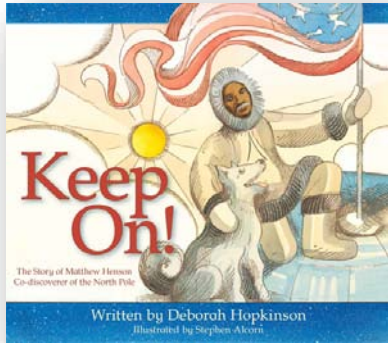


TEACHER'S GUIDE



Keep On! The Story of Matthew Henson, Co-Discoverer of the North Pole

Written by Deborah Hopkinson / Illustrated by Stephen Alcorn

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Ages 6–10 / Biography / Nonfiction

ABOUT THE BOOK

Many know the story of Robert Peary's great 1909 expedition to reach the North Pole. Yet, few people know that Peary was joined on this grueling, history-making journey by fellow explorer Matthew Henson. Henson, an African American, was born just after the Civil War. At this time slavery had been abolished, but few opportunities existed for black people. His greatest adventure began when he accepted an invitation from Peary to join his expedition to the North Pole. The team endured storms, shifting ice, wind, injuries, accidents, and unimaginable cold. Finally on April 1, Peary, Henson, and four Inuit men began the final 133-mile push to the Pole.

Readers will share in the excitement and drama of this remarkable adventure as award-winning author Deborah Hopkinson pays tribute to a great but under-recognized figure from America's past. Illustrator Stephen Alcorn's large-format, stylized ink-and-watercolor illustrations capture all the action. Excerpts from Henson's expedition diaries, a timeline, and an epilogue place the story in its historical context.

THEMES

African American Studies | Snow | North Pole | Arctic
Great Explorers | Diversity | Inuit People | Inuit Dogs
Goal Setting & Determination

BEFORE YOU READ

- Discuss with students several famous African Americans and what they are known for. (Ex.: Oprah Winfrey, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Charles

Drew, Ida B. Wells, Carter G. Woodson, etc.)

- Let students know the importance of learning about people who have made contributions to advance society and who should be recognized for their efforts and accomplishments.
- Ask students if they know who Matthew Henson is.
- Discuss with the students that African Americans were not always treated fairly in the United States. At the time Henson was alive, many did not get credit for their efforts and were never recognized for their achievements, discoveries, and contributions.
- Today, many efforts have been made to rectify this injustice. Discuss when "Black History Month" began in the United States to recognize contributions made by people of African heritage showing that all people contribute to forming a culture and society.
- Have students think about ways Matthew Henson contributed to American society.

AS YOU READ

- Point out that all the quotations in the book are from Henson's own writings.
- Read the book aloud to the class straight through to create and hold the students' interest and to promote a love of reading.
- Review the book a second time, stopping to allow students to point out parts of the story that they had questions about and/or interested them.
- Discuss and answer questions. All questions that cannot be answered during the discussion can be written down on chart paper and saved for a later

time as part of the learning activities in this guide.

AFTER YOU READ

- Why was Matthew Henson not originally given credit for being co-discoverer of the North Pole?
- What skills and talents did Matthew learn throughout his lifetime that prepared him for his journey to the North Pole?
- What kind of personality do you think Matthew Henson had based on the information you read about his life?
- What year was Matthew Henson born and in which state?
- What kinds of dogs were used for the expedition?
- Why do you think Matthew always followed his dreams despite the hardships he faced as a child and as an adult? What message do you get from Matthew Henson's life?
- As a young boy, how did Matthew survive? How would you describe his attitude? (Possible responses: very smart, quick learner, resourceful, go getter, tenacious, friendly, steadfast, open to trying new things, etc.) What could you learn from having this kind of attitude?
- How many years has it been since the Henson/Peary group discovered the North Pole?
- If Henson was alive today how old would he be?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS

- During the week have students imagine they were traveling to the North Pole with Henson, Peary, and the four Inuit men. Have them record their thoughts and experiences during their exploration in a journal.
- These words can be used for the week's new vocabulary or for bonus spelling words. Have students write the vocabulary words on the front and definitions on the back of the index cards.

explore:	to investigate, study, or analyze
keen:	very strong and sensitive; full of enthusiasm
vessel:	a ship or large boat
haul:	to pull or drag (something) with effort
Inuit:	a member of a group of native people of northern North America and Greenland
aim:	to aspire, intend
limp:	not firm or stiff

trudge:	to walk or march steadily and usually laboriously
eager:	very excited and interested
navigate:	to find the way to get to a place when you are traveling
harsh:	unpleasant and difficult to accept or experience
halt:	to bring to a stop
cache:	a place for hiding, storing, or preserving treasure or supplies
haze:	fine dust, smoke, or light vapor causing lack of transparency in the air
screech:	a shrill harsh cry
pounce:	to swoop down on and seize something
assistant:	helper
unrelenting:	not letting up or weakening
expedition:	a journey or trip undertaken for a specific purpose
assault:	to leap, spring
grueling:	requiring extreme effort

- Remind students that Matthew started living on his own at a very young age. Have them imagine being on their own at thirteen years old without any family. Include the following: How would you survive, where would you go, what would you do, how would you earn money to survive?
- Create a chart with Matthew Henson's picture on it. Ask students to write down, on notebook paper, all their thoughts on why they think Matthew Henson is an American Hero? While they are writing have them think about: Who he is, what he accomplished, his childhood, and ways he reached for his dreams. Also, have them include what they personally learned from him and how they can use this in their own lives.
- Review what an action verb is. (An action verb expresses action and describes something a person, animal, force of nature or thing can do.) Read the story, *Keep On!*, and have students raise their hands when they hear an action verb in the story. For older students, as you read the book have them write down all the words they think are action verbs. Afterwards discuss.
- A mind map is a diagram used to represent a topic or subject of study using words, pictures, shapes, symbols, letters, drawings, and different colors to clarify the topic or main idea. The topic is written at the center of the page and all the supporting information is designed and written around it in sub-

topics. Mind maps are used to visualize, organize, generate ideas and problem-solve through pictures, words and symbols. Have students create a mind map of their dream job or dream life. Include the following information: What is your dream job/life? What do you need to learn and do to prepare for accomplishing this dream/these dreams?

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Using a map, track Matthew Henson's voyage. Have students research the location of the North Pole and recreate the trail the men took to get there on a map. See "Resources" at the end of this Teacher's Guide to view maps outlining the expedition to the North Pole.
- Print out a map of Ellesmere Island in Nunavut, Canada. Have students work alone or in pairs to research and fill out the worksheet at the end of this guide. **Answers:** 1. Ellesmere Island, 2. Arctic Ocean, 3. Frozen water, 4. Cape Columbia, 5. The *Roosevelt*, 6. 45 degrees F, 7. -50 degrees F, 8. In the summer the sun shines 24 hours a day and in winter, for 5 months, the sun never shines, 9. Approximately 497 miles, 10. Inuit People
- What do flags represent? Reread the section in the book about placing the flag on the North Pole. Briefly discuss the importance of what this act represented. Also mention other monumental events where flags are used to represent events in time. (Ex: moon landing, the flag on Iwo Jima, etc.) Have students think about a heroic act they have seen or would like to do themselves where afterwards the need for placing a flag would be necessary. Have them write about this experience and create a flag to represent this event.
- *Keep On!* mentions that Matthew Henson lived with the Inuit people for many years and learned their language and way of life. He also worked with their dogs, too. Have students research the Inuit people and Inuit dogs and then have them create posters with this information. They should include the following information and draw and/or print pictures to include on their poster. Inuit people: Where do they live, how do they dress, what do they live in, what do they eat, how do they survive in a place so cold? Inuit Dogs: What were they used for and describe their physical characteristics and attributes. Why would this breed be helpful on the voyage to the North Pole?
- Discuss the timeline at the back of the book with the students. Have them create their own personal timelines. Allow them to create a timeline past their

current age and into their future by including information from birth through adulthood. Let them know they need to also include future goals that they want to accomplish. They can use real pictures of them as babies, pictures from magazines, and drawings.

SCIENCE

- Have students research the effects of global warming on Ellesmere Island and write a paper about it. Also have them include inventive ways to solve this problem.
- Have students research animals and plants who live in the Arctic. Allow them to choose which kind of living organism they want to research and learn more about. Students can work in pairs or small groups. They should include at least five interesting facts and several pictures. Once they complete this project allow them to share their charts with the entire class.

ART

- Briefly discuss what quotation marks are and how they are used in Henson's journal entries. Have students choose their favorite quotation from the book, *Keep On!* and write it down neatly and artistically on construction paper. Then, have them interpret this quote through their drawings or using pictures from magazines. Afterwards read the story again and have the students go to the front of the room with their artwork when their quote is mentioned in the book.
- Create a 3-D portrait of Mathew Henson. Items needed: construction paper, cotton balls, crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils. Use the photos of Matthew Henson from any of the websites in the Resources section of this guide. Either make a copy of one of the photos for each student or have students draw Matthew Henson's portrait onto construction paper. Next have students use cotton balls to represent Matthew's coat and hood and draw a snow scene in the background. On notebook paper have students write about several things they learned about Matthew Henson from the book, *Keep On!* Also have them write a few sentences about what Matthew Henson may have been thinking when these pictures were taken. Afterwards have them paste their information at the bottom of the picture and hang up in the classroom or in the hallway.

RESOURCES

<http://matthewhenson.com/matt2.htm>

This site has a variety of information and activities on Matthew Henson

matthewhenson.com/curriculum.htm

Print out a play about Matthew Henson

matthewhenson.com/awardmatt.htm

Download a Henson Award Certificate

matthewhenson.com/dcpole1.htm

View maps outlining the expedition to the North Pole

thecanadianencyclopedia.com

Information about Ellesmere Island and an article about the effects of global warming on the island

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deborah Hopkinson is an award-winning author of numerous critically acclaimed picture and chapter books, including *Under the Quilt of Night*; *Shutting Out the Sky: Life in the Tenements of New York 1880-1924*; *Girl Wonder: A Baseball Story in Nine Innings*; and *Up Before Daybreak: Cotton and People in America*. She lives in Oregon.

deborahhopkinson.com

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Stephen Alcorn has illustrated numerous books for young people, including *Lincoln: In His Own Words* and *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters*. He lives in New York.

alcorgallery.com

REVIEWS

“...sturdy prose...stylized illustrations range from images of classic Americana to organic figures in motion...”

—**Publishers Weekly**

“Henson’s story is dramatic, although the narrative voice is soft as velvet, while Stephen Alcorn’s artwork appears both washed in bitter cold and defrosted by its hand-tinted quality.”

—**Kirkus**

“...strikingly illustrated...articulate and straightforward prose...” —**School Library Journal**

“Large in scale and often handsome...” —**Booklist**

“...the inspiring tale of determination of African-American explored Matthew Henson is skillfully and artfully brought to life... Alcorn adds a rich visual element that compliments the text beautifully.” —**Library Media Connection**

AWARDS

- Oregon Book Awards (children’s picture book winner) —*Literary Arts 2009*
- Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People —*NCSS / CBC 2010*
- Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List (intermediate) —*Kansas National Education Association 2010*
- Land of Enchantment Book Awards (Picture Narrative Master List) —*New Mexico Library Association, New Mexico Council of IRA 2012-2013*

Peachtree Teacher’s Guide for

KEEP ON!

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CO-DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH POLE**

prepared by Kenya Kilpatrick

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Name: _____

Date: _____

1. In what country and island did the men begin their voyage to the North Pole?
2. What ocean did they walk across to get to the North Pole?
3. Is the North Pole surrounded by land or water?
4. What is Canada's most northerly point of land and the location where the team of explorers began their voyage by foot?
5. What was the name of the ship used to begin the expedition?
6. What are the average temperatures in the summer months?
7. What are the average temperatures in the winter months?
8. Describe what the sun does during summer and winter months on the island.
9. How far is the North Pole from Cape Columbia (in miles)?
10. Who were the first people to inhabit the land?