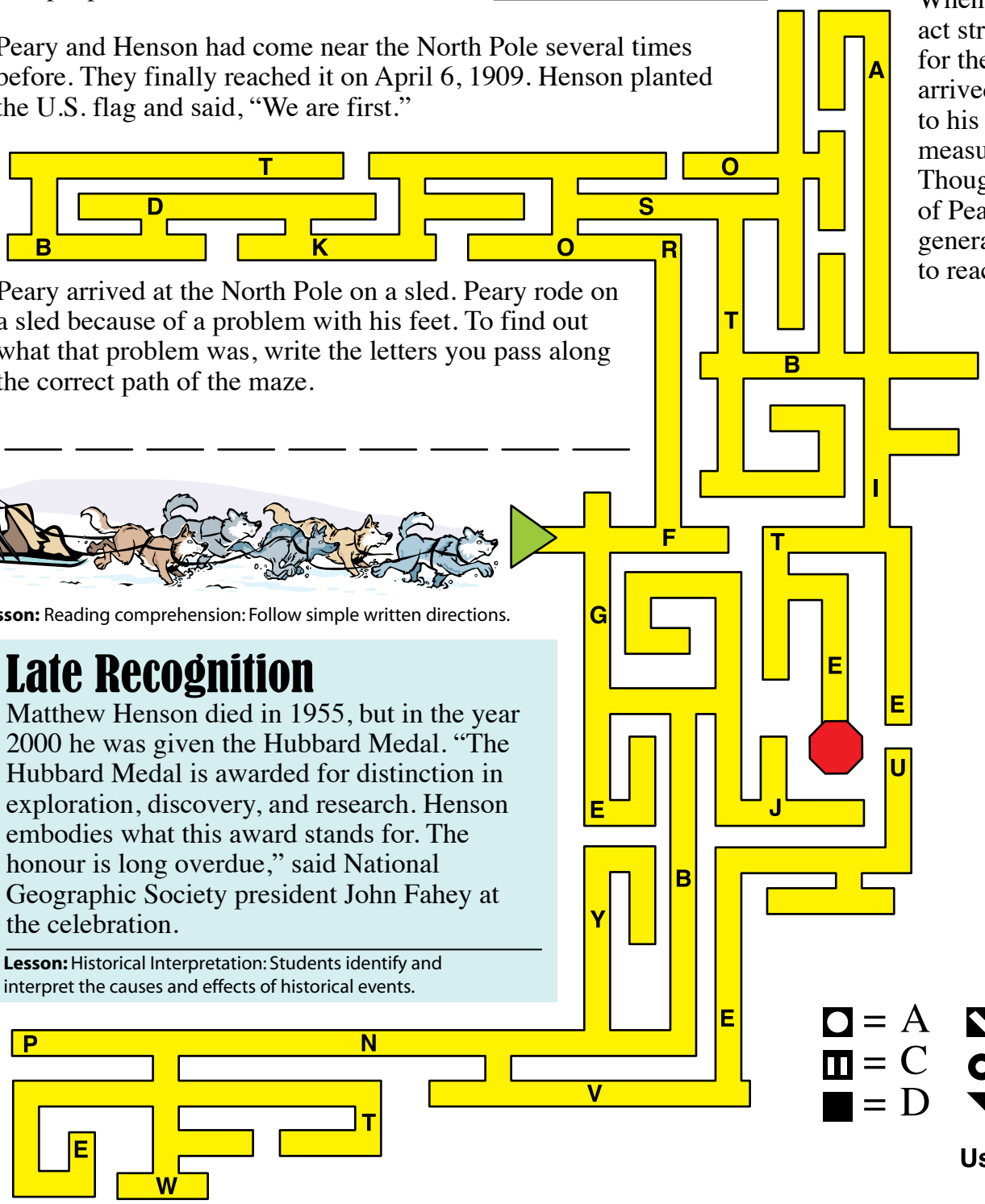
FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

AMAZING ADVENTURER

Most scientists agree that Admiral Robert E. Peary and his assistant, an African-American named Matthew A. Henson, and four Inuit guides were the first people to reach the North Pole.

Peary and Henson had come near the North Pole several times before. They finally reached it on April 6, 1909. Henson planted the U.S. flag and said, "We are first."



Peary arrived at the North Pole on a sled. Peary rode on a sled because of a problem with his feet. To find out what that problem was, write the letters you pass along the correct path of the maze.

Lesson: Reading comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Late Recognition

Matthew Henson died in 1955, but in the year 2000 he was given the Hubbard Medal. "The Hubbard Medal is awarded for distinction in exploration, discovery, and research. Henson embodies what this award stands for. The honour is long overdue," said National Geographic Society president John Fahey at the celebration.

Lesson: Historical Interpretation: Students identify and interpret the causes and effects of historical events.

An Amazing Accomplishment

In 1906, President Roosevelt awarded the Hubbard Medal to Peary for reaching the farthest point north, 175 miles (282 km) from the Pole.

Having come close to reaching the North Pole three years before, Peary and Henson set out again in 1909.

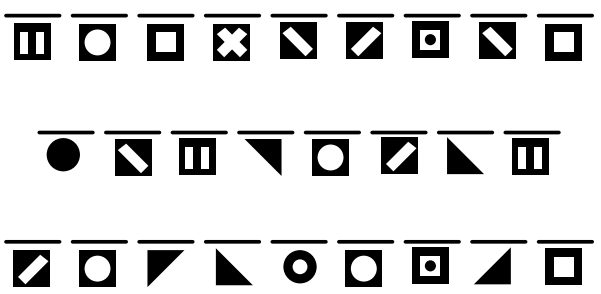
On April 6, Henson was acting as the trailbreaker, traveling ahead of the other members of the expedition.

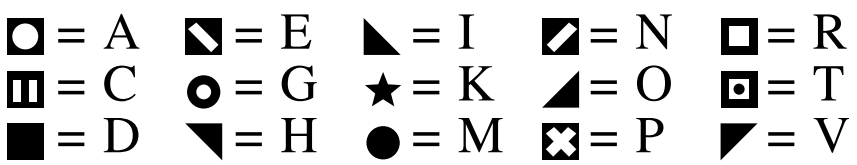
When Henson's compass began to act strangely, he stopped and waited for the rest of the group. He had arrived at a point, which according to his latitude and longitude measurements, was the North Pole. Though he arrived 45 minutes ahead of Peary, for years Peary was generally regarded as the first person to reach the North Pole.

Inuit people had lived in the Arctic region near the North Pole for thousands of years, but some think it unlikely they ventured all the way to the North Pole because of its distance from the open water where the Inuit hunted and fished.

Henson and Peary

Henson's parents died when he was a young boy. At age 12, he went to sea working as a cabin boy. Eventually, Henson got a job working as a clerk in Washington, D.C. and met Robert E. Peary. In 1888, Peary hired Henson to be his personal assistant on an expedition to Nicaragua. After that, Peary hired Henson to join him on his next expeditions to the Arctic. Henson brought these valuable skills listed here.





Use the secret code to discover the hidden words.