epic polar survival journey.

**Maria Gill** has written over 60 children's stories, many of which are biographies about New Zealand's icons. Her book *Anzac Heroes* won the 216 New Zealand Book Awards for Children & Young Adult Non-fiction Award, as well as the Book of the Year prize. *New Zealand Hall of Fame* won the 2012 Children's Choice Award. Her books have been selected for 10 Storylines Notable Book Awards. [www.mariagill.co.nz](http://www.mariagill.co.nz)

**Alistair Hughes** has illustrated four children's books including *Kea: Curiouser and Curiouser*. He also wrote, designed and illustrated for adults 'InfoGothic'. For two decades he worked for a major media organisation and has fine-tuned award-winning visual communication skills. He now writes, illustrates and designs graphics fulltime for his freelance company Shoreline Creative. [www.shorelinecreative.co.nz](http://www.shorelinecreative.co.nz)

## Key Competencies

**Thinking** Students will research information from books including 'Ice Breaker!' and the Internet. They will present knowledge gained from their inquiry. And evaluate and reflect.

**Participating and contributing, relating to others** Students will interact with others in pairs, small groups and as a whole class. They will share ideas, listen to others, ask open questions, discuss, complete activities, and present.

## Learning Goals

Students will read about an Antarctic adventure through close reading of *Ice Breaker!*

Students will build an in-depth picture of what life was like on *Endurance* and the lifeboats, as well as camping on the ice floes and the islands. Students will participate in a range of activities that will help cement the information into their long-term memories.



## Introduction

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there were many places still unexplored. When explorers made those intrepid journeys and succeeded (or failed) they became world famous, especially the expedition leaders. For some of the explorers it was the ultimate challenge and achievement to be the first.

**Brainstorm** – Some of the famous journeys explorers made in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Pair Share** – Partners share what they know about some of these famous explorations.

**Group Activity** – Set up: Divide students into groups of 4-6. At each group's table have a piece of A3 paper with a different heading (one heading per group/sheet).

- What jobs do you think will be on an explorers' ship on an Antarctic expedition?
- What food would the crew eat while on board their ship?
- What dangers do you think could befall the crew while on an expedition to Antarctica?
- What animals would they take with them on the voyage and what do you think happened to them?
- How would the men keep themselves amused while on the ship and on the ice?
- How do the crew keep themselves warm while in freezing temperatures?

Activity: Groups discuss the questions and then write an answer. Then fold their answer so the next group can't see it. The paper will look like a concertina by the end of the exercise. When all groups are finished, groups rotate to the right and sit down at next table and discuss/answer that question. Again, folding it over. Groups continue rotating until they've answered all the questions. At their last question, they unfold the paper and read it aloud to the class/group. Repeat this activity at the end of the unit to see what they've learned.

**Class Share** - Why do you think it was so important for these explorers to be the first? What were they putting at risk to accomplish or fail at these adventures?

**Video** – 'Shackleton's Captain' on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ko-66CheXiQ>

## Before Reading

- Why do you think the author has chosen this title?
- Where do you think this ship is going?
- When do you think this story took place?
- Has anyone heard of Frank Worsley or Sir Ernest Shackleton before?
- How do you think these men will survive in Antarctica?
- Can you predict what will happen in 'Ice Breaker!'



## Close Reading

1. What propelled Frank Worsley to walk along a London street and what did he find there? (page 2-3)
2. Why do you think Frank was so keen to go on the expedition? (pages 2-3)
3. Why is it a problem for the journey that war has been declared? (page 4-5)
4. How does Frank Worsley get through the ice floes? What could be on the ship's hull to make it able to withstand those rams. (pages 4-5)
5. Why was Frank horrified when *Endurance* got stuck? What does it show that the ship means to Frank?
6. What is a ship-berg? Real word or made-up word? And why did they drift north? (pages 6-7)
7. How did the men beat the boredom on the trapped ship? (pages 6-7)
8. What woke up Frank and why was it bad news? (pages 8-9)
9. Why did it feel like losing a leg or arm for Frank? (pages 8-9)
10. Why did Frank think it was a bad idea to drag the boats? And why was Ernest Shackleton determined to give it a go? (pages 10-11)
11. Where did the men live for five months and when did they realise it was time to get back into the boats? (pages 12-13)
12. Why were the men wary of the orca? (pages 12-13)
13. What words/phrases indicate that it is very cold on the boat trip? (pages 14-15)
14. Why couldn't Frank straighten out his body and how did the crew help him loosen his muscles? (pages 14-15)
15. Where do you think Elephant Island is? Is it populated with people? What makes you think that? (pages 16-17)
16. Why did Frank think it was ironic that they were so thirsty? (pages 16-17)
17. It is said that Frank finding Elephant Island in the Weddell Sea in a small boat was an incredible accomplishment. How did Ernest show his appreciation to Frank? (pages 16-17)
18. Where is the high-water mark on a beach? How can you tell? And why did they pull their boats there? (pages 18-19)
19. What is hoosh and why were the men so grateful for the hot meal? (pages 18-19)
20. Why did Frank think they might as well be on another planet? (pages 18-19)
21. Why did they row rather than sail around the bay? What do you think happened to their other oars? (pages 20-21)
22. What did Frank recall from his childhood? How did that experience help him while rowing? (pages 20-21)
23. Why did Frank refer to some of the crew as 'wretched souls'? And what was he hinting at? (pages 22-23)
24. What is Frank measuring and why are those measurements so important? (pages 24-25)
25. How did the boat nearly capsize? How disastrous would that have been for the crew? (26-27)
26. What did Ernest mean when he said, 'Two of the men won't last much longer.'" (pages 26-27)
27. Why was it a big deal that they were traversing the island and what does 'traverse' mean? (pages 28-29)
28. How did Frank steer the men when they were climbing blind in the fog? (pages 30-31)
29. Why was Frank worried about sledging down the slope? (pages 30-31)
30. Why did they continue in darkness? What would happen if they stopped? (pages 32-33)
31. How do you think the men felt when they saw the whaling station? (pages 32-33)
32. Why did one of the castaways think Frank had not come to rescue them? (pages 34-35)
33. Why did it take four attempts to rescue the Elephant Island crew? How do you think they felt when they saw the ship? (pages 34-35)
34. How are Sir Ernest Shackleton and Captain Frank Worsley alike and different? (pages 36-37)
35. Why were Frank Hurley's photographs important when they retold their stories back in civilisation? (pages 36-37)
36. How would you describe Antarctica? Is it a place you would like to go one day? Why? Why not? (pages 38-39)

## Reflection

Students write in a journal about what they felt during the reading and activities. Consider the skills the men needed and the attitude that helped them survive the epic journey. What have they learned from it and could it help save them if they were ever in danger?

## Extra Activities

- Learn navigation and orienteering skills.
- Make a raft and have a sailing competition (to see which is the most sea-worthy).
- Act out the story – see Readers Theatre Script at end.
- Write an adventure story. Set a goal to build the tension in the story to keep the readers reading until the end.

# Readers' Theatre Script

## Ice Breaker!

By Maria Gill

Crew:            Captain Frank Worsley                      Sir Ernest Shackleton                      Narrator 1  
                    Narrator 2                                      Sailor 1, 2, 3

Narrator 1                      Frank Worsley woke up and rubbed his eyes.

Narrator 2                      In his dream, he had been navigating a ship through a busy London street full of ice blocks.

Frank Worsley                      [Speak to audience] *Maybe it's an omen.*

Narrator 1                      He jumped out of bed, threw on his clothes, and hurried to the road he'd seen in his dream.

Narrator 2                      Frank stopped at a 'Trans-Antarctic Expedition' sign.

Frank Worsley                      [Speaks to audience] *Aha! This must be it!*

*Narrator 1*                      He strode into the building.

Frank Worsley                      Hire me as your captain. I've spent 25 years sailing between my homeland New Zealand and England.

Ernest Shackleton                      You'll have to dodge icebergs and drop us off. Then we'll traverse across the Antarctic continent.

Frank                      What an epic polar adventure it'll be.

Narrator 2                      Ernest shook Frank's hand.

Ernest Shackleton                      Welcome, Skipper!

Narrator 1                      While stocking the ship with supplies ...

Narrator 2                      worrying news came in.

Ernest                      Britain's declared war with Germany!

Sailors                      [All talking at once]

Sailor 1                      I need to join the Navy ...

Sailor 2                      Me too ...

Sailor 3                      Surely the expedition will be over, now.

Frank                      Perhaps I should return to the Navy too.

Narrator 1                      But Ernest was told"

Ernest                      [Reads telegram] PROCEED with the voyage!

Frank                      All hands on deck!

Narrator 2	On the 8 <sup>th</sup> August 1914,
Narrator 1	Frank steered <i>Endurance</i> out of the harbour towards South America.
Narrator 2	He couldn't contain his grin and broke into song.
Frank Worsley	"A sailor went to sea sea sea
Sailors & Frank	"to see what he could see see see, but all he could see see see, was the bottom of the sea sea sea"
Frank	Tighten the main brace!
Sailor 1	aye, aye, skipper
Frank	Loosen the top sails!
Sailor 2	aye, aye, skipper
Frank	Hoist the jibs!
Sailor 1	aye, aye, skipper
Frank	Steer east, south-east!
Sailor 3	East, south-east it is, Captain.
Frank	Right lads, next stop South America!
Narrator 1	After four months of easy ocean sailing and at anchor in ports
Narrator 2	Frank was eager for a challenge.
Narrator 1	He soon found it.
Sailor 2	Ice floes ahead, skipper!
Frank	Where's the weakest one?
Sailor 2	To the right, skipper.
Frank	Okay, full speed ahead.
Sailor 3	Full speed ahead, captain.
Frank	Cut the engines!
Sailor 3	Engine cut, captain.
Frank	Brace yourselves!
Narrator 2	Bang! The boat hit the iceberg.
Narrator 1	Carving a notch into the slab.
Frank	Back up! Back up!
Sailor 3	Backing up!
Frank	Now forward, full speed!
Sailor 3	Full speed ahead, captain.
Frank	Brace yourselves again!
Narrator 2	The ship hit the iceberg with a loud ...

Narrator 1                    CRACK!

Narrator 2                    And the iceberg split all the way through ...

Sailors                        Yay!

Narrator 1                    Enabling them to keep on going forward.

Sailor 2                        ‘Nother iceberg ahead, skipper!

Frank                         Full throttle!

Narrator 2                    But six weeks after entering the Weddell Sea ...

Narrator 1                    the *Endurance* was stuck solid in the ice.

Narrator 2                    Frank was horrified.

Frank                         [Speaks to audience] *I can't leave my ship in this desolate place.*

Narrator 1                    The rest of the world,

Narrator 2                    however, was too busy fighting a war to rescue them.

Frank                         Men get your gear – we've got to find a way through the ice!

Sailors                        Aye, aye, skipper

Narrator 1                    All hands chipped at the floe with chisels, saws and picks.

Sailor 2                        Nothing's working, skipper.

Sailor 1                        The ice has got its claws in, all right!

Ernest                         We'll have to wait until the summer when the ice melts.

Narrator 1                    Their ship-berg drifted north for nine months.

Narrator 2                    While Frank fussed over the boat,

Narrator 1                    the crew kept busy playing cards,

Sailor 1                        Hey, it's my turn.

Sailor 2                        Pass me a card, mate.

Narrator 2                    They performed plays,

Narrator 1                    and sang along to banjo music.

Narrator 2                    Sometimes the cramped confines of the ship was too much.

Frank                         Need some fresh air!

Ernest                         The dogs could do with some exercise.

Narrator 1                    Frank walked the dogs,

Narrator 2                    fished for much-needed food,

Narrator 1                    and once had a ...

Sailor 1                        Hey, look at the captain – he's having a snow-bath!

Sailor 2                        Bit cold for that ain't it?

Sailor 3                        Freezing off the brass monkeys, yet, captain?

Sailors	Laughing
Narrator 2	Other times he stared into the horizon and took sightings.
Narrator 1	On a midwinter's night, a cannon-like explosion woke the crew.
Narrator 2	Frank raced on deck.
Frank	What's that noise?
Sailor 3	Ice floes are squeezing the hull, captain.
Narrator 1	The ice floes heaved it upwards,
Narrator 2	tipped the ship sideways
Narrator 1	and dumped it back down.
Frank	[speaks to audience] <i>My ship is being strangled, and there's nothing I can do to save her.</i>
Sailor 1	Seawater's spurting through the cracks, skipper!
Ernest	All men on the pumps!
Sailor 2	We can't keep up, sir, it's gushing through!
Ernest	Skipper, the ship can't live in this, what the ice gets, the ice keeps.
Frank	(Rubs his furrowed brow.) Giving up on a ship is like having an arm or leg amputated.
Narrator 1	The crew moved all their gear onto the ice and pitched their tents.
Narrator 2	The <i>Endurance</i> finally sank on the 21 November 1915.
Narrator 1	As he watched, Frank blinked back tears.
Narrator 2	The ship creaked and groaned, as the beams and timbers were crushed ...
Narrator 1	... under the force of the pack ice swallowing their vessel.
Ernest Shackleton	The expedition is over, lads. We now need to drag the lifeboats closer to land. Our mission is to survive!"
Frank	[Frank winces] It'll ruin the boats' hulls. We're better off riding an ice floe until it drifts nearer the open sea."
Ernest	Sorry, Skipper. I have to keep the men busy.
Narrator 1	And so the journey to survive begins.
Narrator 2	To find out IF the men get back to England ...
Narrator 1 and 2	Read 'Ice Breaker'! by Maria Gill, illustrated by Alistair Hughes.

Ends  
Actors bow to audience  
Questions from the audience



See how many parts you can label, then colour-in the Endurance

- 1 Rudder
- 2 Stern
- 3 Hull
- 4 Mizzen mast
- 5 Mizzen yard
- 6 Main mast
- 7 Main yard
- 8 Fore mast
- 9 Fore yard
- 10 Crow's nest
- 11 Bow
- 12 Bowsprit
- 13 Headsails
- 14 Foresail
- 15 Fore topsail
- 16 Fore skysail
- 17 Driver/spanker (sail)
- 18 Lifeboats
- 19 Stack

