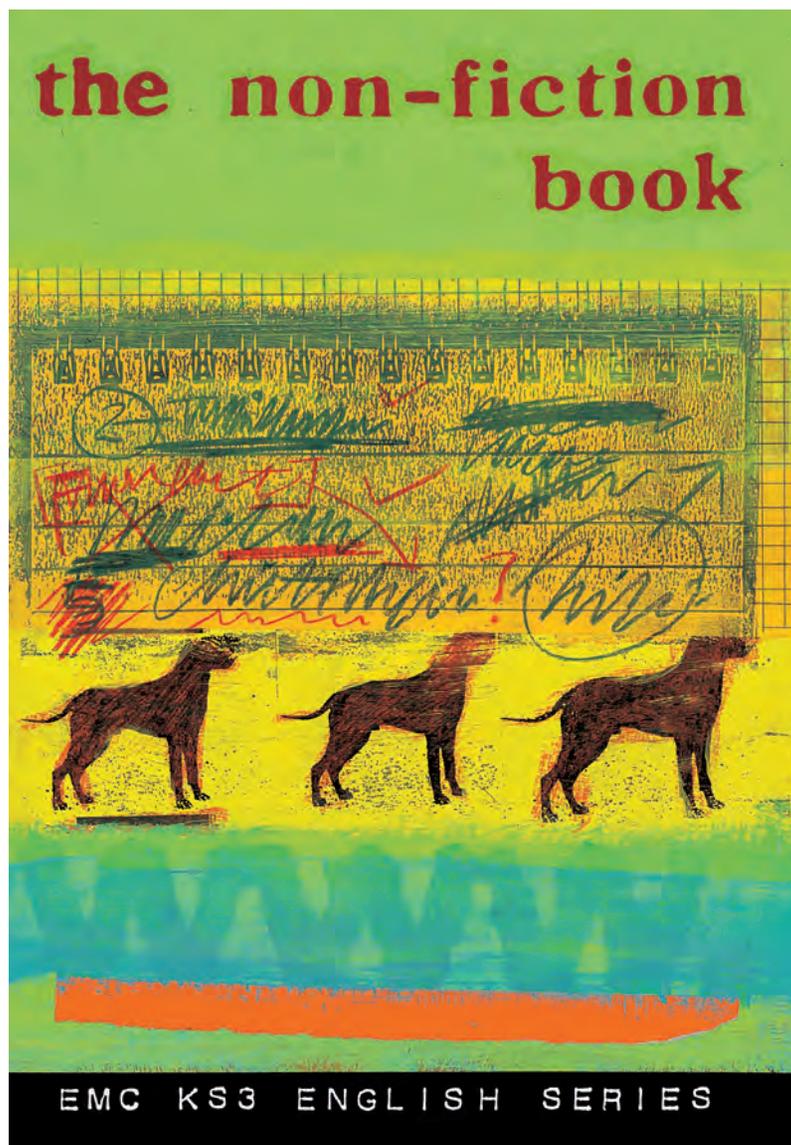


KS3 Non-Fiction Book: Captain Scott



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Captain Scott

In this unit you will:

- look closely at a famous literary non-fiction text
- learn about how the purpose, audience and form of this text affected the way it was written
- use this text as the basis of an information text book.

What sort of writing is this?

Exploring fragments of text Class and pair work

- Your teacher will read four fragments of text to you. As you listen, jot down your first response to each one. For example, you might have some ideas about the type of writing it is, who might have written it and why.
- Read the fragments and make very brief notes about each one. Some of the things you could think about as you read are suggested here:
 - the sort of writing it is
 - why it was written (the purpose)
 - who it was written for (the audience)
 - the way it is written (for example, in a formal or chatty style; in notes or full sentences)
 - your personal opinion of it.
- Take it in turns to share your ideas with the rest of the class.

The sun with blurred image peeping shyly through the wreathing drift giving pale shadowless light.

The eternal silence of the great white desert. Cloudy columns of snow drift advancing from the south, pale yellow wraiths, heralding the coming storm, blotting out one by one the sharp-cut lines of the land ...

Friday, 16 March or Saturday, 17

Lost track of dates, but think the last correct

I take this opportunity of saying that we have stuck to our sick companions to the last ... We knew that poor Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman.

Blizzard bad as ever – Wilson and Bowers unable to start – tomorrow last chance – no fuel and only one or two of food left – must be near the end.

Captain Scott

All four fragments are taken from the diary of Captain Scott. This diary was written during his expedition to the South Pole in 1912. Although Scott and his team reached the Pole on 18th January 1912, they died at the end of March, on their way back to the base camp. The diary was discovered with the frozen bodies of the men nine months later, in November 1912.

Reading the diary Class and individual work

- Read the fragments for a second time. Does the information about where they are taken from change the way you respond to them? If so, in what ways?
- Listen to the whole extract being read out loud.

222

for the place where we had seen the white giant Petrels as the ship rounded the Cape - we found them there standing on the shore ice & I killed four white ones & one dark one as they made off for the ice floating on the sea - One I lost & it floated away on the tide - I also shot two Mac Cormick's Skuas - and Shackleton too, there were any number of them flying over the Penguins ready to pounce on the first nestling found unprotected - The Penguins as usual were very amusing. They had eggs some of them - carefully laid in a nest made of pebbles - Some had just hatched out - and some had big downy or woolly young ones more than half as big as they were themselves - These they tried to sit on but all they could cover was the head so it looked very absurd - Although the bird lays two eggs - hardly ever more than one young one survives. Then they had a strange way of flying at one very often - a big penguin would start running towards one from some considerable distance, and without a moment's hesitation would seize one's trousers & begin battering one's skin with its very bony flippers. The number of these birds was simply incredible - they covered the 200 odd acres - they covered the sides of the mountain, ft. high, & they spread in small colonies over the top - There was a constant stream of them up & down the side of the mountain & their paths were very useful to us in getting up the steep snow & rocky slopes - We found several Skuas on the way up, with their fledgelings - partly little grayish white fluffy things with pale blue bill & feet - but the old birds kept up a continual attack on us when we were anywhere near their young, chattering excitedly & dashing at our heads so boldly & persistently that we had to protect ourselves with a stick & one of the



Diary entry for 9th January 1902

The Diary of Captain Scott

Impressions

The seductive folds of the sleeping-bag.

The hiss of the primus and the fragrant steam of the cooker issuing from the tent ventilator.

The small green tent and the great white road.

The whine of a dog and the neigh of our steeds.

The driving cloud of powdered snow.

The crunch of footsteps which break the surface crust.

The wind-blown furrows.

The blue arch beneath the smoky cloud.

The crisp ring of the ponies' hoofs and the swish of the following sledge.

The droning conversation of the march as driver encourages or chides his horse.

The patter of dog pads.

The gentle flutter of our canvas shelter.

Its deep booming sound under the full force of blizzard.

The drift snow like finest flour penetrating every hole and corner – flickering up beneath one's head covering, pricking sharply as a sand blast.

The sun with blurred image peeping shyly through the wreathing drift giving pale shadowless light. The eternal silence of the great white desert. Cloudy columns of snow drift advancing from the south, pale yellow wraiths, heralding the coming storm, blotting out one by one the sharp-cut lines of the land ...

Friday, 16 March or Saturday, 17. Lost track of dates, but think the last correct. Tragedy all along the line. At lunch, the day before yesterday, poor Titus Oates said he couldn't go on; he proposed we should leave him in his sleeping-bag. That we could not do, and induced him to come on, on the afternoon march. In spite of its awful nature for him he struggled on and we made a few miles. At night he was worse and we knew the end had come.

Should this be found I want these facts recorded. Oates's last thoughts were of his Mother, but immediately before he took pride in thinking that his regiment would be pleased with the bold way in which he met his death. We can testify to his bravery. He has borne intense suffering for weeks without complaint, and to the very last was able and willing to discuss outside subjects. He did not - would not - give up hope to the very end. He was a brave soul. This was the end. He slept through the night before last, hoping not to wake; but he woke in the morning – yesterday. It was blowing a blizzard. He said, 'I am just going outside and may be some time' and we have not seen him since.

I take this opportunity of saying that we have stuck to our sick companions to the last. In the case of Edgar Evans, when absolutely out of food and he lay insensible, the safety of the remainder seemed to demand his abandonment, but Providence mercifully removed him at this critical moment. He died a natural death, and we did not leave him till two hours after his death. We knew that poor Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman. We all hope to meet the end with a similar spirit, and assuredly the end is not far.

I can only write at lunch and then only occasionally. The cold is intense, -40° at midday. My companions are unendingly cheerful, but we are all on the verge of serious frostbites, and though we talk constantly of fetching through I don't think any one of us feels it in his heart.

Captain Scott

We are cold on the march now, and at all times except meals. Yesterday we had to lay up for a blizzard and today we move dreadfully slowly. We are at No. 14 pony camp, only two pony marches on from One Ton Depot. We leave here our theodolite, a camera and Oates's sleeping-bags. Diaries etc., and geological specimens carried at Wilson's special request, will be found with us on our sledge.

Sunday, 18 March

Today, lunch, we are 21 miles from the depot. Ill fortune presses, but better may come. We have had more wind and drift from ahead yesterday; had to stop marching; wind N.W., force 4, temp. -35°. No human being could face it, and we are worn out nearly.

My right foot has gone, nearly all the toes - two days ago I was proud possessor of best feet. These are the steps of my downfall. Like an ass I mixed a small spoonful of curry powder with my melted pemmican - it gave me violent indigestion. I lay awake and in pain all night; woke and felt done on the march; foot went and didn't know it. A very small measure of neglect and have a foot which is not pleasant to contemplate. Bowers takes first place in condition, but there is not much to choose after all. The others are still confident of getting through - or pretend to be - I don't know! We have the last half fill of oil in our primus and a very small quantity of spirit - this alone between us and thirst. The wind is fair for the moment, and this is perhaps a fact to help. The mileage would have seemed ridiculously small on our outward journey.

Monday, 19 March

Lunch. We camped with difficulty last night and were dreadfully cold till after our supper of cold pemmican and biscuit and a half pannikin of cocoa cooked over the spirit. Then, contrary to expectation, we got warm and all slept well. Today we started in the usual dragging manner. Sledge dreadfully heavy. We are 15 miles from the depot and ought to get there in three days. What progress! We have two days' food but barely a day's fuel. All our feet are getting bad - Wilson's best, my right foot worse, left all right. There is no chance to nurse one's feet till we can get hot food into us. Amputation is the least I can hope for now, but will the trouble spread? That is the serious question. The weather doesn't give us a chance - the wind from N. to N.W. and -40° today.

Wednesday, 21 March

Got within 11 miles of depot Monday night; had to lay up all yesterday in severe blizzard. Today forlorn hope, Wilson and Bowers going to depot for fuel.

Thursday 22nd and 23 March

Blizzard as bad as ever - Wilson and Bowers unable to start - tomorrow last chance. No fuel and only one or two of food left - must be near the end. Have decided it shall be natural - we shall march for the depot with or without our effects and die in our tracks.

Thursday, 29 March

Since the 21st we have had a continuous gale from W.S.W and S.W. We had fuel to make two cups of tea apiece and bare food for two days on the 20th. Every day we have been ready to start for our depot 11 miles away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of-course, and the end cannot be far.

It seems a pity but I do not think I can write more.

R. Scott

For God's sake look after our people.