**Escape to the Pole – Journey to the North Pole**

That first trip (1890) was the beginning of over nineteen years working with Peary and travelling to the frozen north. We didn’t know it then but it would take us all that time and four more expeditions to get to the North Pole.

The second journey in 1894 was the worst. We set out across the ice cap with three sledges and thirty-seven dogs. But we returned with only one sledge and one dog. We had to haul our equipment ourselves and we had to walk for miles through freezing ice and snow. We were starving most of the time and the temperatures were some of the coldest I remember.

Conditions were also hard during our third expedition, which set out in 1898 and lasted for almost five years. One time we were trapped in our igloo for days without food while a wild storm blew outside.

At last in the summer of 1908, Commander Peary wrote to me to tell me he had funds for one last journey wrote to me to tell me he had funds for one last journey. Percy and I knew the Arctic well now. Once we got to Greenland, we got the trail ready. In March, we were ready to go. Our expedition, complete with ninety-eight dogs, set off from our final camp on Cape Sheridon on the very north of Ellesmere Island.

We travelled all through March. Every night we camped and built igloos. It was so cold, our breath froze in our fur hoods. By this time, I didn’t think I had much chance of getting to the Pole.

Peary chose me to go on the last leg of the journey. That meant that I would be the only American left with him. And so, on1st April 1909, my party went ahead.

We travelled for another five days. It was on the 6th April, late in the day, I checked my readings. I could not believe it. I thought I had made a mistake, so I tried again.

“We made it!” I cried. “We’re here! Look at the compass! We’re here!” We had spent over nineteen years trying to get there, but we were all so worn out.

We stayed in the north until the sea ice began to melt in July, and it was on the 17th that we set sail for America.

In 1910, the American government announced that our expedition was the first true journey to the North Pole. The President gave Peary a medal too. But not me.

Slowly, America began to change. In 1937, the Explorers’ Club invited me to join – the first coloured member they had ever had. In 1944 the President decided I could have a special Peary Polar Expedition Medal and gave it to me himself.

Who would have thought it? A coloured man, an orphan beaten and homeless, with no shoes on his feet, working since the age of eleven, at last had the honour and thanks of the whole country.

**Task 1:**

Can you write a timeline about the adventures of Matthew Henson?

**Task 2:**

Write a biography about Matt Henson’s life. You do not need to write everything about his life, just key facts and one or two key events.

You can use Purple Mash, Publisher or Word to produce this.

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Matthew-Henson/399967>

Checklist:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Years 3 and 4 | Years 5 and 6 |
| Have I written an opening paragraph to introduce my character? | Have I used a rhetorical question in my opening statement? |
| Have I written 2 key events about his life? | Have I written 2-4 key events about his early and later life? |
| Is it written in the past tense? | Is it mainly written in the past tense, but supported by a quote? |
| Have I used full-stops, question and exclamation marks to punctuate my work? Have I used commas? | Have I used a range of punctuation, including dashes and commas? |
| Have I started my sentences with a time connective? | Have I used fronted adverbials? |
| Is it written in the third person? (He…) | Is it written in the third person? |
| Have I used a simile?  | Have I used similes and metaphors? |

**Task 3:**

Produce a leaflet about what it is like to visit the North Pole. (See Purple Mash task.)

Or

Write about what achievement it would be to reach the North Pole. Pretend you are going to make the journey, describe your journey, the highs and lows, and what it would be like if you made it to the North Pole.