

Listening and speaking

Ann Daniels – polar explorer

1 What is this advert for? What is surprising about it?

2 Read about Ann Daniels.

- How did she become a polar explorer?
- Why wasn't she an obvious choice for a polar expedition?

ORDINARY WOMEN WANTED

To become members of the first all-female relay team to walk to the North Pole. No experience needed.



It was in 1997 that **Ann Daniels** saw a newspaper advert from the Polar Travel Company. It said 'ordinary women'. Well, she was working in a bank, and she was a mother – though of young triplets, which perhaps wasn't so ordinary. As she says, 'I had three children, and I thought, if I can do that, I can do anything.' She certainly had no experience of outdoor activities ('I'd never had a rucksack on my back – I was born in an inner city'), and she borrowed all the clothes and equipment she needed for the first selection weekend. She then had nine months of intensive training, and, as she puts it, 'I was very lucky that some idiot chose me'.

Ann is now one of only two women who have walked to both the North and South Poles as part of an all-female team. She has taken part in scientific expeditions to measure the polar ice cap, so that scientists can work out how long it will last. She is also a popular international speaker.

3 Which of these nouns do you associate with an expedition to the North Pole? Use a dictionary to help.

misery joy agony humour pain wonder
beauty gloom horror optimism achievement

▶ 6.4 Listen to **Part 1** of a BBC radio programme, in which Ann is interviewed by another explorer, Steve Backshall. Tick (✓) the nouns in the box that you hear.

4 ▶ 6.4 Listen again and choose the correct words in the statements.

- 1 Steve feels that there are *few* / *many* options when it comes to choosing destinations for great adventures.
- 2 When she reached the Arctic, Ann realized *gradually* / *immediately* that this was something she wanted to keep doing.
- 3 Halfway through her 2002 expedition, *all* / *some* parts of Ann's body were giving her extreme pain.
- 4 Ann feels that for *mothers* / *children*, it's useful to remember the best parts of their experience, rather than the worst.
- 5 Steve talks about a *good* / *bad* memory being an advantage for an explorer.

5 ▶ 6.5 Listen to **Part 2**. What is Ann's position in her family? Does Ann agree with Steve's theory about how this helped to make her an explorer?

6 ▶ 6.5 Listen again to **Part 2** and answer the questions.

- 1 How old was Ann when she left school? Why?
- 2 What was her career ambition?
- 3 How did she feel compared to her brothers?
- 4 What did she want to be able to do as a child?
- 5 Why did she take so many risks?
- 6 What makes her a good explorer?

What do you think?

- Would you answer an advert for ordinary people to go on a polar expedition? Why/Why not?
- Do you think it's right for a mother of small children to risk her life as an explorer? What about a father?
- What effect do you think your position in your family has had on you?