

## Learning objectives

- Students will examine the relationship between geography and history.
- Students will explore the search missions for the 1845 British Arctic Expedition and evaluate the effects of the Arctic's physical geography on their outcome.

## Time required

50-70 minutes

## Grades

4-8

## Materials

- "Searching for the 1845 British Arctic Expedition" worksheet
- Access to Internet
- December 2014 issue of *Canadian Geographic*

## Set-up

Make copies of the "Searching for the 1845 British Arctic Expedition" worksheet – one for each student. Arrange for the class to have access to the Internet for research.

## Links to the Canadian National Standards for Geography

### Essential Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

- Mental maps
- Map types

### Essential Element 2: Places and Regions

- Perceptions of places and regions
- Political and historical characteristics of regions

### Essential Element 5: Environment and Society

- Limits and opportunities of the physical environment for human activities

### Essential Element 6: The Uses of Geography

- Influences of physical and human features on historical events

## Introduction

Write on the board one, two, or all of the following statements (based on your students' ability and knowledge):

Geography is the place where history happens.

Latitudes not attitudes: geography explains history.

An atlas is like a long-term forecast – it sees history before it happens.

What is where? Why there? Why care?

Begin your discussion by having your class define what geography is. Have them explore the different types of geography (physical, human, historical, etc.) and which type(s) they think would play a role in an expedition. Facilitate a class discussion about geography's effects on history using the above quotes as guiding statements.

Ask students to think about the Arctic and list all the things they remember learning about the history and geography of the region. Ask students to draw a map from memory of Canada's Arctic, labelling all the geographical features they can recall (water bodies, island, coastline, rivers, etc.). Tell them to turn to a neighbour and compare maps, focusing on where they started their maps and how each student was able to identify geographic features. Have each pair make a list of words that describe the geography of the region.

Discuss the importance of the Arctic to Canada and how much of Canada is considered to be part of the Arctic. Using your students' maps and adjectives as a starting point, have students compare and contrast the geography of where they live to the geography of where the 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition occurred. Record responses for all students to see.

## Development

Provide an overview of the 1845 British Arctic Expedition by reading pages 48-51 of the December 2014 issue of *Canadian Geographic*. Have the students consider this quote by Professor Russell Potter of Rhode Island College: "You see a region of the Earth that defeats great imperial power." Check for understanding by asking:

- What region of Earth is he referring to?
- What is the "great imperial power"?
- What was the role of geography?

Have students reflect on the describing words and maps from the introductions when discussing this.

Introduce students to the 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition. If possible, have students watch the videos found on [cgeducation.ca/franklin](http://cgeducation.ca/franklin). Explain that the 2014 expedition sought the location of the missing ships from the 1845 British Arctic Expedition led by Sir John Franklin. A succession of search expeditions that began in 1847 had tried to do the same. Explore each of these expeditions through the interactive timeline found at [cgeducation.ca/franklin](http://cgeducation.ca/franklin).

Geography played a pivotal role in the 1845 British Arctic Expedition, as well as in the searches following. Discuss the geographical struggles faced by the 2014 search crew and how they overcame these issues. Be sure to focus on geography's effects before, during and after the find of HMS *Erebus*. Consult the maps on pages 78-82 of the December 2014 issue of *Canadian Geographic* for additional insight about the geography of the Arctic.

## Conclusion

Instruct students to complete the "Searching for the 1845 British Arctic Expedition" worksheet using the information they find on [cgeducation.ca/franklin](http://cgeducation.ca/franklin) as well as their prior geographic knowledge. Tell them to choose one of the search expeditions. Guide and assist as necessary. Conclude with a discussion about the role that the different types of geography have played in searches in the past and will continue to play in future expeditions.

## Extend your geographical thinking

Evidence and interpretation are key features of geographical thinking. Have the students investigate evidence collected by the many searches for the lost 1845 British Arctic Expedition. Instruct them to categorize it as a primary, secondary or tertiary source. What does each tell us?

*For more information about the search for Franklin's lost ships, please visit [www.pc.gc.ca/eng/culture/franklin/index.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/culture/franklin/index.aspx)*

## Searching for the 1845 British Arctic Expedition

Complete the following:

Search expedition year: \_\_\_\_\_ Expedition lead: \_\_\_\_\_

Other members of expedition: \_\_\_\_\_

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Technology/tools used in search: \_\_\_\_\_

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Discoveries: \_\_\_\_\_

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Questions/mysteries remaining: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Geography's Effects on History

Role of geography in the search. Did it help or hinder the search? Provide examples.

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Plot the searchers' route: Trace the route in red and locate and indicate several geographic features.

