**Tosca : When**

**Light blue : Who**

**Yellow : What**

**Purple : Why**

**Green : Where**

**Gray : How**

**ROALD AMUNDSEN**

Roald Amundsen (July 16, 1872-June 22, 1928) was a Norwegian polar explorer who was the first person to fly over the North Pole in a dirigible (May 11-13, 1926) and was the first person to reach the South Pole. He was the first person to reach both the North and South Poles.

Amundsen and his small expedition reached the South Pole on December 14, 1911, traveling by dog sled. Amundsen was also the first person to sail around the world through the Northeast and Northwest passages, from the Atlantic to the Pacific (in 1905).

**Early Life:**  
Amundsen was born on July 16, 1872, near Oslo, Norway. As a teenager, he had been fascinated by the adventures of the explorer [John Franklin](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/f/franklin.shtml), and wanted to be an explorer himself. His mother, however, wanted him to be a doctor (his father died when Roald was 14). When Roald was 21, his mother died, and he stopped studying medicine and began preparating for a trip to the Arctic.

**Early Trips:**

By 1897, he was first mate (on the Belgica) on a Belgian expedition to the Arctic; it was the first expedition to overwinter at the Arctic (the ship had been caught in the ice, so they were forced to stay until the ice melted). On this trip, scurvy (a lack of vitamin C) began to make the crew ill, but Amundsen saved them by making them eat seal meat (which is high in vitamin C).

**The North Magnetic Pole and the Northwest Passage:**  
In 1899, Amundsen became a sea captain himself and organized an expedition to go to the North Magnetic Pole. In 1900, he bought a ship called the Gjoa. On June 16, 1903, with a crew of 6, Amundsen sailed from Oslo, Norway, around the south of Greenland, through Baffin Bay, and on to King William Island (in northern Canada), where they spent two years building two ships, an astronomical observatory, and a couple of huts. While on the island, during this time, they also mapped that frozen, island-studded area.

In 1904, Amundsen and his small crew continued on to the North Magnetic Pole, which had moved 30 miles since it was originally located by [James Clark Ross](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/r/ross.shtml) in 1831.

**South Pole:**  
In 1910, Amundsen sailed for Antarctica, intending to be the first person to make it to the South Pole [Peary](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/p/peary.shtml) and [Henson](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/h/henson.shtml) had surprised him by making it to the North Pole. Amundsen set up a base camp at the Bay of Wales (by the Ross Ice Shelf). On December 14, 1911, Amundsen and his crew made it to the South Pole on dog sleds. They returned to their base camp on January 25, 1912; they had covered 1,860 miles in 99 days. The British explorer [Robert Falcon Scott](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/s/scott.shtml) had also tried to be the first to the South Pole, but Amundsen beat him there (and Scott and his crew all died on the return trip).

**North Pole:**  
From 1918 until 1921, Amundsen tried unsuccessfully to use Arctic currents to drift to the North Pole. In the process, however, he sailed through the Northeast Passage (the sea passage from northern Europe across northern Asia to Alaska); he was only the second person in history to do this (A. E. Nordenskjold was the first).

Amundsen then decided to fly to the North Pole. With financing from the millionaire explorer Lincoln Ellsworth, they had many unsuccessful tries. [Richard Evelyn Byrd](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/b/byrd.shtml) eventually reached the North Pole by plane in May, 1926. When Byrd returned Spitsbergen, Norway, Amundsen and Byrd met. Two days later, May 11, 1926, Amundsen left for the North Pole in a dirigible (blimp) designed and flown by the Italian explorer, pilot and engineer Umberto Nobile. Amundsen and Nobile reached the North Pole on May 11. Although they had some weather and mechanical troubles, they eventually returned to Point Barrow, Alaska, on May 14.

**Death:**  
Amundsen died in a plane crash in the summer of 1928, while attempting to rescue his friend Nobile, who had been lost in a dirigible crash in the Arctic (Nobile was found by another search crew). Amundsen disappeared on June 18, 1928, with his French flight crew; Amundsen's body was never found. Amundsen was 55 years old when he died. 

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