

Name _____ Date _____

Matthew A. Henson



At the age of thirteen, Matthew A. Henson became a cabin boy on a sailing ship. For seven years the captain of the ship took an interest in Henson and taught him to read and write as well as become a good sailor. He traveled all over the world and learned a little of many languages. Henson had the ability to get along with people with different customs.

When he was twenty-one, Henson met Admiral Robert E. Peary and later joined him in his explorations of the North Pole. In those days no one knew what would be found at the Pole. Would there be snow-covered land or floating chunks of ice? There were no radios for communication or planes to drop food or make an emergency rescue. Henson and Peary both accepted the challenge to stand where no other person had stood before.

Time and again they failed to reach the North Pole because of swirling blizzards, temperatures of 50° F below zero, frostbite and lack of supplies. Finally on April 6, 1909, Peary, Henson, four Eskimos and a group of husky dogs reached the exact North Pole. Since Henson was the trailblazer, he and his dogsled reached the Pole first. Peary asked his friend Matthew Henson to place the American flag on the spot.

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

1. Matthew Henson _____ a little of many languages.
2. Henson met Peary and _____ him in his explorations to the North Pole.
3. They _____ to reach the North Pole because of blizzards.
4. On April 6, 1909, Peary and Henson _____ the exact North Pole.
5. Henson _____ the North Pole first because he was the trailblazer.
6. Henson became a _____ boy on a ship when he was thirteen.
7. A captain of a ship _____ Henson how to read and write.

Name _____ Date _____

Matthew A. Henson - Answers

At the age of thirteen, Matthew A. Henson became a cabin boy on a sailing ship. For seven years the captain of the ship took an interest in Henson and taught him to read and write as well as become a good sailor. He traveled all over the world and learned a little of many languages. Henson had the ability to get along with people with different customs.

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Fill in the blank with the correct word.

1. Matthew Henson **learned** a little of many languages.
2. Henson met Peary and **joined** him in his explorations to the North Pole.
3. They **failed** to reach the North Pole because of blizzards.
4. On April 6, 1909, Peary and Henson **reached** the exact North Pole.
5. Henson **reached** the North Pole first because he was the trailblazer.
6. Henson became a **cabin** boy on a ship when he was thirteen.
7. A captain of a ship **taught** Henson how to read and write.
8. Henson placed the **American** flag on the North Pole.