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Vocabulary

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GEO SKILLS

ANTARCTIC FIRST

ADVENTURER COLIN O'BRADY recently achieved what many said could never be done. This winter, he became the first person in history to cross Antarctica solo and unassisted. His trek across the icy continent took 54 days as he navigated snow-covered mountains and braved frigid temperatures.

While other people have crossed the frozen continent before, they did it with the help of fellow explorers, dogs, or other assistance. O'Brady, who covered 932 miles while towing a gear-packed sled, was propelled only by his arms and legs—and ironclad **endurance**.

Why did O'Brady, who had already climbed the highest peak on all seven continents, pick a solo, unassisted Antarctic crossing for his next challenge? Because, he said before starting his trek, "no one in history has ever accomplished it, and people have been trying for 100 years."

An Unforgiving Landscape

Antarctica is Earth's coldest continent. No country owns it, thanks to a 1959 treaty that established it as a place of scientific study. Several countries—including the U.S.—have →

COVER: AARON DYER; FOOD STYLING: JESSIE DANLUCK; PAGES 2-3: LUPPECLUB/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM (GLOBE); COURTESY OF COLIN O'BRADY (ALL OTHER IMAGES)



O'Brady on the move (top), his packed sled (left), and pausing for a selfie (above)

research stations there, but no one lives there year-round except for penguins and seals.

Antarctica has long been a magnet for adventure seekers. Since the early 20th century, explorers and athletes have been drawn to the icy continent to test their strength and attempt world records.

O'Brady began his Antarctic journey on November 3, 2018, setting off from the edge of the Ronne Ice Shelf, a vast stretch of frozen seawater (see map). It took 40 days to reach his first destination, the South Pole—the southernmost point on Earth.

Conditions were brutal. Temperatures fell as low as 80°F below zero and winds roared up to 60 miles an hour. O'Brady also faced the constant threat of crevasses—deep cracks in the ice that could open up and swallow him or his sled at any moment.

What He Carried

That sled was **vital** to O'Brady's survival. It held his tent, sleeping bag, fuel for heat and cooking, and the GPS tracker and satellite phones that allowed him to plot his course. But mostly the sled was crammed with food—and O'Brady needed every ounce of it.

To withstand the bitter cold, he had to eat 8,000 calories a day. (That's equal to 20 cheeseburgers!) He relied on calorie-dense energy bars and freeze-dried meals to do so.

Pushing Boundaries

By Christmas, O'Brady had been on the move nearly 20 hours a day for 53 days and exhaustion was setting in. But when he woke up that morning, he felt **compelled** to try to finish the last 80 miles in one stretch.

Thirty-two sleepless hours later, he made it to his finish line: the Ross Ice Shelf, the largest ice shelf on Antarctica. After reaching it, he shed tears of joy.

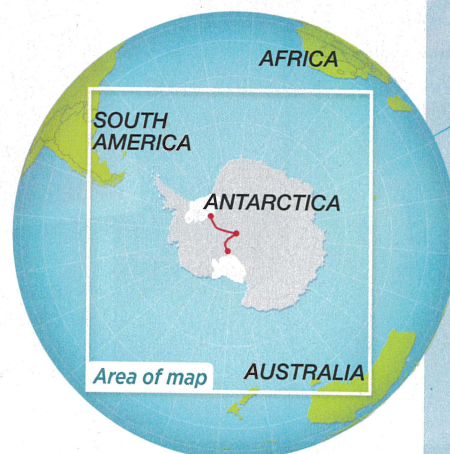
Back home in Portland, Oregon, O'Brady says he hopes his achievement inspires others to go after their dreams. While he hasn't picked his next challenge, one thing's for sure, he says: "I want to continue to push the boundaries of human potential." ♦

Icy Crossing

This polar map shows Colin O'Brady's route across Antarctica. A polar map is a flattened view of the world from directly above a polar region. This map shows the South Pole, the farthest point south on any map.

Map Skills

1. What is the name of Antarctica's highest peak?
2. To reach it from the South Pole, you'd travel in which direction?
3. O'Brady started close to which line of longitude?
4. The Ronne Ice Shelf is the frozen waters of which sea?
5. What ocean surrounds the continent near the Antarctic Circle?
6. What is the straight-line distance in miles between O'Brady's starting point and the South Pole?
7. Antarctica is closest to which other continent?
8. In which direction would you fly to go from Tasmania to the South Pole?
9. What mountain range did O'Brady cross to reach the Ross Ice Shelf?
10. On this map, all longitude lines meet at which point?



JIM NICHOLSON/MAPKANY (GLOBE AND MAP)

BRAZIL

FALKLAND IS.
(ISLAS MALVINAS)
(administered by U.K.,
claimed by Argentina)

ARGENTINA

CHILE

Cape Horn

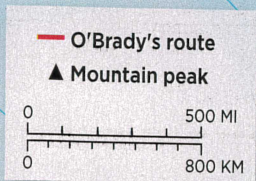
90°W

120°W



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at junior.scholastic.com
for more geography practice.

SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTH SANDWICH IS.
(administered by U.K.,
claimed by Argentina)



ATLANTIC OCEAN

SOUTHERN OCEAN

ANTARCTICA

START
Day 1

SOUTH POLE
Day 40

FINISH
Day 54

HIGHEST POINT: ▲
VINSON MASSIF
16,067 FT

WEST ANTARCTIC ICE SHEET

EAST ANTARCTIC ICE SHEET

ROSS ICE SHELF

SOUTHERN OCEAN

PACIFIC OCEAN

AUCKLAND ISLANDS
(NEW ZEALAND)

TASMANIA
(AUSTRALIA)

Hobart

Melbourne

NEW ZEALAND

Tasman Sea

AUSTRALIA

SOURCE: National Snow and Ice Data Center