



# NATIONAL FINDING FRANKLIN



The quest to find the remains of the Franklin **Expedition** must have sometimes seemed like **folly**. Imagine trying to locate two wooden ships, lost for 169 years in the vast and frigid depths of Canada's Arctic waters. Still, enthusiastic Canadian history hunters haven't resisted the challenge.

Many times they mounted searches and many times they failed. Finally, in September, eureka! In an amazing turn of events, the latest determined team of Canadian archaeologists and scientists located one of the two vessels that made up the doomed expedition.

"We've invested so much of our time, so many years," said Ryan Harris, one of the archeologists on the search. "It was like winning the Stanley Cup."

## THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION

The Franklin Expedition is the stuff of legend. In 1845, Sir John Franklin and his 128-man crew set sail from England on the HMS *Terror* and the HMS *Erebus*. They were seeking the fabled Northwest Passage, a route that would connect the Atlantic and Pacific

Oceans. They wanted to be the first of many searchers to find and claim for England this critical trade lane.

The Franklin Expedition was the biggest and best-equipped Arctic mission the Royal Navy had ever launched. The *Erebus* and the *Terror* were state-of-the-art, with copper-reinforced hulls and steam-powered propellers.

Unfortunately, all this new technology didn't help. The expedition got trapped in ice for 18 months. The entire crew died, the ships disappeared, and people have been hunting for the vessels ever since.

## SIXTH TIME LUCKY

Conditions weren't great this summer for combing the Arctic waters. Cold weather shortened the usual six-week search window and the heaviest sea ice in years forced investigators south of their chosen search area in the Victoria Strait.

**Undeterred**, the team switched their focus to the shallow waters of Queen Maud Gulf, following clues left in the

## WHO OWNS THE WRECK?

Britain launched the Franklin Expedition, but the ships sank in Canadian territory. So who owns the wreck?

The shipwreck belongs to Britain. However, according to a diplomatic agreement signed in 1997, Canada has permission to recover the ship and its **relics**.

There are a few exceptions. Any human remains must be undisturbed. Any gold will be divided between Canada and Britain. As well, Britain gets first dibs on artifacts significant to the British Navy.

oral history of the local Inuit. Stories passed down for decades talked of two ships trapped in the ice off King William Island. Elders spoke of a ghost ship drifting south, with a dead white man aboard.

It appears the stories are true. This time – the sixth search since 2008 – was lucky.

## DEFINITIONS

**EXPEDITION:** a journey or voyage undertaken by a group of people with a particular purpose, especially that of exploration, scientific research, or war

**FOLLY:** lack of good sense; foolishness

**RELICS:** objects surviving from a distant time

**UNDETERRED:** persevering with something despite setbacks



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## "MOWING THE GRASS"

The team got a break when a helicopter pilot who was ferrying the search party to a barren island stumbled across an iron fitting from a Royal Navy vessel. The piece was too heavy to have travelled far, so the hunters reasoned the ship must be nearby.

They cabled a **sonar** towfish to the survey vessel, lowering it to just above the sea floor. Then they started "mowing the grass," the name for an underwater scan of 150-metre passes. The towfish sends sound waves through the water on both sides. When the sound waves hit something, they "ping" or bounce back.

## EYES ON THE PRIZE

Back on the surface, archaeologists eagerly stared at the pattern of pings. After only a couple of passes, the wreck of one of Franklin's ships scrolled eerily onto their screen.

"I don't think it was halfway down the monitor when I shouted out, 'That's it! That's it! We found it!'" said Mr. Harris.

The highly detailed images showed the wreck sitting upright just 11 metres below the surface. The stern was damaged. Its masts were gone. Yet otherwise, the 30-metre ship looked intact. The team later sent down a remote-control mini-sub to video the hulk.

"There are some deck planks missing and you can actually see openings on the deck and the hatchways," reported Marc-André Bernier, a Parks Canada archeologist who was part of the team. "There's a lot of debris. And two

bronze cannons – more proof that it's not an ordinary ship."

After they checked the vessel's dimensions, they knew for certain they'd found either the *Erebus* or the *Terror*.

## NO TRESPASSERS!

The exact location of the find is a secret. Scientists worry that treasure hunters will loot the ship and damage priceless historical artifacts.

"I wouldn't be surprised if people are already contemplating how they might get up there," said John Geiger of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society, one of the sponsors of the hunt.

## SO MUCH TO LEARN

The next order of business is identifying which of Franklin's ships they found. Ship blueprints and a second dive will answer that question. In mid-September, the search team was hoping to dive again if the weather permitted.

The second order of business is discovering what's inside.

"There may be documents in sealed cylinders. There may be surviving paper," said Mr. Geiger. "If we've found the flagship *Erebus*, Sir John's quarters [and his belongings] will be there. There will be human remains. There will be insights into how they lived and how they died. There's no end to the answers we might be able to glean."

Added Mr. Bernier: "We have a chance to look history in the eye."

## TELLING THE WORLD

Prime Minister Stephen Harper flew the team to Ottawa to announce

## TWO MISSIONS WITH SIMILAR STORIES

In some surprising ways, Sir John Franklin's Arctic mission parallels that of the team sent to find his wrecked ships 169 years later.

For example, just as Franklin wanted to claim the passage for England, Canada wants to assert its **sovereignty** over the Arctic. Other nations, including Russia, appear to be contesting our claim, probably eager to use the Arctic shipping corridor themselves. As well, potential resource development and the effects of climate change are increasing other countries' interest in the Arctic.

Franklin mapped the unknown coastlines he explored. The Canadian team also maps and surveys the Arctic waters and shorelines as they pass because less than ten percent of the Canadian Arctic is charted to modern standards.

And just like Franklin's ships, with their copper-reinforced hulls and steam-powered propellers, the Canadian expedition was better equipped than ever before, using the best available technology, such as sophisticated sonar equipment and unmanned mini-submarines.

the news and to congratulate the adventurers on their find.

"For more than a century, this has been a great Canadian story and mystery," he said. "It's been the subject of scientists and historians and writers and singers. This is truly a historic moment for Canada." ★

## DEFINITIONS

**SONAR:** a system for the detection of objects under water and for measuring the water's depth by emitting sound pulses and detecting or measuring their return after being reflected

**SOVEREIGNTY:** recognized authority to govern a territory



# NATIONAL FINDING FRANKLIN

## ON THE LINES

Answer the following in complete sentences:

1. Name the Royal Navy ships that were part of the Franklin Expedition. How many crew were on board these vessels?

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2. Where and when did the expedition sail from and what was the purpose of this journey?

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3. What was technologically special about Franklin's ships?

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4. What happened to Franklin's ships?

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5. What did Canadian archaeologists and scientists recently find near King William Island?

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6. Why did it take so long to find?

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7. Describe how this sixth search effort since 2008 achieved success.

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8. Which ship was found and who owns it?

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9. What are researchers hoping to find and learn from the wreck?

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# NATIONAL FINDING FRANKLIN

## BETWEEN THE LINES

An **inference** is a conclusion drawn from evidence. A *plausible inference* is supported by evidence in the article and is consistent with known facts outside of the article.

What inference(s) can you draw from the fact that Stephen Harper is so interested in the discovery of one of Franklin's ships?

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## BEYOND THE LINES

1. When questioned on the cost of searching for the Franklin ships, Prime Minister Harper often mentions our need to further establish Canadian control and ownership of the Arctic. Who else is trying to stake a claim to this region? Why do these countries want a stake in the Arctic? What kinds of things should Canada be doing to secure our claim? (Google "Is Santa Canadian?" for one humorous suggestion.)
2. The Panama Canal ultimately solved the age-old problem of getting from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Research this modern day wonder of the world to get a sense of just *how* important this trade route must have been and, indeed, still is.

## JUST TALK ABOUT IT

1. When Sir John Franklin launched his two Royal Navy ships from England's shores in 1845, thousands lined up to wave goodbye. The same can be said of America's first launches to space, the moon, and beyond. Humans have always taken great risks and spent extraordinary sums to investigate the unknown. In fact, there is currently a one-way trip to Mars planned for 2023. Would you go? Would you have joined Franklin in 1845? Why or why not?
2. In the 19th century alone there were more than 40 searches for HMS *Terror* and HMS *Erebus*. Each one added to the British knowledge of the North, as have our own modern day mapping and searching missions. In your opinion, have these expeditions been worth the countless hours of effort and millions of dollars? Give reasons to support your response.

## ONLINE

Visit our student website at [www.news4youth.com](http://www.news4youth.com) and click on the *What in the World?* tab to:

1. See the first [underwater video of this historic find](http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/lost-franklin-expedition-ship-found-in-the-arctic-1.2760311) (or visit <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/lost-franklin-expedition-ship-found-in-the-arctic-1.2760311>).
2. Read about [the Prime Minister's 2012 decision to resume the searches](http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/08/23/stephen-harper-franklin-expedition/), see the ships in their original glory, and track the path of their ill-fated adventure (or visit <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/08/23/stephen-harper-franklin-expedition/>).
3. Understand [why we should care](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/the-franklin-search-peter-mansbridge-on-why-we-should-care-1.2760551), as argued by Canada's most celebrated news anchor, Peter Mansbridge (or visit <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/the-franklin-search-peter-mansbridge-on-why-we-should-care-1.2760551>).
4. Watch a short Discovery Channel documentary, "[The Search for the Northwest Passage: Part 1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiKrYuuerAc)" (or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiKrYuuerAc>). Part II is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU28jeAAaQE>. ★





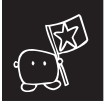
# FINDING FRANKLIN

Photographs are useful sources of information. Learning to “read the clues” in photographs can help us learn about historical or contemporary events, time periods or people. The “5W” questions (Who, What, Where, When and Why) is a technique used by reporters when investigating an event – and may be helpful in interpreting a photograph. Each of the 5W questions can help us focus on **clues** (*hints or pieces of information that help us find out something*) or evidence in the picture. We can then use these clues to help us draw **conclusions** (*answers or ideas that we think of because of a clue*) about what is happening in a photograph.

Consider the picture below:



(THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick)



1. Use the chart below to help you interpret what is happening in the photograph. Record as much evidence as you can for each question.

	<b>Clues</b> <i>(what you see in the picture)</i>	<b>Conclusions</b> <i>(what you think about what you see)</i>
<b>Who</b> is in the photograph?		
<b>What</b> are the people doing?		
<b>Where</b> is the action taking place?		
<b>When</b> did the action in the photograph take place?		
<b>Why</b> is the action happening?		

2. **Write a caption:** Develop a complete and believable explanation (or caption) for the photograph. A good explanation answers all of the 5W questions, is supported with evidence, and leaves no doubts about the conclusions.

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