

Teachers' and Discussion Resources:

Antarctic Writer on Ice

Antarctic Writer on Ice: Diary of an Enduring Adventure, by Hazel Edwards
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These notes contain ideas for classroom activities which involve students in reviewing and moving into performance and multi-media but are based on the author's process of researching and writing the book and other media. The theme of Antarctic Journeys is one studied by many students and this factual work can link with the author's novel 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' (Lothian) to contrast the fact and fiction.

This is the writer's book on how to write under difficult circumstances and how participant observation is a valid research technique for an author.

Because 'Antarctic Writer on Ice' is available in e-book format for downloading as well as conventional print format, it is versatile in format as well as in content and suitable for adult as well as student readers.

1. Student Activities
2. Book Launch
3. Article: Cool Challenges of Writing Antarctic Hot Ice Pack

1. Student Activities

1. **Review.** You've been invited to review 'Antarctic Writer on Ice' or another Antarctic book for a radio program 'Icy Words' Write and present your 3 minute review (about a page). You may assume any personality you wish.
2. **Animation.** You've been asked for a proposal for animation related to Antarctica. Some suggestions are icebergs, wildlife or pollution. You use these but also have another suggestion. Decide on a name for your animation series and the age group for which it will be produced. Preschool? General exhibition? Storyboard your ideas.
3. **Launch.** As event organiser you've been briefed to plan a launch for 'Antarctic Writer on Ice' or another Antarctic book. What will you decide about:
 - Venue
 - Food
 - Person to launch the book
 - Invitations
 - Guests
 - Media coverage

PS You have a very small budget.

2. Book Launch at All Saints Literary Festival Western Australia

'I'll have an iceberg with that...'

30 degree heat, an Antarctic freezer suit with furry boots, iced tea, a pseudo iceberg (boxes covered with sheets) and marshmallow iceberg bits, at Bull Creek?

Unusual ingredients for a book launch, but tea bags WERE invented by Australian winterers at Mawson Station.

Hazel Edwards' 'Antarctic Writer on Ice' was launched by Dr John Long, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology of the Western Australian Museum, who is an experienced expeditioner. John Long's 'long johns' (Antarctic thermal underwear) have even been exhibited in a recent Antarctic display at the museum.

A sense of humour appears to be a pre requisite for Antarctic survival.

This book launch claims several 'firsts', especially as it was held as part of the first All Saints Literature Festival held at Bull Creek in Western Australia. Locals know that Bull Creek is the next Perth suburb to Fremantle, but others smile at the thought of linking writers and 'bull'.

Over fifty authors, illustrators, storytellers, poets and performers were involved in the four day Literature Festival aimed at students and the general public on the campus of All Saints College, which was buzzing with young people discovering writing was 'cool' as well as parents and booklovers meeting authors, buying books and watching performances in the marquees, halls and amphitheatres. It was a 'no bull' festival with all ages having fun with words. Emily, a shy ten year old winner of the Young Writers Competition had travelled four hours to the Festival, to discover she had won three categories.

Prior to the book launch John Long and Hazel Edwards had a public 'Conversation' about the differences in their Antarctic experiences 'on ice' and showed slides. As ANARE (Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition) writer on ice for 2001, Hazel was beset on the polar resupply ship for several weeks whereas John had flown in with a New Zealand expedition to study fossils. Apart from humorous incidents coping with the FUD (female urinary device) or the 'piss-bottle', they discussed how people were significantly affected by their exposure to the surreal icescape and crevasse dangers of Antarctica.

'Antarctic Writer on Ice' is a candid diary based on e-mail format which reveals a professional author's workstyle under difficult physical conditions. It contains interviews with wintering expeditioners such as the dieso, the Doc, the met-guys, the helicopter pilot and the Comm God who maintains the links via satellite which are so important for families of wintering expeditioners who may be away fourteen months. Since many students are studying Antarctica it gives insight into wildlife, eco-issues, weather and global implications as well as the quirky tales of the First Belly dancing class, the Virtual Reality Book Launch and how to cope with Search and Rescue training. However the book is intended for the general reader.

Hazel wearing full Antarctic gear was not a First because she had worn the ventiles (windproofs), boots, gloves and even the First Aid manuals during her roundtrip to Casey Station the previous year. Due to Perth heat, the speed with which she changed was a First.

Antarctica has a mystique, especially in the week of news reports about an iceberg the size of Canberra breaking off the Antarctic ice shelf. Timing is everything in a book launch! So, 'I'll have an iceberg with that!' is ambiguous.

3. COOL Challenges of Writing Antarctic Hot Ice-Pack

published in Classroom magazine 2002.

by

Hazel Edwards

ANARE (Australian Antarctic Division Research Expedition)

WRITER ON ICE 2001

Mistakenly I'd assumed it would be easy to create a cast of Antarctic vehicles, with personalities, set on 'Windmill' a hypothetical Australian Base in remote Antarctica. The initial proposal was a book series followed by television animation, because the Antarctic photographs were so stunning.

I'm not a 'petrol-head' but during my 2001 Antarctic re-supply visit to Casey station, the size, colour and significance of the working vehicles like the Hagg, Quad and 'Dozer called Mr Muscles captured my interest. In real life, the Antarctic station was like a construction site during summer, with ice- tracks and high ice-sided roads.

I started with the idea of a 'Six Pack' of ice vehicles because 'vehicle' was too difficult to read for the target age of 3-8 year olds, and strictly speaking, the Zodiac which was an inflatable rubber duck, was not a vehicle. Neither were the helicopters who sling-loaded supplies.

Against the ice, the vivid primary colours were practical, because expeditioners could find their transport and colour-coded huts like the Red Shed or the Green Store, in blizzard conditions. TV Producer Pam Witton, of Channel 7's , 'The Bookplace' had indicated that 'Trucks' were one of their six most popular topics for pre-schoolers, and she'd already broadcast my 'Any Ants in Antarctica?' e-story with laptop photos provided by Casey expeditioners. She was willing to air a series of Antarctic trucks stories.

Naming Characters:

My first decision was to name the characters by their roles or brands because I had a cast of humans AND vehicles.

Antarctic vehicles are known by their brand names like Hagg which is short for the Swedish tracked Hagglund, or Quad for the four wheeled motor cycle. That provided the names, as did the expeditioners' roles like Dieso (mechanic), Chippie (carpenter), Doc, and Met. Guy (meteorologist) or Birdo who was a scientist studying birds. Expeditioners are either 'boffins' (scientists who include astro-physicists, glaciologists and environmental impact specialists) or 'tradies' support staff including the chef, plumber or Comm God who is the electrical communications expert. Under eights find those job titles hard to read. Luckily, Antarctica is the land of abbreviations like 'birdo' or 'bio' and nicknames like Critter, but naming my characters was still a challenge. I decided to link an expeditioner with each vehicle and make either the Dieso or the S.L. (Station Leader) the major human character for continuity.

Photos?

I had access to great photos and my next mistake was to write the 'Seasick Hagg' story and then try to find photos to fit, or arrange for new ones to be taken. Next time, I worked a story from existing photos.

Dialogue?

Technical decisions had to be made. Could a vehicle actually talk on the radio? Or use a G.P.S.? (global positioning system) Could a Hagg get sea-sick? Did the 'Hot Ice Pack' speak to their expeditioners? Or vice versa? What was the relationship between the vehicle and its main driver? Was the vehicle equal or dominant?

Individualised:

I used colour, numbers and attributes like slow and steady for the Hagg, while the Quad was an

adolescent who 'hooned' around. Sex or gender was another issue. The 'Copter Twins became female and so did the Zodiac whom I called Zip as she disliked being known as 'Rubber Duckie'.

As they 'winter' on the ice, the Dieso keeps them moving while they cope with fire alarms, searchand-rescue (SAR) and even blizzards.

Vehicle	Number	Colour	Characteristics
Hagg	1	Blue	Slow & Loyal
'Copter Twins	2	Red & White	Impulsive
Zip the Zodiac	3	Green	Protestor
Speedy the Quad	4	Red	Hoons around
Fork Lift	5	Yellow	Fussy
Mr Muscles	6	Orange	

Known by their jobs, Tradies include:

- Dieso who fixes any engines.
- Chippie who is the carpenter.
- Chef who cooks the meals.
- Doc who is doctor and dentist.
- Plumber who keeps the water pipes and heating working.
- The Comm God who makes the satellite phones work
- S.L. is the station leader who is the Boss.

The A Factor is what it's called when things go wrong in Antarctica so I wanted the theme of working together and effective problem-solving to come through. Helicopters do travel in pairs for safety in Antarctica, so the 'Copter Twins were born as impulsive larrikins while Mr Muscles became the 'grunt' who provides shelter during a blizzard for the lighter vehicles who were in danger of being blown away.

The 3 P's of people, place and problem are the basics of any story but I wanted the vehicles to act realistically and to ensure that my facts about blizzards and rescue procedures were accurate, so I checked by e-mail with the resident expeditioners.

The initial draft I wrote from the Hagg's perspective, in first person as an 'I' story but realised this couldn't be sustained, because each story would feature a different vehicle. So I changed to third person 'he' and 'she'.

An Australian Antarctic Base is a mixture of hi-tech, G.S.P (global positioning systems) via satellite, and resourceful 'fixing' when things don't work in the cold.

On Base, there is a web-cam which photographs station-life and sends it back via Internet for families and colleagues. An official Antarctic photographer does take 360 degree photos for use on the web site, and families e-mail photos daily as well as text messages. I decided to use the web-cam as a device to provide flashback, multi-media links and a way of characterising egos.

At first I wrote in past tense because it's easier for continuity. But then I changed to present tense for immediacy of action and to include more dialogue. It was easier to characterise vehicles through what they said, or what others said to them, than through authorial comment.

It's true that writing a series is like an ice-berg, only one tenth above the surface which shows and all the hard work underneath which is invisible. Eventually, I hope that my 'Antarctic Hot Ice Pack' will challenge Thomas the Tank Engine.

Hazel Edwards' 'The Sea Sick Hagg was shown on Channel 7's 'The Bookplace'. Hot Ice Squad animation for pre-schoolers is in production.