

Journey to the End of the Earth

- Tishani Doshi
(1975)

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Journey to the End of the Earth



Tishani Doshi
(1975)

About the Author :

Tishani Doshi is a writer and dancer of Welsh-Gujarati origin. She was born in Madras, India. She studied Business Administration and Communications at Queens College, North Carolina and gained a Masters degree in Creative Writing from the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. She moved to London in 1999, becoming assistant to the advertising department of *Harper's and Queen* magazine. In 2001, she returned to India and became a dancer with the choreographer Chandralekha. She also works as a freelance journalist, contributing to various newspapers. Her first book of poetry, *Countries of the Body* (2006), won the Forward Poetry Prize (Best First Collection) in 2006. Her first novel, *The Pleasure Seekers*, was published in 2010.



Journey to the End of the Earth

Tishani Doshi

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The lesson highlights how geological phenomena enable us to trace the history of mankind. It also tells us about the way in which landmasses and countries are formed. The writer emphasises the impact of human endeavour to dominate nature. It should be realised that exploration of this landmass under the ice cap will certainly reveal valuable information on the theory of birth and evolution of our planet and its association with the solar system and the galactic evolution. The challenge to the ecology of the world makes the Antarctica (with the simple eco-system and lack of biodiversity) a crucial place for study. The 'Students on Ice' programme provides inspiring educational opportunities which help to foster an understanding and respect for our planet. The objective of taking children to Antarctica to teach them the importance of protecting the Earth's environment is laudable.



Journey to the End of the Earth

Theme – Antarctica as the best place to study the Earth's past, present and future

Sub-Theme – Our responsibility towards safeguarding the planet

Characters :

Narrator – the author herself
Geoff Green – A Canadian



JOURNEY TO THE END OF THE EARTH - *down the memory lane..*



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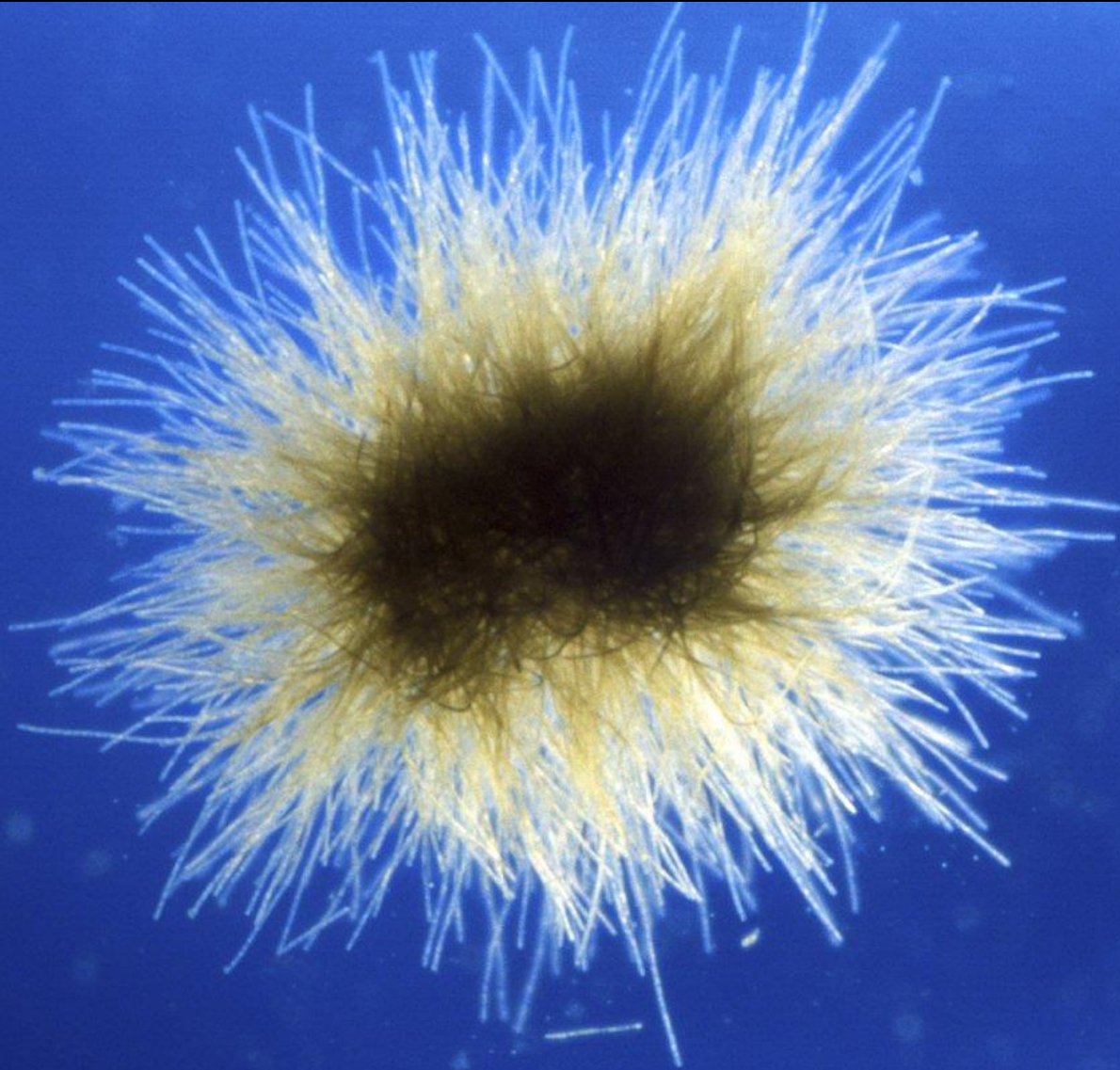
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Journey to the End of the Earth



SUMMARY

The lesson begins with the author on a journey in a Russian research vessel — the *Akademik Shokalskiy*. It was headed towards Antarctica. We learn that the author has travelled about 100 hours in a car, aeroplane as well as the ship. The main objective of this trip is to learn everything in detail about Antarctica. Further, we learn about her two-week stay there and what all is present there. The place stores 90% of the earth's total ice volumes with no trees, buildings or anything. It has 24-hour austral summer light. Moreover, it is covered in silence. This makes the author wonder about the time when India and Antarctica were the same landmass's part. We learn about the existence of a southern supercontinent, Gondwana. It existed for six hundred and fifty million years ago. We learn that the climate back then was much warmer and sustained a huge variety of flora and fauna. All this was before the arrival of human beings. Moreover, for 500 million years, Gondwana flourished. Thus, after the extinction of dinosaurs, the landmass separated into continents, as we know today. Moreover, we also learn about the reality of climate change. The author believes that to study the impact closely, one must make a visit to Antarctica.

Journey to the End of the Earth

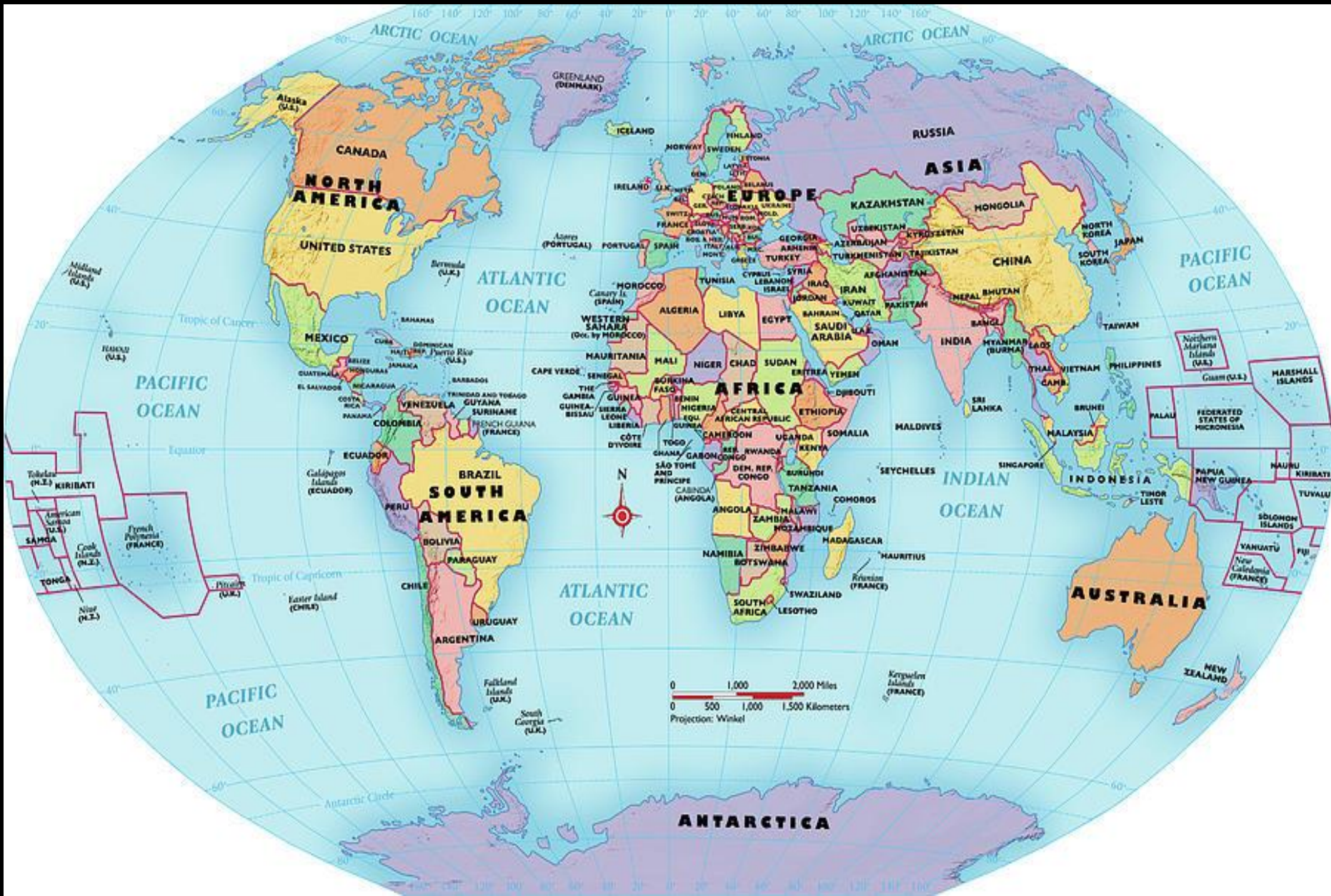


SUMMARY

After that, we learn about Antarctica's ecosystem and how it lacks biodiversity. Moreover, it is the place to observe if you wish to see what consequences a little action can bring about in the environment. If the ozone layer keeps depleting at the present rate, it will impact the lives of the inhabitants of the area viz. the sea-animals and birds. Moreover, it will also impact the global carbon cycle. We learn about the contributors to climate change, like the burning of fossil fuels. All this is damaging the quality of Antarctica and this may cause immense danger to human life. Moreover, we also learn about it through examples of phytoplankton. Finally, the story ends with the author observing some seals sunbathing on ice. It makes her wonder whether this beauty will be reserved for the years to come, or will the future be catastrophic.

To sum up, we learn in detail about climate change and how it is impacting our lives as well as other living beings dangerously. It serves as a wakeup call to start working to make the planet a healthier place.





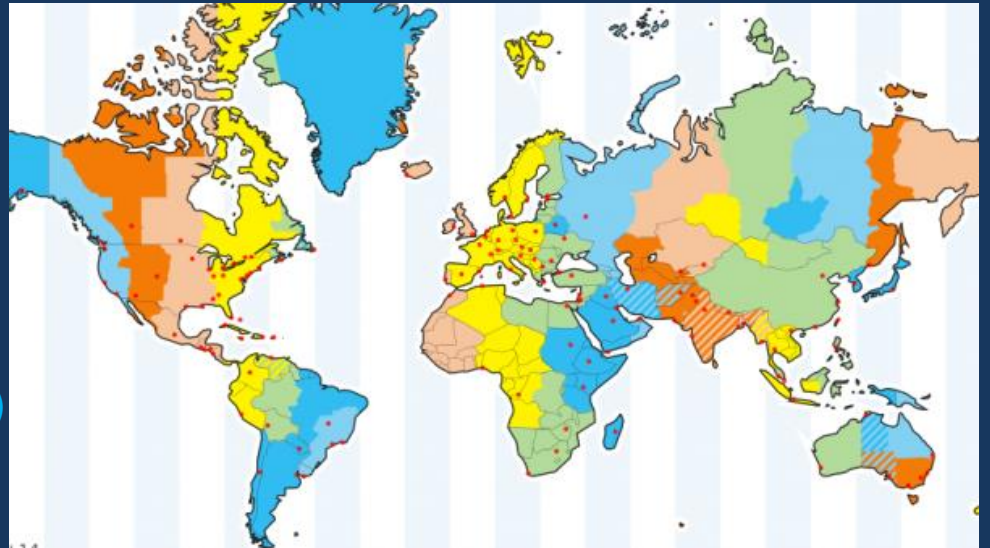
TIME ZONES



The scientists studied Earth's movements after which they came up with **24 time zones** which are theoretically drawn on the world map. If each **time zone** is 1 hour apart, there would be 24 in the **world**. However, the International Date Line (IDL) creates 3 more. Also, several **time zones** are only 30 or 45 minutes apart, increasing the total number of standard **time zones** even further.

TIME ZONES FROM EAST TO WEST :

Atlantic Standard Time (AST)
Eastern Standard Time (EST)
Central Standard Time (CST),
Mountain Standard Time (MST)
Pacific Standard Time (PST)
Alaskan Standard Time (AKST)
Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time (HST)
Samoa standard time (UTC-11)
Chamorro Standard Time (UTC+10)



CORDILLERA - An extensive chain of mountains or mountain ranges, especially in the Americas.

The American Cordillera is a chain of mountain ranges (cordilleras) that consists of an almost continuous sequence of mountain ranges that form the western "backbone" of North America, South America and Central America. It is also the backbone of the volcanic arc that forms the eastern half of the Pacific Ring of Fire.

Since the Cordillera is known for its large forests and trees, forestry is a huge part of the economy and will continue to benefit the region. Lastly, the Cordillera is rich in lots of minerals making mining a successful industry.



THE PRECAMBRIAN ERA : The name means "before the Cambrian period." This old, but still common term was originally used to refer to the whole period of earth's history before the formation of the oldest rocks with recognizable fossils in them.

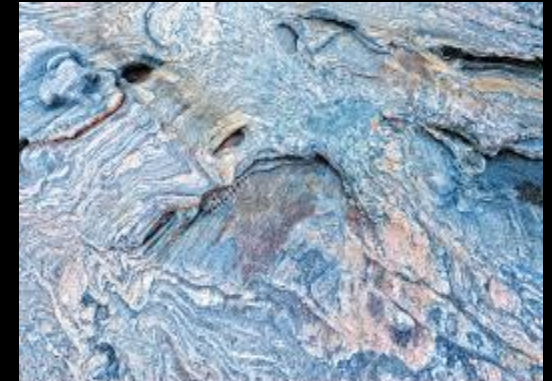
PRE-CAMBRIAN GRANITE SHIELDS : Cambria is the medieval name of Wales. Precambrian time covers the vast bulk of the Earth's history, starting with the planet's creation about 4.5 billion years ago and ending with the emergence of complex, multi-celled life-forms almost four billion years later.

Where are Pre-Cambrian rocks found?

Carbon found in 3.8 billion-year-old rocks from islands off western Greenland may be of organic origin.

Pre-Cambrian Organism - The first life is believed to be the Eubacteria (i.e., bacteria), single-celled prokaryotic organisms with no DNA-containing Nucleus. The most prevalent theory is that the Eubacteria are ancestral to the Archaea, only identified as a distinct domain of life in the 1970's.

PRE-CAMBRIAN GRANITE SHIELDS



DRAKE PASSAGE : The body of water between South America's Cape Horn, Chile and the South Shetland Islands of Antarctica. It connects the southwestern part of the Atlantic Ocean with the southeastern part of the Pacific Ocean and extends into the Southern Ocean.



Tourist expedition ship sailing across the Drake Passage to Antarctica

Journey to the End of the Earth - Key Points & Sequence

Journey to Antarctica

- Tishani Doshi heads towards Antarctica aboard a Russian Vessel named Akademik Shokalskiy in the company of high school children
- Antarctica coldest, driest, windiest continent in the world
- starts her journey from Madras
- crosses nine time zones, six checkpoints, three bodies of water and many ecospheres in order to reach there
- travels for one hundred hours to reach Antarctica
- struck with wonder



Historical data

- Six hundred and fifty millions years ago, Antarctica was a giant amalgamated landmass (Gondwana)
- Southern super continent surrounded Antarctica
- human life didn't exist then, climate warmer, flora and fauna flourished
- Gondwana thrived for 500 million years
- landmass detached from Antarctica and forced to separate into countries
- part of landmass pushed northward ; formed India and Himalaya
- South America formed ; drifted off to join North America
- Antarctica is frigid and desolate

Astonishing Antarctica

- the author surprised to see huge volume of ice
- feels she is walking into a giant ping-pong ball
- Antarctica devoid of human life
- author finds midges, mites, blue whales and huge icebergs
- finds surreal 24-hour austral summer light

Human impact

- human life merely 12000 years old on the geological clock
- man has achieved dominance over nature
- created villages, cities and megacities
- increasing human population is depleting resources
- average global temperature is increasing

Change in Climate

- climate change is hotly debated
- this raises many questions
- will the West Antarctic ice sheet melt entirely ?
- will the Gulf Stream Ocean current be disrupted ?
- will it be the end of the world ?
- the answer is : May be or May be not



Journey to the End of the Earth - Key Points & Sequence

- But Antarctica is the crucial element in this debate because it contains half-million-year old carbon records
- Antarctica is the place to study earth's past, present and future



'Students On Ice' programme

- programme aims to study and understand Antarctica
- the author works on this project on board 'Akademik Shokalskiy'
- takes high school students to Antarctica
- their visit helps them understand our planet better
- Geoff Green, a Canadian, carted celebrities and retired people to Antarctica for money
- those visitors gave back nothing to the planet after their visit
- decided to take high school students to Antarctica
- Geoff thought that the students are quick to absorb, learn and act
- programme successful because children saw glaciers retreating and ice shelves collapsing
- students realised that the threat of global warming was very real

Lessons to learn

- a place to study how little environmental changes can have big repercussions.
- come to know the importance of photosynthesis
- scientists warn that depletion in the ozone layer will affect plants and animals
- big things will be saved by taking care of small things

Walk on the Ocean

- visit a memorable experience
- At 65.55 degrees south of equator, the author and the students instructed to get down
- they put on ice shoes (Gore-Tex) and glares (sunglasses)
- walked on one metre-thick ice over 180 metres of living breathing salt-water
- they saw Crabeater seals sitting in the periphery



Author's Comments

- the author wonders about the beauty of balance in play on our planet
- she wonders what will happen if Antarctica were to become the warm place that it once used to be.
- will it mean the extinction of human beings ?
- the students have the idealism to save the world

Journey to the End of the Earth - Vocabulary

<i>Akademik Shokalskiy</i>	= A Russian research vessel
<i>Checkpoints</i>	= a place on a boarder where people have to stop to get their belongings checked
<i>expansive</i>	= covering a large amount of space
<i>profound</i>	= very great
<i>immensity</i>	= large size of something
<i>amalgamated</i>	= merged
<i>Gondwana</i>	= a huge amalgamated southern supercontinent
<i>buckle</i>	= to crush or bend
<i>frigid</i>	= very cold
<i>desolate</i>	= empty and without people
<i>devoid of</i>	= completely lacking in
<i>metabolic</i>	= relating to chemical processes in living things that change food, etc. into energy and materials for growth
<i>billboards</i>	= hoardings of boards for advertisement
<i>perspective</i>	= viewpoint
<i>midges</i>	= small flying insects that live especially in damp places
<i>mites</i>	= small creatures like spiders that live on plants, animals, carpets, etc.
<i>austral</i>	= relating to the south
<i>surreal</i>	= very strange



<i>ubiquitous</i>	= seeming to be everywhere or in several places at the same time
<i>avalanche</i>	= a mass of snow, ice and rock that falls down the side of the mountain
<i>consecrate</i>	= to make holy
<i>paltry</i>	= meagre
<i>ruckus</i>	= commotion, a situation where there is a lot of noisy activity
<i>etch</i>	= to make a strong clear mark or pattern on something
<i>fossils</i>	= remains of an animal or a plant which has become hard and turned into a rock
<i>unmitigated</i>	= complete
<i>pristine</i>	= fresh and clear as if new
<i>ice-cores</i>	= central part of the ice-block
<i>foster</i>	= to promote
<i>carting</i>	= carrying
<i>blase</i>	= not impressed or excited by something
<i>latitude</i>	= the distance of a place north or south of the equator
<i>longitude</i>	= the distance of a place east or west of the Greenwich Meridian measured in degrees
<i>ecosystem</i>	= all the plants and living creatures in a particular area considered in relation to their physical environment



Journey to the End of the Earth - Vocabulary

<i>biodiversity</i>	= the existence of a large number of different kinds of animals and plants which make a balanced environment		
<i>repercussions</i>	= consequences	<i>gangplank</i>	= a board for people to walk on between the side of a boat and land
<i>sustain</i>	= bear	<i>Gore-Tex</i>	= special ice boots
<i>Phytoplankton</i>	= forms of plant and animal life	<i>periphery</i>	= the outer edge of a particular area
<i>parable</i>	= a short story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson	<i>icefloes</i>	= a large area of ice, floating in the sea
<i>epiphany</i>	= a christian festival, held on 6th January, in memory of time when the Magi came to see the baby Jesus at Bethlehem (here) memories		

- Cordilleran folds - an extensive chain of mountains or mountain ranges
- Precambrian granite shields - large areas of relatively low elevation that forms part of continental masses
- Mind-boggling - overwhelming; startling
- Thrived - prosper; flourish
- Calving - split and shed
- Immersion - submerge
- Prognosis - a forecast of the likely outcome of a situation



JOURNEY TO THE END OF THE EARTH

“If you want to know more about the planet’s past, present and future, the Antarctica is the place to go to”



JOURNEY TO THE END OF THE EARTH

POINTS TO PONDER



- Author's journey to Antarctica & her feelings & emotions on reaching there
- Part of History – Geological aspects- time, Gondwana – uniqueness & lives in Antarctica
- Human impact – climate change, melting of ice, premonition & the prognosis
- Study of the Past (carbon reservoir- evolution), Present (ongoing changes- global warming-melting of ice) and Future (humans may be wiped out the way dinosaurs & mammoths were)
- Parable of the phytoplankton
- Metaphor for existence: take care of the small things and the big things will fall into place
- Walk on the ocean
- Students on the ice programme - Canadian Geoff Green and his decision to cart students rather than celebrities and retired, rich, curiosity-seekers to Antarctica - students are the future policy makers, at their age they are ready to absorb, learn, and most importantly, act.

JOURNEY TO THE END OF THE EARTH

ASSIGNMENT : QUESTIONS TO TEST COMPREHENSION

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words)

1. What are Geoff Green's reasons for including high school students in the "*Students on Ice*" expedition?
2. "Take care of small things and the big things will take care of themselves." Comment.
3. What are the indications for the future of mankind?
4. How does the writer feel on reaching Antarctica and why?



Long Answer Questions (125-150 words) :

1. How can a visit to Antarctica help us know about our past, present and future?
2. Describe the writer's varied experiences, impressions and feelings regarding Antarctica during her sojourn there.
3. "You lose all Earthly sense of time and perspective here." Describe the feelings and experiences of the writer in Antarctica.