

Chapter- 3

CHAPTER NAME: JOURNEY TO THE END OF THE EARTH

Concepts

- Global warming
- Study of Carbon Records trapped under ice layers of Antarctica
- “Students on Ice” Program by Canadian Educator Geoff green

Characters

- The Writer- Tishani Doshi
- Students of her school

A Brief Note on the Topic

The topic “Journey to the End of the Earth “is a vivid description by Tishani Doshi about her journey to the coldest, driest and windiest continent in the world: Antarctica.

- The lesson is a travelogue which describes Tishani Doshi’s expeditions with a group of teenagers to the wonderful place-the supercontinent Antarctica and it reflects how geological phenomena help us to acquire knowledge about the history of mankind. It tells us about the ways of the formation of landmasses and countries.
- It emphasises the impact of human endeavour to dominate nature.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR

- A celebrated writer, poet, journalist and dancer
- born in Madras, India in 1975
- studied Business Administration and Communications at Queens College, Charlotte, North Carolina and gained a Master’s degree from Johns Hopkins University Baltimore, went to London in 1999.
- Returns to India in 2001 where she became a dancer with the Choreographer Chandralekha.
- Works as a freelance journalist contributing to various newspapers such as The

Guardian, The International Herald Tribune and many others.

Steps to comprehensive explanations

a) The Journey to Antarctica Begins

- The narrator heads towards Antarctica aboard 'Akademic Shakalskiy' Russian research vessels with a group of high school students.
- She reveals that Antarctica is the coldest, driest and windiest continent in the world. She commences her journey from Madras, crosses nine time zones, six checkpoints three water bodies and many ecospheres to reach her destination.
- Travelling over a hundred hours, she feels relief and wonders about the isolation of the continent and the historic time when India and Antarctica were a part of the same landmass.

b) Gondwana and the Shaping of the Modern World

- The narrator takes the reader back to six hundred and fifty million years. At that time, Antarctica was a part of a giant amalgamated Southern supercontinent.
- At that time human had not arrived. The climate was warm and there was a huge variety of flora and fauna. For around 500 million years Gondwana existed.
- Eventually, the landmass broke up and was forced to separate into countries. The shaped our present globe.

c) Narrator Wonders at Antarctica; Finds It Blissful

- Belonging to a relatively warm country, the narrator who is a South Indian is shocked to be in the place where 90% of the Earth's total ice volumes are stored!
- She feels she's walking into a giant ping pong ball. There is no human life there and nothing to show that human life exists on this planet.
- she is surrounded by midges, mites, blue whales and limitless expanse of huge icebergs.
- The surreal twenty-four-hour summer lights and the eerie silence that is interrupted only by the breaking of the iceberg is mind-boggling.

d) Human Impact on the Environment

- Human beings have been on the Earth for about 12000 years.
- In this short period, we have changed the face of our environment for worse.

- We have dominated the Earth by establishing cities and megacities. This has led to encroachment of Mother Nature. We are limiting resources on the planet for other creatures.
- The burgeoning population has added to our woes. The average global temperature is rising and the blanket of carbon dioxide around the world is increasing.

e) The Paradox of Climate Change

- There are many unanswered questions about climate change and the narrator is alarmed by them.
- Will the West Antarctic ice sheet melt entirely?
- Will the gulf stream ocean current be disrupted?
- Will the world come to an end?
- In this debate, Antarctica has a major role to play. This is because as compared to other places it remains relatively 'pristine' and contains half-million-years-old carbon records trapped in its layers of ice. The Earth's past, present and future lie hidden in Antarctica.

f) 'Students on Ice' Programme

- This programme aims at studying the ecological processes in Antarctica.
- The narrator works on this project on board '*Akademik Shokolskiy*', It takes school students on the trip of Antarctica.
- The visit aims at generating a new awareness and respect for our planet in young, impressionable minds.
- The programme has been in operation for six years. It is headed by a Canadian, Geoff Green.
- Earlier he used to take celebrities, retired rich, curiosity seekers to Antarctica for money. Gradually he got sick of those who gave nothing to the Earth in return. So, he decided to take school students there.
- It was his firm belief that young minds could learn and act better about the potential hazards regarding the environment which our Earth faces.
- The programme was a success because children could see with their own eyes collapsing ice shelves and retreating glaciers. They realised that the threat of global warming was real.

Lesson continuation with comprehensive explanations:

- Human beings on earth for 12000 years to change the face of the environment to the worse

- Establishment of cities and towns has led to encroachment of Mother Nature. - Natural resources getting limited
- Population goes on increasing.
- Global temperature rises due to carbon dioxide.
- Antarctica contains half-million-years old carbon records trapped in its layers of ice.

Drilling of words and Linguistic expressions:

- Ecosphere ---part of the universe habitable by living organisms.
- Expansive— extensive/covering a wide area in terms of space or scope
- Profound—Intense Isolation –Separation
- Landmass—a continent or other large body of the land. Thrive-Flourish/prosper
- cordilleran folds---an extensive chain mountains /mountain ranges
- Precambrian granite shields—large areas of relatively low elevation that forms part of continental masses
- Mind-boggling –overwhelming/startling
- Frigid-very cold in temperature
- Desolate—uninhabited and giving an impression of bleak emptiness.
- Surreal—unusual
- Austral- relating to the Southern Hemisphere
- Ubiquitous-pervasive/everywhere
- Avalanche – snow-slide
- Calving- split and shed
- Consecrates—make or declare something sacred
- Immersion—submerge
- Prognosis—a forecast of the likely outcome of a situation
- Paltry—petty/insignificant

- Ruckus—a row or commotion
- Etching—engraved
- Unmitigated—unconditional

Related Questions from the portion taught:

- i. What was the objective of the “Students on Ice” Program?
- ii. How did Antarctica amaze the writer when she first saw it?
- iii. What was “Akademic Shokalsky”? Where was it heading to and why?
- iv. What happened to Gondwana 650 years ago?
- v. Why is Antarctica important in the study of the history of the earth?

THE END