Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Notes: The Race to the South Pole**

**Answer the following:**

**1. What was the destination of Scott and his party? On 15th January how far were they from their destination? How did they make certain that they would reach according to their plan?**

Ans: Scott and his party were headed to the South Pole and on 15th January they were only 27 miles away from the pole. They needed two long marches to reach the Pole. They left their depot that day with nine days’ provisions so that reaching their destination ought to be a certain thing.

**2.What appalling possibility does Scott mention in his records on 15th January? What does this show?**

Ans: Scott refers to the appalling possibility of the Norwegian expedition team having reached the South Pole before them. This shows that Scott’s party was aware of the Norwegian expedition to the South Pole.

3.**On January 16, Scott has written ‘the worst has happened or nearly the worst’. What was the worst thing to have happened? Why was it nearly the worst?**

Ans: On January 16 , after covering 71/2 miles , Scotts party saw a black flag tied to a sledge bearer, nearby the remains of a camp, sledge tracks and ski tracks going and coming and the clear trace of dogs’ paws. This made it clear that the Norwegians were the first to reach the Pole and had forestalled Scott’s party. This was the worst thing to have happened. But Scott wrote it was nearly the worst because he realized that the return journey would not be smooth as they were tired, dejected and the weather was worsening. Thus he expected that the worst was yet to happen.

**4.When did Scott’s party reach the Pole? Were they happy with their accomplishment? Why?**

Ans: Scott’s party reached the Pole on January 17. Scott’s party was not happy with their accomplishment because they had lost the race to the Pole to the Norwegian party. To add to their misery, the weather did not support them. It was extremely cold – 220  and the wind was 4 to 5 0.. Their run home was a desperate struggle.

**5.When Scott’s party arrived at the tent, what did they find?**

Ans: When Scott’s party arrived at the tent, they found a record of five Norwegians having been there. They were – Roald Amundsen, Olav Olavson Bjaland, Hilmer Hanssen, Sverre H Hassel, Oscar Wisting. There was a note from Amundsen which asked Scott to forward a letter to King Haakon which said that Roald had visited the tent with his companions.

**6. What did Scott’s party do on reaching the Pole? Why does Scott write that they had said a goodbye to most of their dreams?**

Ans: On reaching a little away from the Pole, they camped there calling it the Pole Camp. They built a cairn and put up their poor sighted Union Jack and photographed themselves. They saw a runner of a sledge stuck in the ice realizing that their predecessors had made sure of their mark and fully celebrated the occasion. His team was obviously dejected at not winning the race to the Pole and thus the return home was an ordeal. They had to say a goodbye to their dreams.

**7. What had gone wrong in the plans of Scott’s team? What was the consequence of the same?**

Ans: Robert Scott had planned to reach the South Pole before Christmas, that would be mid- summer in the Southern Hemisphere. They had been delayed by almost a month and the season had changed by then. They had to take their return journey during the change of season from summer to winter.

**8. How did Oates meet his end? What are Scott’s views of him?**

Ans: Titus Oats had got frostbite in his foot making the journey very difficult for him. He suggested that his colleagues should leave him in his sleeping- bag and move ahead. The team refused to do so and induced him to go ahead. He bravely struggled on with them but just for a few more miles. He bravely endured the pain without complain. He slept through the last night of his life thinking he wouldn’t wake up but he did. It was a blizzard and he went out saying he would be back in some time but he didn’t return. Scott has written that Oates’ story to be recorded and that his last thoughts were of his mother. He wrote that they could testify to his bravery.

**9. What were the disastrous weather conditions during the last few mortal days of Scott’s party? How did it affect them?**

Ans: During the last few days the weather conditions worsened. From -220 the cold aggravated to more than -400. Often there would be a blizzard making them immobile. There was strong wind blowing and the weather was so bad that no human could sustain it. All of them had got frostbites and were extremely worn out. The food supplies were dwindling and the fuel was running out.

**10. In the end Scott had written ‘For God’s sake look after our people.’ What did he mean by that?**

Ans: Scott and his team had lost the race to the pole. Nevertheless, they had faced extreme weather conditions very bravely and had no complains. He wrote the above lines as an appeal to is country to look after the families of the entire party who had laid their lives for the expedition.