**Summary of Journey to the End of the Earth**

Journey to the End of the Earth, written by Tishani Doshi, talks about her experience on the Antarctic continent during a research programme that takes high school students to the icy continent to study and understand climate change. She takes off from Madras in a Russian research vessel named Akademik Shokalskiy. Reaching the world’s coldest, windiest and driest continent of the world – Antarctica – involved crossing nine time zones, six checkpoints, three bodies of water, and many ecospheres. Her first reaction on reaching the continent after travelling for 100 hours was relief. She was wonderstruck by its immensity and isolation. The idea of India being a part of Antarctica long back in the past seemed a bizarre thought. Students can read the summary of Journey to the End of the Earth given below for a detailed understanding of the chapter. Students can also visit BYJU’S CBSE Summary and [CBSE Notes](https://byjus.com/cbse-notes/) for more information and learning materials on CBSE Class 12 English syllabus.

**CBSE Class 12 English Journey to the End of the Earth Summary**

**Part of history**

The author talks about Gondwana – a giant amalgamated southern supercontinent that existed six hundred and fifty million years ago. It was centred roughly around present-day Antarctica. Humans had not arrived for quite a long time, and the climate was warmer. Gondwana thrived for 500 million years with a variety of flora and fauna. By the time of the advent of mammals, the landmass was forced to separate into smaller parts or countries.

This journey to Antarctica was an attempt to understand the formation of countries and find out about our origins. India had pushed northwards into Asia to form the Himalayas. South America had drifted towards North America to form the Drake passage, which created a cold circumpolar current to keep Antarctica frigid at the bottom of the world.

The author belonged to the Southern part of India – a sunny place where cold temperatures are rare occurrences. Spending two weeks in Antarctica was overall a chilling prospect for her. It contains ninety per cent of Earth’s ice volume and has no human markers like trees or billboards throughout the continent. One lost a sense of perspective or time here. Visible things ranged from the microscopic to the mighty, e.g., from midges and mites to whales. Days were of a duration of twenty-four hours and immersed in complete silence, disturbed occasionally by avalanches or calving ice sheets.

**Human impact**

The author says that humans have been on this planet for only 12,000 years and have managed to create havoc with their ambitious dreams of development. Rapid human population growth has made survival difficult for other species. Limitless burning of fossil fuels has increased the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Climate change is an important part of the environmental debate, and Antarctica is a crucial part of it because it holds half-million-year-old carbon records in its layers of ice.

The author was working on a programme named Students on Ice on the Shokalskiy. High school students were taken to Antarctica for educational purposes that would help them understand and respect the planet. The programme, headed by Geoff Green, had been operating for six years. He was tired of taking celebrities and rich curiosity-seekers to Antarctica who gave back to the world in a limited way. With Students on Ice, Geoff offered the future policy-makers a life-changing experience at an age when they were ready to absorb, learn and act.

The reason why the programme was so successful was that being near the South Pole always affected people in some way. We cannot observe environmental changes from the comfort of our homes. But when we see the glaciers retreat and the ice shelves collapse, we realise how serious the threat of global warming is. The simple ecosystem and lack of biodiversity in Antarctica make it easy for us to study how minor changes in environments can have big repercussions. For example, further depletion of the ozone layer could disturb the activities of phytoplankton, which can, in turn, affect the birds and marine animals of the region – finally affecting the global carbon cycle.

**Walk on the ocean**

While the author had a number of epiphanies during her Antarctic experience, the best one was when they were asked to walk on the ocean. The Shokalskiy was wedged into a thick white sheet of ice that prevented them from going further south. The captain decided to turn around and go back to the north. Before going, the participants of the programme were asked to climb down the gangplank and walk on the ocean. All 52 members spread out on the one-metre-thick ice pack. Crabeater seals were stretching and sunning themselves on ice floes nearby, just like stray dogs do under the shade of a banyan tree. The author found it to be a new revelation – everything connected.

The author reflected upon how our planet has been balanced beautifully. She wondered what would happen if Antarctica became a warm place. She wondered if we would meet the same fate as that of dinosaurs, mammoths and woolly rhinos. After meeting the optimistic teenagers on the programme, the author felt that a lot could happen in a million years, but a single day was capable of making drastic changes to the environment.

**Conclusion of Journey to the End of the Earth**

Summary of Journey to the End of the Earth depicts the gravity of climate change and its effects on our lives. Our comfortable lifestyles and easy accessibility of resources do not allow us to reflect upon the damage we are causing to our environment through our actions. The change in global climate is a cumulative effect, and we become blind to the changes owing to our commitment to rapid economic development. Because of the biodiversity around us in the habitable continents, the minute changes that lead to climate change are not easily noticeable as long as we are able to live comfortably. Antarctica, on the other hand, does not have a complex ecosystem, and a small change can trigger a major change in its landscape. This makes the continent a perfect place to learn about the catastrophic effects of climate change.