



GCSE

C700U20-1A



S25-C700U20-1A



FRIDAY, 6 JUNE 2025 – MORNING

ENGLISH LANGUAGE – Component 2
19th and 21st Century Non-Fiction Reading
and Transactional/Persuasive Writing

RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR USE WITH SECTION A

Preet Chandi is the first woman of colour to complete a solo expedition to the South Pole

by Rachel Treisman

Preet Chandi has made a habit of pushing herself, tackling increasingly challenging endurance events over the years, from ultra-marathons to mountaineering. And fresh from a gruelling ski expedition in Antarctica, the 32-year-old has now made history to become the first woman of colour to complete a solo expedition to the South Pole, and in doing so, hopes to inspire future generations to pursue their goals, push their limits and make history.

While preparing for her expedition, Chandi became increasingly aware of how much it matters for young people to see someone like her as a role model. “I’m an Asian woman. I’m not really the image I think people expect to see, even now,” Chandi said, referring to her South Asian background. “I’m told that ‘you don’t really look like a polar explorer’. When I first typed ‘polar explorer’ into Google, I didn’t see anyone who looked like me. Now when you type it in, you’ll see a picture of me. I can’t even begin to explain how powerful that is. I’ve always believed ‘nothing is impossible’ and always had this idea that I can achieve something great, something that allows me to be a role model.”



The British army officer, who adopted the nickname ‘Polar Preet’ for her website, showed a steely determination to achieve her goal, completing the incredibly challenging 700-mile trip in just 40 days. She documented her journey online, posting Instagram updates from the ice to those who supported and inspired her. Chandi wrote on her website that she didn’t know much about Antarctica – other

than its status as ‘the coldest, highest, driest and windiest continent on Earth’ – which was exactly why she wanted to go there when she first started planning her expedition.

Her journey to the South Pole – and into the history books – began with two full years of preparation, when she did polar training expeditions in Greenland and Norway and says she spent months dragging heavy car tyres to prepare for pulling her sledge.

As her start date approached, Chandi put together her food and equipment, including freeze-dried meals, high-protein bars, a daily hot chocolate drink ration and a communications kit with satellite phones, global positioning system and a compass.

On November 24th, 2021, Chandi set off skiing and pulling her sledge. She skied for hours every day, stopping at night to pitch a tent, do her check-in calls and sleep. Most days she averaged 11 hours of skiing but, determined to complete the expedition, she sometimes skied for almost 20 hours and suffered from exhaustion towards the end of the journey. By the end of the expedition, it had left her with a persistent cough.

Her Instagram posts described the intense conditions, with temperatures down to a bone-numbing minus 50 degrees Celsius and wind speeds of up to 60 mph. There were days of good visibility and smooth snow, other days where she battled for hours, dragging her sledge across huge wave-like ridges on the icy terrain.

When she arrived at the South Pole she said, “I’m feeling so many emotions right now. I knew nothing about the polar world three years ago and it feels so surreal to finally be here. It was tough getting here but this expedition was always about so much more than me. If I am a role model, it’s to encourage people to push themselves and to believe in themselves. No matter where you are from or where your start line is, everybody has to start somewhere.”

Half of the funds raised from her extraordinary feat will go towards an adventure grant for women attempting unique challenges, which she will launch next year. “Hopefully doing something that pushed me out of my comfort zone will inspire others to believe in themselves and push their boundaries,” she said.

Congratulating her on the expedition, a spokesperson for the British Army said, “I am delighted that Preet has become a role model for young people from diverse and ethnic backgrounds to see a world with challenges rather than barriers. Her belief that ‘nothing is impossible’ shows others they can aim to achieve anything they want. She is an inspirational example of determination.”



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