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Russian flag claims North Pole riches

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4th August, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Russian flag claims North Pole riches

Russian sailors dived deep below the North Pole in a submarine on Thursday to plant its national flag on the seabed. In doing so, it has staked a claim to the oil and gas riches beneath the Arctic Ocean. It has also raised the stakes in the race among Arctic powers to extract the world's largest source of untapped energy reserves. Russia wants to extend its territorial waters right up to the North Pole itself, which is sure to set a scramble for territory. Moscow claims the Arctic seabed and Siberia are linked by the same continental shelf. This would give Russia more than a million square kilometres of prime Arctic real estate. Under international law, Canada, Norway, Russia, the United States and Denmark have a 320 km economic zone around the north of their coastline, much of which extends into the Arctic Circle.

The leader of the flag-sinking expedition Artur Chilingarov, 67, said his main concern was not the icy or dark Arctic waters, but to resurface at the ice hole they dived through. The mini-submarine used was not strong enough to break through the polar ice and there was a danger the sub might be trapped beneath the ice caps. Of the expedition, Chilingarov said: "It was a soft landing." He also described what he saw in the murky depths: "There is yellowish gravel down here. No creatures of the deep are visible," he said. Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov explained to world leaders that Russia has good reason for planting its flag beneath the North Pole: "The aim of this expedition is not to stake Russia's claim but to show that our shelf reaches to the North Pole," he told reporters.

WARM-UPS

1. NORTH POLE: Walk around the class and talk to other students about the North Pole. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

sailors / North Pole / submarines / national flags / energy reserves / real estate / expeditions / polar ice / being trapped / creatures of the deep / world leaders

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. REAL ESTATE: In pairs / groups, talk about which nations should be allowed to have the rights to the places in this list:

- The North Pole (Arctic)
- Antarctica
- cyberspace
- the moon
- space

4. ARCTIC ENERGY OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, discuss whether you agree or disagree with these opinions:

- No country has the right to take oil and gas reserves from the North Pole
- The Arctic Ocean should be divided equally between the bordering countries
- Money spent on oil exploration should be used for research into green energy
- We should find and use up all of Earth's energy reserves
- Russia should get all the Arctic's energy because it put its flag on the seabed
- Profits from Arctic Ocean oil should go to developing countries

5. I'M A SAILOR: You are a sailor. Last week you went to the seabed beneath the North Pole to sink your country's flag. Your country can now claim all of the energy reserves there. Talk with the other "submariners" in your class about the expedition and its dangers and joys.

6. ENERGY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'energy'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

7. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think Russia should get the territory because its flag is there. Students B think the opposite. Change partners often. Share your findings.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Russia planted its flag on the seabed beneath the Arctic Ocean. | T / F |
| b. Russia wants to mine the rich gold reserves in the North Pole. | T / F |
| c. Russia believes the Arctic is linked to Siberia. | T / F |
| d. Five countries have borders that extend into the Arctic Circle. | T / F |
| e. A submarine was trapped beneath the polar ice caps. | T / F |
| f. The submarine hit the seabed hard, damaging its propeller. | T / F |
| g. Sailors took many photos of deep-sea creatures. | T / F |
| h. Russia's aim is to show it is physically linked to the North Pole. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. staked | a. worry |
| 2. extract | b. free-for-all |
| 3. untapped | c. beasts |
| 4. scramble | d. voyage |
| 5. extends | e. made |
| 6. expedition | f. gloomy |
| 7. concern | g. stretches |
| 8. murky | h. take out |
| 9. creatures | i. grounds |
| 10. reason | j. unused |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. sailors dived deep below the North Pole | a. stakes in the race |
| 2. it has staked a | b. reaches to the North Pole |
| 3. It has also raised the | c. the north of their coastline |
| 4. the world's largest source of | d. in a submarine |
| 5. a 320 km economic zone around | e. beneath the ice caps |
| 6. resurface at the ice hole | f. reason for planting its flag |
| 7. a danger the sub might be trapped | g. claim to the oil and gas riches |
| 8. what he saw in the murky | h. untapped energy reserves |
| 9. Russia has good | i. they dived through |
| 10. to show that our shelf | j. depths |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Russian flag claims North Pole riches

Russian sailors dived _____ below the North Pole in a submarine on Thursday to _____ its national flag on the seabed. In doing so, it has staked a _____ to the oil and gas riches beneath the Arctic Ocean. It has also raised the _____ in the race among Arctic powers to extract the world's largest source of _____ energy reserves. Russia wants to extend its territorial waters right up to the North Pole itself, which is sure to set a _____ for territory. Moscow claims the Arctic seabed and Siberia are linked by the same continental shelf. This would give Russia more than a million square kilometres of _____ Arctic real estate. Under international law, Canada, Norway, Russia, the United States and Denmark have a 320 km economic zone around the north of their coastline, much of which _____ into the Arctic Circle.

untapped

claim

prime

plant

stakes

scramble

deep

extends

The leader of the flag-sinking _____ Artur Chilingarov, 67, said his main concern was not the icy or dark Arctic waters, but to _____ at the ice hole they dived through. The mini-submarine used was not strong enough to break through the _____ ice and there was a danger the sub might be trapped beneath the ice _____. Of the expedition, Chilingarov said: "It was a _____ landing." He also described what he saw in the murky depths: "There is yellowish gravel down here. No creatures of the _____ are visible," he said. Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov explained to world leaders that Russia has good _____ for planting its flag beneath the North Pole: "The aim of this expedition is not to stake Russia's claim but to show that our shelf _____ to the North Pole," he told reporters.

polar

soft

resurface

reaches

deep

expedition

caps

reason

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Russian flag claims North Pole riches

Russian sailors _____ North Pole in a submarine on Thursday to plant its national flag on the seabed. In doing so, _____ to the oil and gas riches beneath the Arctic Ocean. It has also raised the stakes in the race among Arctic powers to _____ source of untapped energy reserves. Russia wants to extend its territorial waters right up to the North Pole itself, which is sure _____ territory. Moscow claims the Arctic seabed and Siberia are linked by the same continental shelf. This would give Russia more than a million square kilometres _____. Under international law, Canada, Norway, Russia, the United States and Denmark have a 320 km economic zone around the north of their coastline, _____ the Arctic Circle.

The leader of the flag-sinking expedition Artur Chilingarov, 67, said his main concern _____ Arctic waters, but to resurface at the ice hole they dived through. The mini-submarine _____ enough to break through the polar ice and there was a danger the sub _____ the ice caps. Of the expedition, Chilingarov said: "It was a soft landing." He also described what he saw in the murky depths: "There is yellowish gravel down here. No _____ visible," he said. Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov explained to world leaders that Russia _____ flag beneath the North Pole: "The aim of this expedition _____ but to show that our shelf reaches to the North Pole," he told reporters.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'north' and 'pole'.

north	pole
--------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• plant• raised• source• scramble• prime• zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• concern• resurface• soft• creatures• reason• shelf
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STUDENT NORTH POLE SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about the NORTH POLE in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the words "the North Pole"?
- c) Do you think countries can stake a claim to the North Pole?
- d) Should Russia be allowed to mine the riches in the Arctic Ocean?
- e) What do you think it's like to dive beneath the North Pole in a submarine?
- f) Do you think Russians should be proud their flag is the first to be planted beneath the North Pole?
- g) How do you think other powers will react to Russia's action?
- h) Do you think the riches under the Arctic Circle should be mined?
- i) Who do you think would win in a scramble for land in the Arctic?
- j) How large are the stakes described in this article?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What are the dangers of being a submariner?
- c) What do you think submariners would do if they were trapped beneath the ice?
- d) What kinds of sea creatures are there deep below the oceans?
- e) Do you think other world leaders will be happy with Russia's actions?
- f) Will Russia's position be strengthened if Siberia is linked to the Arctic via an underwater shelf?
- g) What do you think animals living in the North Pole would think of Russia's action?
- h) Do you think extracting the Arctic's energy reserves will damage the area?
- i) What questions would you like to ask Sergei Lavrov?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Russian flag claims North Pole riches

Russian sailors (1) _____ deep below the North Pole in a submarine on Thursday to (2) _____ its national flag on the seabed. In doing so, it has staked a claim to the oil and gas riches beneath the Arctic Ocean. It has also raised the (3) _____ in the race among Arctic powers to extract the world's largest source of untapped energy reserves. Russia wants to extend its territorial waters (4) _____ up to the North Pole itself, which is sure to set a scramble for territory. Moscow claims the Arctic seabed and Siberia are linked by the same continental (5) _____. This would give Russia more than a million square kilometres of prime Arctic real estate. Under international law, Canada, Norway, Russia, the United States and Denmark have a 320 km economic zone around the north of their coastline, (6) _____ of which extends into the Arctic Circle.

The leader of the flag-sinking expedition Artur Chilingarov, 67, said his main (7) _____ was not the icy or dark Arctic waters, but to resurface at the ice hole they dived through. The mini-submarine used was not strong enough to break through the polar ice and there was a (8) _____ the sub might be trapped beneath the ice caps. Of the expedition, Chilingarov said: "It was a soft landing." He also described what he saw in the murky (9) _____. "There is yellowish gravel down here. No creatures of the (10) _____ are visible," he said. Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov explained to world leaders that Russia has (11) _____ reason for planting its flag beneath the North Pole: "The aim of this expedition is not to stake Russia's claim but to show that our shelf reaches (12) _____ the North Pole," he told reporters.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) dived | (b) diving | (c) divers | (d) dives |
| 2. | (a) flower | (b) branch | (c) seed | (d) plant |
| 3. | (a) steak | (b) stake | (c) stakes | (d) steaks |
| 4. | (a) left | (b) right | (c) so | (d) down |
| 5. | (a) door | (b) shelf | (c) case | (d) table |
| 6. | (a) whole | (b) few | (c) many | (d) much |
| 7. | (a) concept | (b) consent | (c) concern | (d) concert |
| 8. | (a) danger | (b) dangers | (c) dangerous | (d) dangerously |
| 9. | (a) widths | (b) lengths | (c) depths | (d) heights |
| 10. | (a) low | (b) high | (c) shallow | (d) deep |
| 11. | (a) good | (b) well | (c) fine | (d) excellent |
| 12. | (a) for | (b) to | (c) with | (d) by |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about the North Pole. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. NORTH POLE POSTER: Make a poster about the different animals and sea life of the North Pole. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the effects mining for oil and gas in the North Pole might have on the environment. Include imaginary interviews with consumers and company executives.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Russia's foreign minister. Ask him three questions about the planting of the flag. Give him three suggestions about how to keep the Arctic environment in perfect condition. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. T d. T e. F f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. staked | a. made |
| 2. extract | b. take out |
| 3. untapped | c. unused |
| 4. scramble | d. free-for-all |
| 5. extends | e. stretches |
| 6. expedition | f. voyage |
| 7. concern | g. worry |
| 8. murky | h. gloomy |
| 9. creatures | i. beasts |
| 10. reason | j. grounds |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. sailors dived deep below the North Pole | a. in a submarine |
| 2. it has staked a | b. claim to the oil and gas riches |
| 3. It has also raised the | c. stakes in the race |
| 4. the world's largest source of | d. untapped energy reserves |
| 5. a 320 km economic zone around | e. the north of their coastline |
| 6. resurface at the ice hole | f. they dived through |
| 7. a danger the sub might be trapped | g. beneath the ice caps |
| 8. what he saw in the murky | h. depths |
| 9. Russia has good | i. reason for planting its flag |
| 10. to show that our shelf | j. reaches to the North Pole |

GAP FILL:

Russian flag claims North Pole riches

Russian sailors dived **deep** below the North Pole in a submarine on Thursday to **plant** its national flag on the seabed. In doing so, it has staked a **claim** to the oil and gas riches beneath the Arctic Ocean. It has also raised the **stakes** in the race among Arctic powers to extract the world's largest source of **untapped** energy reserves. Russia wants to extend its territorial waters right up to the North Pole itself, which is sure to set a **scramble** for territory. Moscow claims the Arctic seabed and Siberia are linked by the same continental shelf. This would give Russia more than a million square kilometres of **prime** Arctic real estate. Under international law, Canada, Norway, Russia, the United States and Denmark have a 320 km economic zone around the north of their coastline, much of which **extends** into the Arctic Circle.

The leader of the flag-sinking **expedition** Artur Chilingarov, 67, said his main concern was not the icy or dark Arctic waters, but to **resurface** at the ice hole they dived through. The mini-submarine used was not strong enough to break through the **polar** ice and there was a danger the sub might be trapped beneath the ice **caps**. Of the expedition, Chilingarov said: "It was a **soft** landing." He also described what he saw in the murky depths: "There is yellowish gravel down here. No creatures of the **deep** are visible," he said. Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov explained to world leaders that Russia has good **reason** for planting its flag beneath the North Pole: "The aim of this expedition is not to stake Russia's claim but to show that our shelf **reaches** to the North Pole," he told reporters.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - a 2 - d 3 - c 4 - b 5 - b 6 - d 7 - c 8 - a 9 - c 10 - d 11 - a 12 - b