



Matthew Henson

Born to Explore

Part 1

Teacher Reads Matthew Henson was a Black explorer who was born almost 150 years ago. He began traveling the world at a young age. One day, he met a famous explorer named Robert Peary. That meeting changed the course of Henson's life.

Matthew Henson was born in 1866. When Matthew
8 was 12, he got a job on a ship. He did chores for people
22 on the ship. While on the ship, Matthew became skilled at
33 reading and **writing** as well as sailing. He got to explore
44 lands in many parts of the globe.

51 When Henson left his job on the ship, he met Robert
62 **Peary**. Henson and Peary both enjoyed exploring.
69 Henson told Peary about his skills in sailing and exploring.
79 Peary asked Henson to join his crew of explorers.

88 The connection between the men grew strong as they
97 spent many trips exploring together. Henson became a
105 trusted member of Peary's crew. When Peary
112 made a plan to go to the North Pole,
121 he wanted Henson by his side.



Part 2

Teacher Reads Peary wanted to be the first explorer to reach the North Pole. Peary, Henson, and the rest of the crew began preparing for the trip.

127 Before the men started, Henson **learned** many new skills
136 for surviving in the Arctic. He learned how to train a team of
149 dogs to haul a sled and how to drive the sled. He learned how
163 to hunt and fish in the Arctic. Henson needed these skills as
175 he and Peary aimed for the North Pole.

183 Peary and Henson made many trips trying to reach the
193 North Pole, but every time they failed. Each time, they had
204 problems. The cold was harsh. The men got lost in storms
215 with strong winds that blew snow. The crew ran very low on
227 food. Peary and Henson fell into freezing water.

Part 3

Teacher Reads Henson and Peary tried again to reach the North Pole. At first, people believed Henson and Peary had reached the North Pole, but later people questioned if the men actually did.

235 In 1908, Henson, Peary, and the crew got set for one
246 more try for the North Pole. They packed big sleds with
257 food and other things they needed for the trip. They
267 harnessed teams of dogs to the front of each sled. The dogs
279 hauled the sleds over the snow and **ice**. The men rode on the
292 sleds or walked in back of them. In April 1909, after many
304 hard weeks of travel the crew reached what they **thought**
314 was the North Pole. The news reached the rest of the globe.
326 Newspapers told of the trip to the North Pole. But over time,
338 experts have debated whether the **place** Henson and Peary
347 reached was in fact the North Pole.

354 Henson was an important member of the crew. If it had
365 not been for his help, the crew might not have made it as far
379 as they did. Henson had shown all his life that he was born
392 to explore. [Learn More](#)

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