between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE LESSON SAMPLER

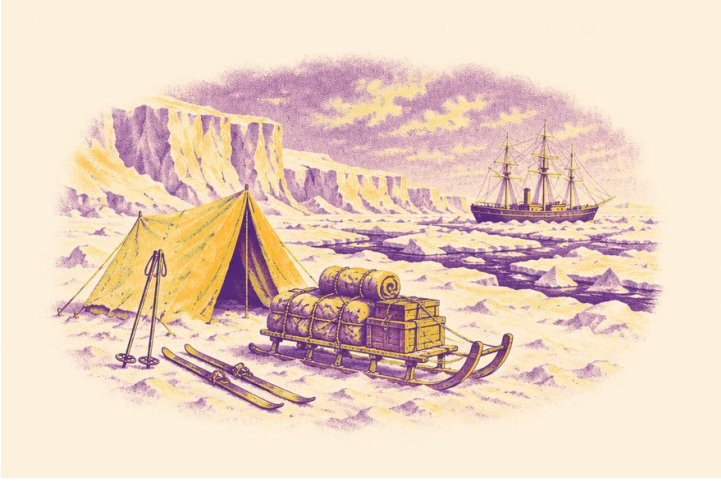
Journeys: travel and exploration writing: The giant wave

How does Shackleton make one moment at sea so frightening?

Lesson 4 of 14 from the scheme of learning

Teacher notes, slides and student pages at all three levels

Written for the English national curriculum at Key Stage 3



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What is in this sampler

This is one complete lesson from our Journeys: travel and exploration writing scheme for Year 7. It comes exactly as it appears in the full scheme, so you can teach it next week and see how our lessons work.

Teacher notes	Timings with slide numbers, Do Now answers, the exploded quotation, the hinge question and what each answer tells you, the task at three levels, a model and notes on misconceptions and adapting the lesson (next pages).
Slides	The editable PowerPoint deck for Lesson 4, with teacher notes on every slide (separate file).
Student pages	The lesson's pages from the student booklet: one question, with the Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support side by side (at the end of this document).

How every lesson works

Know	Do Now from memory, vocabulary, then the reading. The five Do Now questions build on what students learned in Lessons 1 to 3 of the full scheme.
Apply	Explode one quotation together; a hinge question checks understanding.
Master	One shared task, with Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support; then a model and an exit ticket. Most Master tasks are What–How–Why paragraphs, and some are creative or other forms: in this lesson, a description.

Three levels of support

Every student answers the same question in every lesson. What changes is the support on the page, so the whole class does the same lesson:

Securing	The most support: a word bank, a choice of quotations, a worked example and sentence starters.
Strengthening	Some support: prompts for What, How and Why, a planner and a checklist.
Soaring	The most challenge: a debatable statement, prompts to think further and an argument planner.

The names describe the support, never the student. The hinge question shows who might start where, and students move between levels from lesson to lesson.

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In the full scheme

- 14 lessons like this one, with editable slides and a teacher handbook (lesson notes, unit map, assessment guide and knowledge bank)
- A student booklet with every lesson and all three levels of support, plus the same lessons as one pack per level
- Six weeks of independent practice homework at three levels
- A checkpoint (Feedback Loop kit) with a whole-class feedback sheet and improvement tasks
- A two-part end-of-unit assessment with a teacher guide, band guidance and annotated models
- A catch-up sheet for every lesson, for students who missed it
- An inclusion guide: pre-teaching, SEND, EAL and pupil premium notes for every lesson

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Lesson 4: The giant wave

SEQUENCE 1: POLAR WRITERS: SHACKLETON AND SCOTT · 60 MINUTES

How does Shackleton make one moment at sea so frightening?

By the end of the lesson, students can

- Explain how a false hope and a simile make the giant wave frightening
- Describe how suspense is built by slowing time down
- Write a first-person description of a dangerous moment at sea, using the senses and a simile

Lesson at a glance

Time	Phase	What happens	Slides
0–8	Know	Do Now: five quick questions on Lessons 3 and 1 and the voyage of the James Caird. Students self-check from the answer slide.	2–3
8–18	Know	Pre-teach “simile”, “suspense” and “tiller”. Read the extract aloud while students follow and underline the moment Shackleton realises what he has seen.	4–5
18–28	Apply	Draw a small boat and a high wave on the board, then explode the quotation together. Think aloud about the false hope, then students annotate their copy. Before you reveal any notes, students try the four empty boxes on the first explode slide, on their own or after you model one box.	6–7
28–33	Apply	Hinge question on mini-whiteboards. Use the answers to decide who starts on which level of support.	8–9
33–53	Master	Students write a description of the wave as one of the six men in the boat, using their level of support in the student booklet. Share the model description in the last five minutes.	10–11
53–60	Master	Exit ticket. Collect and sort into three piles to plan the start of the next lesson.	12

Do Now answers

1	What is it called when a writer describes a ship as if she were alive?	Personification
2	In Lesson 3, which noun did Shackleton use for the fight with the ice?	Battle
3	What is the name of the small boat sailed to South Georgia?	The James Caird
4	How many men sailed in the James Caird?	Six
5	Where did the James Caird sail to?	South Georgia

Vocabulary

simile	a comparison that uses the word like or as
suspense	the nervous feeling of waiting to find out what happens
tiller	the handle that steers a small boat

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Reading

Chapter 9: the giant wave

At midnight in the James Caird, Shackleton sees something in the sky.

> At midnight I was at the tiller and suddenly noticed a line of clear sky between the south and southwest. I called to the other men that the sky was clearing, and then a moment later I realized that what I had seen was not a rift in the clouds but the white crest of an enormous wave. During twenty-six years' experience of the ocean in all its moods I had not encountered a wave so gigantic. It was a mighty upheaval of the ocean, a thing quite apart from the big white-capped seas that had been our tireless enemies for many days. I shouted, "For God's sake, hold on! It's got us!" Then came a moment of suspense that seemed drawn out into hours. White surged the foam of the breaking sea around us. We felt our boat lifted and flung forward like a cork in breaking surf.

Ernest Shackleton, South (1919), Chapter 9

Word help **rift**: a gap or split · **gigantic**: extremely large · **upheaval**: a sudden, violent rise

Explode the quotation

Method	Zoom in
A false hope. Shackleton first sees clear sky, then learns what the pale line really is.	The sharp concrete noun "crest" names the top of a wave, and the large adjective "enormous" shows its size.

"the white crest of an enormous wave"

Effect	Purpose
A moment of hope turns into danger, so the shock is greater.	Shackleton wants readers to feel the fear of six men in a small boat, one moment before the wave hits.

Hinge question

Shackleton first thinks he sees "a line of clear sky". Why does he begin the moment this way?

A. He wants readers to know the sky was beautiful.

B. A moment of hope makes the shock of the wave worse. **(the right answer)**

C. He wants to show that he was a poor sailor.

What the answers tell you

A is a literal reading that treats the sky as scenery: ask what he feels when he finds it is not sky. C means the student has missed that Shackleton had twenty-six years at sea: these may be your students who start on Securing.

Why the answer is right

He calls out that the sky is clearing, then sees the wave, so his hope makes the fear sharper.

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Master task: description

You are one of the six men in the James Caird. Describe the moment the giant wave reaches the boat at night, from the first sight of it to the moment it lets go. Use the senses and one simile of your own.

Securing the most support

A frame for each part, Shackleton's lines as models and a word bank.

"a line of clear sky"

"a mighty upheaval of the ocean"

"a moment of suspense that seemed drawn out into hours"

Strengthening some support

Prompts for building the moment and a success checklist.

Begin with a small, calm detail, as Shackleton does with the clear sky

Show the moment you understand what you are seeing

Slow the moment down with short sentences or one long sentence

End with the moment the wave lets go

Soaring the most challenge

Describe the wave so that readers feel fear without being told. Open with a false hope, stretch one moment out, and end quietly.

Model description

At midnight I was huddled in the bow, soaked to the skin, when I saw a thin pale line low in the sky. I thought the clouds were clearing. Then the line grew taller, and I understood. It was not sky. It was foam, high above us, glowing in the dark.

Nobody spoke. The wind seemed to hold its breath, and the silence was worse than the storm. I heard a low hiss, like a kettle about to boil, but a thousand times louder. The boat shivered under my hands.

Then the sea lifted us. The whole boat tilted, and cold water rushed over my face and filled my mouth with salt. It thundered around us. I gripped the rope until my fingers burned.

And then, as suddenly as it had come, it let go. The boat dropped. The foam hissed away into the dark. Somewhere behind me a man began to laugh, and I found that I was laughing too.

What makes it work

- Opens with a false hope, as Shackleton does, then takes it back with a short sentence
- Uses the senses (the hiss, the cold water, the burning fingers) and one simile, like a kettle about to boil
- Slows the moment with a silence, then speeds it up, and ends with a human detail instead of an explanation

Exit ticket

Shackleton makes the wave frightening by…

Teacher notes

Subject knowledge

Shackleton builds the moment in order: a false hope ("a line of clear sky"), the shock of seeing the wave, a mighty upheaval, and a moment of suspense that seems to last hours. The final simile, "like a cork in breaking surf", makes the boat small and helpless. His shout, "For God's sake, hold on! It's got us!", is left as written: it is a real cry. In the Master task students invent a sensory description, not a copy.

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