

Call Me Ahnighito

Book by Pam Conrad

Unit study by Michelle Light and Celia Hartmann

(Pronunciation note: Ahnighito = Ah na HEET oh)

Geography--Greenland and New York: Ahnighito was found in Greenland and was moved to New York City, New York. Have your student locate both on a map, or globe. Make two paper circles and put them on your map. Put one on Greenland and the other on New York. Connect the circles with a piece of yarn. Our lesson will focus on Greenland, but the yarn connecting the two places will remind the student of where Ahnighito was found and where he was taken/where he is today.

The world's largest island, Greenland, is about 81% ice-capped. Vikings reached the island in the 10th century from Iceland; Danish colonization began in the 18th century and Greenland was made an integral part of Denmark in 1953. It joined the European Community (now the European Union) with Denmark in 1973 but withdrew in 1985 over a dispute over stringent fishing quotas. Greenland was granted self-government in 1979 by the Danish parliament. The law went into effect the following year. Denmark continues to exercise control of Greenland's foreign affairs.

Why Was It Named Greenland?

There is a story about the origin of Greenland's name. The first settler in Greenland, Erik the Red, is reported in old Icelandic sagas to have named the new country Greenland to attract other settlers there. Some historians, anyway, have claimed that due to climate changes, weather in Greenland in the Middle Ages might have been much warmer than nowadays. *Ivan Sache*, 3 September 2001

Meaning of the Flag

The flag of Greenland, or Kalaallit Nunaat, celebrated its 10 anniversary in June 10, 1995. For this occasion, the Greenland Post Office, issued some stamps and a brochure explaining the flag. The text in the brochure is written by *Thue Christiansen*, the flag's designer. Christiansen makes some remarks about the natural features of Greenland, and then goes on to account for the symbolism of the flag:

"the large white part in the flag symbolizes the ice cap and our fjords are represented by the red part in the circle. The white part of the circle symbolizes the ice bergs and the pack ice, and the large red part in the flag represents the ocean."

In other interpretations the circle is seen as representing the rising and setting sun.

Social Studies

The population of Greenland is predominantly Inuit, a people bearing an affinity and solidarity with the Inuit of Canada, Alaska, and Siberia. It is only 140 years since the last immigration from Canada took place.

The Greenlandic people are few in number: 55,000 in an enormous country. Approx. 20 percent of the population was born outside Greenland.

Most native Greenlanders today are a mixture of Inuit and Dane. All Greenlanders are bilingual and speak Inuktitut (the official name of the Greenlandic language) and Danish.

Today fishing is the all-dominating trade and accounts for 95 percent of total exports, but in the hunter districts of the outer areas, the seal and whale catch is of great importance. It actually forms the stable existence for one fifth of the Greenlandic population. For millennia the philosophy has been to live at one with nature. The hunters live with nature and follow the natural seasons.

History -In South Greenland, ruins from the Norse (Viking) settlers 1,000 years ago are well preserved, including the ruins of the first Christian churches on the North America continent. The symbols of the ancient culture are still alive even in the larger towns. Many people build and use their own kayaks. You can see them in every harbor. The old drum dance is performed by a growing number of artists. The musical and theatrical life is largely based on myths and sagas conveyed in a modern form.

This story takes place in 1894-1897. Discuss the technology at that time. The first car had just been invented by Daimler and Benz in 1887 and planes had not yet been invented. Notice how people in New York are dressed. Men held on to their derbies (hats).

Social Studies -- Tools made from the Meteorites: In the story, Ahnighito complains of the snow people chipping away pieces of him. The following information came from the [American Museum of Natural History](#):

Although iron meteorites are incredibly hard, the Inuit people successfully chipped off pieces of the fragment known as the Woman using hammer stones made of basalt. The iron was then used to make tools such as knives and harpoons.

When explorer Robert Peary located the Woman in 1894 with the help of an Inuit guide, some 10,000 hammer stones were scattered around the three-ton meteorite. Over the years, Inuit people had carried these basalt stones to the area from far away because the rocks found naturally around the Woman were too soft to break iron.

Few trees grow on the rugged arctic terrain of northwestern Greenland, so the native Inuit population long made tools and weapons out of such materials as walrus tusks and reindeer antlers. And until the mid-1800s, the primary source of metal for their knives, harpoons and spear points was iron from meteorites.

(Note: "The Woman" mentioned in this article is a fragment that came from the same meteorite as Ahnighito. See the Science lesson on Meteors below.)

Language Arts-Names: Read the authors note from the book if possible. Ask your child to come up with a name for the meteorite. Why did they choose this name?

Language Arts -- Personification/Anthropomorphism: If your student has studied personification before, ask him if he remembers the word that means "to give animals and things human characteristics." The rock, Ahnighito takes on a human personality and has feelings and thoughts. If your student can read, have him go through the text and tell you what sentences and words are used to bring Ahnighito to life. Otherwise, go over some of the passages and discuss with younger students.

You may wish to introduce *anthropomorphism*. (Pronunciation: an thruh puh morf ism) It is the specific type of personification used in this story. Anthropomorphism

is when a writer applies either animal or human qualities to an inanimate object. Rocks are inanimate (not living). The author chose to tell the story from the rock's point of view and to allow the rock to have feelings of being cold, lonely, patient, frightened, weeping, etc. Have your student come up with a paragraph that uses anthropomorphism.

Language Arts -- Story Writing or Narration: Have your child make up and illustrate their own story using personification. Example-Maybe about a pet rock in their backyard.

Language Arts -- Legends: The Inuit People had legends (make believe stories) about the meteor-saying it was a sewing woman and her dog that fell from heaven. Have your child make up a story about why the meteor fell to earth.

Language Arts -- Writing: Has your child ever seen a falling star? What do people do with falling stars? (Wish) Do they think people saw this star and made a wish upon it? Make up and illustrate a story about some people that saw the star long ago and the wishes they might have made. We are not sure if people were around at the time this meteor hit the earth. It's fun to think about it, though.

Vocabulary: Check for understanding. Could do either written or orally.

island, meteor, prodded, probed, grunting, straining, abandoned, exposed, hydraulic jacks, stubborn, obstinate, strained, sparked, blizzard, wept, mightily, soggy, greased, steadied, winches, groaning, edged, gangplank, plunged, topple, streaked, eased, bulk, plowing, bashing, ice floes, compass, savage, creaking, troubling, uninterested, alongside, pressed, beneath, yachts, buoys, swaying, enormous, gently, splendid, procession, glorious, displayed, admire, famous, dimmed, bask.

Art: The note in the overview is from the promotion of the book-stating it was illustrated with museum-quality paintings by Caldecott winner Richard Egielski. Why would they call them museum quality paintings?

Art -- Facial Expressions: Notice the expressions on the people, the shadings in the rock, the ice illustrations, reflections of light in the water. Discuss the use of cool

colors to make a cold feeling. Notice the pages in New York where warmer colors are used and the writer states that they were now in a warmer place.

Art -- Drawing: Have your child draw the meteorite or any of the pages in the book adding their own imagination and creativity to it.

Math-- Tons / Metric Tons: The meteor weighs over 31 metric tons. Discuss metric ton and the English ton. How many pounds are in a ton? 2,000
How many pounds are in a metric ton? 2,205.

metric ton

n. A unit of mass equal to 1,000 kilograms (2,205 pounds). So 2205 lbs. x 31
=68,355.00 pounds

Besides converting Ahnighito's weight from metric tons to pounds, make up other conversion problems.

Science - Meteors and Meteorites: Many people do not know the difference between a falling star, a meteor, and a meteorite (or even if there is any difference).

A rock floating out in space is called a *meteoroid*.

When that rock reaches the Earth's atmosphere, it begins to heat up and catch fire. It then turns into a fireball called a *meteor*. (Point out the picture of the meteor on the front cover.) Another word for meteor is a *falling "star."* As you just learned, a falling star is not really a star that has fallen from its place in the sky, but a rock.

Most meteors you see in the night sky burn up in the atmosphere and thus they never hit the earth. Most of the meteors are very small...about the size of a pebble! Every once in a while, a larger rock will survive its fiery descent and will hit the earth. When it passes through the earth's atmosphere and hits the earth, the rock is then called a *meteorite*.

The outside of a meteorite is melted because of the time it spent burning in the atmosphere. Meteorites hit the earth with such force that they leave indentations

in the earth, called *craters*. The larger the meteorite, the larger the crater.

Many meteorites are broken off bits of *asteroids* and are mostly made of iron and nickel. Asteroids are large rocks that orbit around a star (like the Earth orbits around its star the Sun, only asteroids are much smaller than planets.)



Meteoroid breaking away from asteroid Meteoroid in space



Meteor burning in atmosphere Meteorite hits the earth

Ahnighito was part of a larger meteor called Cape York, believed to have been about 200 tons in size. (Six times the size of Ahnighito alone.) The meteor broke up in the earth's atmosphere, and at least seven meteorites landed. The three most famous were found within four miles of another: Ahnighito, the Woman, and the Dog. Three other fragments were found in other parts of Greenland and the final

fragrant was found in Canada. If you have Real Player, you can watch [*The Journey of Cape York*](#).

Field Trip Opportunities

Go out in your own backyard at night and see if you can spot any meteors! If you have a telescope or know of someone who does, take advantage of it to look at the moon and stars! (Meteors are too quick to use a telescope.)

In August of each year, the [Perseid meteor shower](#) puts on a spectacular display for the northern hemisphere of the earth. They are the most watched of all the meteor showers. During peak, it is not unusual to see 100 meteors an hour! The display lasts from about July 15 to August 25. The bulk of activity is August 8 through 14, and peak is generally about August 12. If you missed the August ones, [try this list for other meteor showers at other times of the year](#).

[Use this list at Wikipedia to see if there is a crater near you to visit.](#)

Visit a local planetarium.

Visit a museum that has meteorites on display. Of course, if you live near New York City, [go visit Ahnighito himself!](#)

Science -- The Asteroid Belt, the Inner Planets, the Outer Planets: We talked about how some meteorites come from asteroids. There is a large amount of asteroids in our solar system that orbit the Sun, just like our Earth does. They are *the Asteroid Belt*. The Asteroid Belt is located between the Inner Planets and the Outer Planets.

The Inner Planets are:

Mercury

Venus

Earth

Mars

The Outer Planets are:

Jupiter

Saturn

Uranus
Neptune
Pluto

So, the Asteroid Belt is located between Mars and Jupiter. Mars is the last planet of the Inner Planets. Jupiter is the first planet of the Outer Planets.

Science -- Magnetism: Show your child a compass, and explain it's uses. Explain that the needle of a compass always points north, so we can use it find our way. Show your student the cardinal points of N, E, W, and S.

When you're on a ship, you cannot see landmarks to help know where you are. A compass helps the sailors know which way to go. You can also use a compass in the woods. You might be in some woods where all the trees look the same and you have no idea which way to go. The needle of a compass is a magnet.

Magnets attract (want to make come closer) or repel (want to push away) certain objects. The objects that are attracted or repelled are made mostly of either iron or nickel. Show your child some magnets. Use some paper clips to show how one end/side of a magnet will attract and how the other will repel. The ends/sides of a magnet are called *poles*, more specifically a magnet has a *north pole* and a *south pole*. The north poles are attracted to the south poles, and the south poles to the north. Try putting two north poles or two south poles together and they repel. Yes, you can force them together because you are stronger. If the magnets were stronger than you, you could not make them go together. If you gently push the two north (or two south poles) together you will feel a bit of resistance....they don't want to go together....they want to repel.

Can you think of something else that has a North Pole and a South Pole? Right, the earth. The earth is also a magnet! The needle of a compass is attracted to the earth's North Pole, and that is why the needle of a compass points north.

Do you remember when Ahnighito mentioned "*the men were upset with me because all the ship's compasses pointed at me and at nothing else?*" Why were they so upset? Because their compasses no longer pointed north, but at Ahnighito! Why did they point to Ahnighito? (Celia's older daughter answered "Because he was on the north side of the boat!" LOL)

Do you remember when we talked about meteorites earlier? What are they made of? Yes, iron and nickel! The ship's compass was attracted to Ahnighito instead of the North Pole! And out on the open sea, that means they had a hard time figuring out which way to go!

Bible/Creation Science vs. Evolution: Old Earth/Vs. Young Earth Theory-(Supposedly people were not around at the time this meteor hit the earth. However, some of us hold to a young earth theory.) You may want to discuss the differences in these theories and what you believe-perhaps offering some scriptures to back up your belief. (God created the world in six days, etc. You could list the differences in these theories.)

Science Technology: It took years to unearth and move the giant meteor. The technology at the time and the arctic conditions made it even more difficult.

Science: Ice Breakers are boats designed to break the ice. They are used in the Arctic and Antarctic regions for explorations and expeditions. Ahnighito refers to the ship *“plowing into icebergs bashing into floating ice floes, trying to cut her way out of the bay into the open sea.”* Michelle is not certain this expedition used an Ice Breaker, but the passage in the story leads me to believe they did. The technology for building these boats became better after the turn of the 1900's.

Just for Fun: Meteorites in the Back Yard!

Make these (without the children knowing) a few days in advance.

In a bowl, mix:

2 c. Flour

2 c. Used coffee grounds

1 c. Salt

1/2 c. Sand

(If desired, you could add 2 T of powdered tempera paint to the dry ingredients to make them more colorful.)

Slowly add 1 1/2 cups of water. Knead until it is the consistency of bread dough.

Break off a piece about the size of a tennis ball or baseball. Roll it into a ball and then make a hole in the center of the ball big enough to hide treasures in.

Fill the hole with small treasures (small plastic toys, balls, wrapped pieces of candy, quarters for iron, nickels for nickel, etc.) and seal the hole with some extra dough.

Let your "meteorites" air dry until hard (2 to 4 days). (Depending on what you put inside, you could instead bake them in the oven on a cookie sheet at 150 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes.)

When they are dry, go outside and place them around the yard. (Again, without the kids knowing!) Tell your children that there was a meteor shower and to go outside and see if they can find any meteorites! When they've found them all, let them break the meteorites open and enjoy the treasures!

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Robert Edwin Peary

Explorer

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Date of Death: _____

Place of Death: _____

Where did he explore? _____

www.wpclipart.com

What did he do to prepare for exploring there? _____

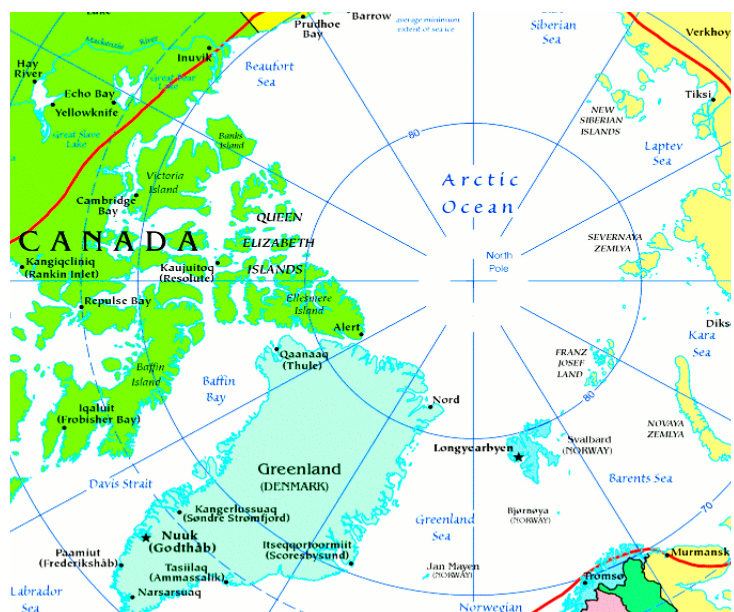
What did he discover and when? _____

Draw a line to

the northern part of Greenland

the northern part of Ellesmere Island

the North Pole



www.wpclipart.com

Answer sheet

Robert Edwin Peary

Explorer

Answers from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Peary

Birth: May 6, 1856 Cresson, Pennsylvania

Death: February 20, 1920 Washington, D.C.

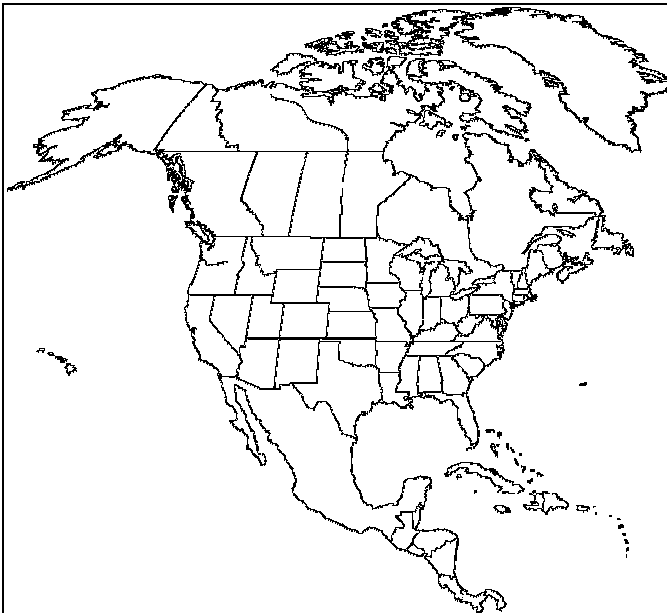
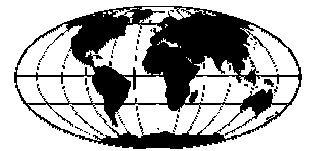
Where did he explore? Robert Peary explored northern Greenland and the Arctic.

What did he do to prepare for exploring there?: Robert Peary studied the Inuits and how they survived in the Arctic. He learned to build igloos and he wore clothing made of fur to keep him warmer and allow him to take less sleeping bags on his explorations. He took several Inuit men with him, since they knew more about traveling and hunting in the Arctic.

What did he discover and when? On April 6, 1909, Robert Peary, Matthew Henson, and four Inuits were the first to locate the geographic North Pole, the northernmost point on Earth.

Is
Greenland?

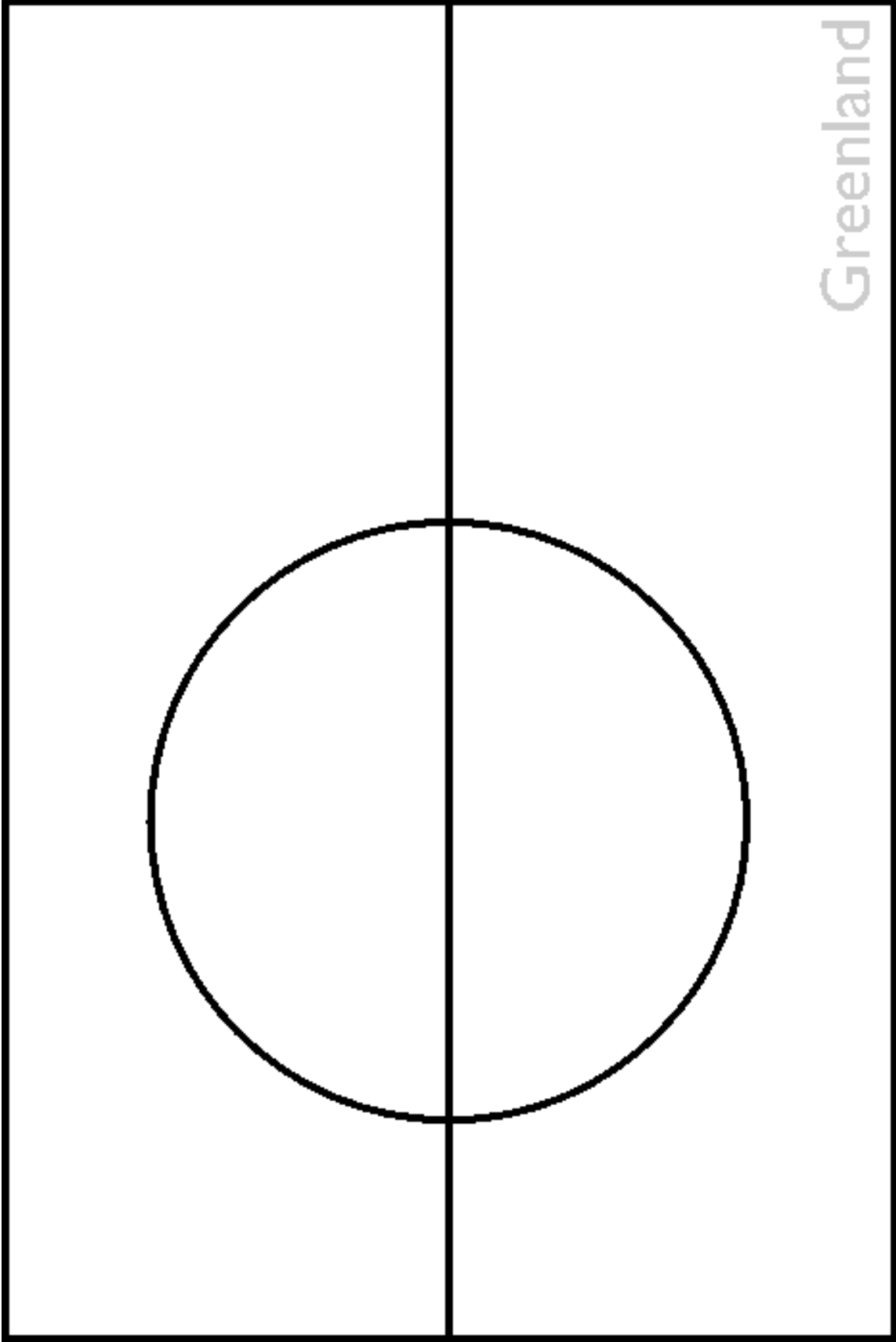
Where
in
the
World. . .



What continent is Greenland on?

Find Greenland on the map and color it in.

Cut out shutter book and map on solid lines.
Fold shutter book on dotted lines so that words
are on cover. Glue map into book under shutters.



Greenland