

# Book Unit: Painter & Ugly – Junior Iditarod and A Study in Friendship Among Competitors

**Developed by:** Jen Reiter, 2014 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™; created January, 2016

**Discipline / Subject:** Reading – Language Arts

**Topic:** Reading, Language Arts

**Grade Level:** 1-4; others with modification

## **Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:**

Painter and Ugly by Robert J. Blake

Author Site: <http://robertjblake.com>

Robert J. Blake Introductory Video: <http://robertjblake.com/videos/>

Junior Iditarod Introductory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYWc-MZpT3w>

Junior Iditarod Sportsmanship Award Story: <http://itteacheronthetrail.com/2014/02/24/in-the-history-books/>

## **Lesson Summary:**

The students will explore the picture book Painter and Ugly by Robert J. Blake. They will be introduced to new vocabulary and explore what friendship means. They will learn factual information about the Junior Iditarod and ways that the mushers demonstrate friendship and sportsmanship to each other even though they are competitors.

**Standards Addressed: (Local, State, or National)**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1

Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3

Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. TLW identify literature-based and content-based vocabulary.
2. TLW make text-to-self connections to a text.
3. TLW make observations about the traits of friendship and their peers.
4. TLW read, discuss, and analyze related fiction and non-fiction texts.

**Assessment:**

Students can be assessed on their participation in class discussions as well on their journal writing and award presentation.

## **Procedural Activities:**

### **Day One:**

1. Share with the students the video shared on Robert J. Blake's website.
2. Tell the students that above all else, Painter and Ugly is the story of a remarkable friendship. Have the students brainstorm ideas about what friendship means and ways in which friends demonstrate friendship. Depending on the age of your students, you could brainstorm as a class and record their answers, they could work with a partner to generate ideas first, or they could work independently.
3. You may want to introduce the literature-based vocabulary at this point, prior to reading the book. Students could work with a partner to try to read the words and match the appropriate meaning to the word as a puzzle. Review the correct answers as a class.
4. Share the story with the students. Depending on the level of your students and the number of copies of books you have available, the book could be a shared read aloud, a partner read, or an independent read.
5. Have the students revisit their brainstorm list of ways friends show they care about each other. See if any of the methods they discussed appeared in the book demonstrated by Painter and Ugly.
6. Have the students add to their list the ways Painter and Ugly showed their friendship for each other.
7. Students should make a text-to-self connection in their journals describing their best friend and a time that their friend showed them how much they mean. Remind them they are writing about something their friend did for them!
8. If time allows, students can play a memory matching game with the content-related vocabulary cards, matching the words to the photos that match.

### **Day Two:**

1. Ask the students to recall the final setting of the book, Painter and Ugly.
2. Have them reread, or reread for them, the section of the book that takes place at the Junior Iditarod race. (Beginning on the page that begins, "Then came Junior Iditarod race day –" through to the end.)
3. Ask the students to find words that describe the setting of the race. Encourage them to find words that use all five senses. What would it be like to be there to experience it?
4. Let the students know that the Junior Iditarod is a real event that takes place every year the week before the Iditarod. Share the Junior Iditarod video with them.
5. Tell the students that even though the kid mushers who run the Iditarod are competitors they are also friends who support and help each other. In fact, each year, one musher is chosen to receive a prize for demonstrating kindness to one of his or her fellow competitors. This is known as the Sportsmanship Award.
6. Share with them the story of how Kevin Harper won this award in 2014. They may be interested to know that Kevin went on to win the Junior Iditarod the following year!

7. Have the class create a working definition of sportsmanship. A quick Google Search reveals this definition:

***Sportsmanship is defined as ethical, appropriate, polite and fair behavior while participating in a game or athletic event. When a basketball player plays by the rules, is fair to his opponent and is gracious when he loses, this is an example of sportsmanship.***

8. Ask the students to make a comparison between friendship and sportsmanship. What are the similarities and differences?
9. Tell the students that they will be creating their own version of a Sportsmanship Award. They could use traditional pen and paper to draw an award. If laptops or tablets are available, using a digital painting or drawing program may allow the students to present multiple awards to their classmates.
10. Encourage the students to think of a classmate or other friend who deserves an award. Ask them to think of a specific incident. Have the students make a presentation of their award to this special friend and tell the class the story behind it. Note: This could become an ongoing program. Encourage the students to continually look for and recognize examples of good sportsmanship in others. Perhaps you could host a mini- awards presentation every week or every other week.

### **Materials Students Need:**

Anchor Text: Painter and Ugly by Robert J. Blake for the class, individuals, or partners

Journals

Literature-based vocabulary cards, cut

Content-based memory matching game

Junior Iditarod Sportsmanship Award story viewable online or printed

Computer or device with access to an online or app based painting and drawing program.

### **Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:**

Videos and websites as listed in Teacher Material section

Online or app based painting and drawing program such as Drawing Pad or Doodle Buddy

### **Other Information:**

The Iditarod also awards yearly Sportsmanship Awards, so there is a natural tie into the Iditarod.

This book could be included in a Text Set or as an introductory book for a bigger unit. See attached suggestions.

**Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities:**

- An alternative to having the students write in their journal on day one, is to integrate with an art lesson. Have the students explore the Sketchbook portion of Robert J. Blake's website that features the original sketches from the book. The students could then sketch a portrait of their best friend.
- As a final wrap up, the students could think about what happened to the other friends who lived with Painter and Ugly on the island. What was their fate? Did they also join a race team? Maybe an Iditarod team? Did they become a pet? Were they used for skijoring or some other dog powered sport? Have them write the story of another of Painter and Ugly's friends.
- It could be really fun to have the kids role-play the race scene!

Painter and Ugly  
Suggested Discussion Questions

1. How did Painter and Ugly get their names according to the story? Why would someone name a dog Ugly?
2. How can you tell Painter and Ugly are best friends? How do they demonstrate their friendship towards each other? Do you feel like they are equal? Or is one more of a leader and one more of a follower? Think about your best friend. What do you do to show your friend you value his or her friendship? Are you two equal? Or do you have a leader and a follower?
3. Predict: Why did Jake not come back? What could have prevented him from returning to his dogs?
4. Why was Painter happy to go with the man on the boat? When did he change his mind about wanting to go?
5. Look carefully at the painting of Painter in his dog house in his new dog log. How is he feeling? How can you tell?
6. How does Painter know his new musher is not happy with him? How did Painter end up securing his lead dog role?
7. If there are 200 dogs on 20 teams, how many dogs does each Junior Iditarod musher have?
8. Why didn't Painter rest at the checkpoint for the Junior Iditarod race?
9. Explain how the two friends managed to get reunited during the race.
10. Why do you think "people will talk about that race forever?"

Painter and Ugly Text Sets  
Grades 2, 3, 4

*Robert J. Blake Author Study*

Anchor Text: Painter and Ugly by Robert J. Blake

You could address a text set based on the books of Robert J. Blake in three ways:

- Sled Dog/Alaska based books - include Swift, Togo, and Akiak
- Dog Books – include Swift, Togo, Akiak, Dog, Riptide, and Santa Paws
- All Books – chose any and all books from this author

Additional Texts:

- Robert J. Blake Sketchbooks – Several of his sketchbooks are located on his website including those for Painter and Ugly, Togo, and Akiak. Students can get an insight into the stories behind some of the drawings from the books.
- Biography: <http://www.penguin.com/author/robert-j-blake/233285>

*Junior Iditarod Text Set*

Anchor/Motivational Text: Painter and Ugly by Robert J. Blake

Additional Texts:

- Eye on the Iditarod: Aisling's Quest by Hope Marston – Aisling is an eleven year old girl with her eyes set on competing in the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. This is a great insight into what it takes to raise, train, and compete with sled dogs. You can find a unit created about this book here: <http://iditarod.com/teacher/aislings-quest-and-a-goal-for-students/>
- Iditarod Dream: Dusty and His Sled Dogs Compete in Alaska's Junior Iditarod by Ted Wood - a photo essay type book following a young Junior Iditarod musher.
- Dashing Through the Snow: The Story of the Junior Iditarod by Sherry Shahan – this book is hard to locate, but you frequently find it used on Amazon.
- Junior Iditarod Winner from Scholastic - <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/iditarod/junior/index.asp?article=winner2008>
- Junior Iditarod Video from Alaska Public Media - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYWc-MZpT3w>
- Racing the Junior Iditarod from Outside Magazine – profiles Noah Pereira after he won the 2013 Junior Iditarod –he is running his rookie Iditarod in 2016 <http://www.outsideonline.com/1914231/racing-junior-iditarod>

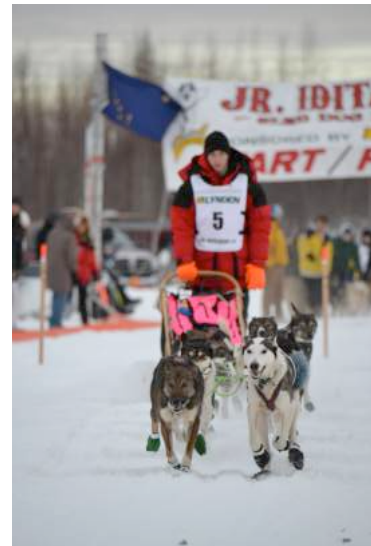
Literature Based Vocabulary Matching Activity: Run one set per partner set. Cut apart boxes.

|            |                                             |
|------------|---------------------------------------------|
| harmony    | Combining musical notes into something nice |
| howled     | When an animal made long cries              |
| hauled     | Pulled or dragged with force                |
| surrounded | Circled all around                          |
| commands   | Orders or directions                        |
| distracted | Unable to concentrate                       |
|            |                                             |



|               |                                                              |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| impressed     | Respected or admired                                         |
| approaching   | Coming nearer                                                |
| no-man's land | The very end of the trail – you can't pass once you are here |
| required      | Needed                                                       |

Junior Iditarod



dog box



dog lot



lead dog



starting chute



sled runners



checkpoint



dog tags



haw



gee

