

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## **I Am Canada: Graves of Ice** by John Wilson

1. The technology that Franklin's men took with them was the best they had in 1845. If you were leading an expedition through the Northwest Passage today, what new inventions would you take with you? What sorts of crises might they help you avoid?
2. Which side would you have been on when Davy leads the mutiny against the officers? Why?
3. What made it so hard for George to decide whether to stay with Davy or leave with Lt. Fitzjames? Have you ever been pulled in two opposite directions when having to make a major decision? How did you finally make up your mind?
4. One of the great mysteries of the Franklin Expedition is why the crew left so few written messages. The only one is the note at Victory Point. If you had been on the expedition, where would you have left notes and what would you have written in them?
5. Franklin's men probably met up with Inuit hunters. Why didn't they, or couldn't they, adopt Inuit ways and learn to live in the Arctic? Why couldn't the Inuit simply have rescued the survivors they came across?
6. Why does Franklin and his fate still fascinate us today? We remember his failure much better than we remember Amundsen's success. What might be the reason for that?
7. Boredom was a major problem for Arctic explorers trapped in the ice for months at a time. In 1845 there were no video games, television or internet. What would you have taken with you in 1845 to keep yourself entertained over the long dark winter? What would you take with you today for entertainment if you had to spend a winter in the ice at Beechey Island?

## **FURTHER RESEARCH**

- (a) George Chambers and David Young are real historical characters, but we know very little about their lives. Research what a boy's life might have been like in London back then. Would you rather have had George's or Davy's background?
- (b) Franklin's Expedition was the biggest and best to be sent in search of the Northwest Passage, but there were many more, from Cabot in the fifteenth century to Amundsen in the twentieth. Pick one Arctic explorer and research what he achieved and why he succeeded or failed. Some you might consider are: Cabot, Frobisher, Hudson, Davis, Knight, Baffin, Perry, John Ross, James Ross, Back, Amundsen.