Lives of the Explorers: Discoveries, Disasters (and What the Neighbors Thought)

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GENRE: Biography
LEXILE: 1050L

SUMMARY:
Through informative text and bright caricatures, Lives of the Explorers details the adventures and feats of twenty explorers from Leif Ericson to Sally Ride. From the bottom of the ocean to the North Pole and even outer space, this collection of short biographies offers both astounding facts and humorous vignettes describing the varied personalities and accomplishments of each explorer.

BOOKTALK:
Wanted: Person seeking adventure.
Job Requirements:
- Willingness to embark on a trip for an unknown length of time
- Ability to say goodbye to loved ones knowing you may never see them again
- Lack of fear at the idea of sailing over the edge of the world, encountering giant squid, freezing at the North Pole, or an unnumbered amount of other possible adventuring hazards

Possible dangers:
- Getting lost in outer space
- Running into tribes of man-eating cannibals
- Becoming caught in a mutiny on board your ship

If you think you can handle a job like this or are amazed by people who actually did, you should check out Lives of the Explorers. This book is a collection of 20 short biographies of explorers who set sail, blasted off, and dove deep on adventures to explore the unknown. Read on to discover for yourself the truly incredible adventures people like Leif Ericson, Marco Polo, Sally Ride, Daniel Boone, and many more embarked upon.

AUTHOR’S NAME: Kathleen Krull

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Other books written by the author:
Additional books in the Lives Of series:
Lives of the Scientists
Lives of the Pirates
Lives of the Presidents
Lives of Extraordinary Women
Lives of the Musicians
Other titles:
Louisa May’s Battle
Big Wig
Kubla Khan
The Boy Who Invented TV
Pocahontas: Princess of the New World

CHALLENGING WORDS
1. merchant, (noun) page 15, 33
someone who buys or sells things to make money
2. monastery, (noun) 21
a place where people live who study religion
3. primitive, (adjective) 35
describes something that seems ancient or old
4. navigation, (noun) 39
the methods and tools someone uses to get from one place to another, figure out a location, which way to go, and distance traveled
5. conquer, (verb) 80
to gain control over a place or people sometimes through force
6. solitude, (noun) 67
being alone
7. uncharted, (adjective) 71
unknown area, not on a map
8. privileged, (adjective) 91
having more than most people, having either more things or more opportunity
9. survival, (noun) 77
the act of staying alive
10. mutineer, (noun) 37
a member of the crew who tries to overthrow the leader (captain)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. What motivated these explorers in the face of danger? Columbus was looking for gold while Auguste Piccard wanted to study the air at high altitudes. Were the explorers’ motivations worth the risk and danger? Compare and contrast the motivations of several explorers.
2. How did methods of exploration evolve and change from long ago to present day?
3. Ferdinand Magellan was a violent and ruthless leader of his expedition. Why do you feel some explorers mistreated their crews and/or the people and places they encountered?
4. Which of the trips in the book would you have most liked to be on? Which would you least like to be on? Explain.
5. If you could meet one of the explorers in this book, who would you choose? Why does that explorer interest you? What questions would you ask him?
6. Imagine future explorers. Where do you think they will go and what challenges do you think they’ll face?
ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Language Arts

- Create a ‘Guess Who’ game of the twenty explorers identified in the book. Spread 20 flashcards across a table. Write the name of an explorer on each card. Working in a pair or two teams, have one team choose an explorer they’re thinking of. The other team has to ask questions to eliminate explorers and eventually identify the explorer the first team is thinking of. For example, the second team could ask the first team, “Do you prefer to travel over land or over sea?” If the first team answered sea, the second team could eliminate the explorers who traveled primarily by land (i.e. Marco Polo).

  **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.6**
  Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

- Wax Museum: Have students dress up and act as the explorers in the book. Invite other classes and families to visit and take a tour of the explorer museum stopping at each explorer to hear about their lives and exploration.

  **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.3**
  Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

- Have the students create a giant map to be hung in the library or in their classroom. Trace the routes of each explorer over the map. Create a key noting special or memorable stops or destinations on every route.

  **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7**
  Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

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Sally Ride Science: [https://sallyridescience.com/](https://sallyridescience.com/)


