

To Disqualify or Not?

A Lesson in Character Building and Opinion Writing

Developed by:

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Discipline / Subject:

Language Arts—Writing and Character Development

Topic:

Opinion Writing and Character Development

Grade Level:

Intermediate Grades—3rd, 4th, and 5th

Adapted for 1st, 2nd, 6th, 7th, and 8th

Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:**Terrie Henke's 8 Traits of Iditarod**

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/8-traits-of-iditarod-character-ed/>

Insider Video of Brent Sass--<http://iditarod.com/race/?vid=103013>

Kid Blog—www.kidblog.org

Iditarod 2016 Rules-- <http://d3r6t1k4mqz5i.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/2016-RACE-RULES.pdf?50a80c>

Lesson Summary

In this lesson students will write an opinion blog post about whether or not the Iditarod Trail Committee should have disqualified Brent Sass for having an iPod on the trail. Students will use the 8 traits of Iditarod and the Iditarod rules to guide them in their writing.

Standards Addressed: Common Core State Standards

1. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.A

Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.B

Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.C

Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., *for instance, in order to, in addition*).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.D

Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will take a stance on an issue and write a short opinion piece supporting their views.
2. Students will use proper grammar and punctuation in their writing.
3. Students will read their classmates writing pieces and provide feedback (comments) to support or challenge their stance.

Assessment:

The blog post will serve as an assessment of the students' ability to take a stance, organize their thoughts, support their views, and post to the class blog.

Procedural Activities

1. Introduce the lesson by telling students they will be writing short opinion pieces. First you will write on all together, and then they will write one on their own.
2. Each student should receive an OREO handout. OREO = opinion, reason, evidence, restate opinion. Give the students the prompt:
 1. Begin by talking about the 8 Traits of Iditarod: innovation, determination, integrity, optimism, respect, attitude, team work, and diligence. Use the pre-made posters on the Iditarod education portal to guide students through the traits and how they relate to Iditarod.
 2. Discuss what traits students see in each other, and then what traits they see in their mushers.
 3. Have students watch the Iditarod Insider video on Brent Sass being disqualified from the 2015 Iditarod. Also, have students read and examine the rule which states that mushers are not allowed to have 2-way communication devices.
 4. Students should discuss in small group whether they believe Brent should have been disqualified or not. Then, come together as a whole class to discuss the topic. In the discussion include how form and write a short opinion piece. Students should receive an "Oreo" writing handout; the handout should be completed as a class. OREO = Opinion, reason, evidence, restate opinion.
 5. Once students have had time to discuss the topic as a class give them each the "To Disqualify or Not?" handout

Materials Students Need:

Rule 35 and 8 Traits of Iditarod Handout

OREO Handouts (whole class and individual)

Blog Post Wall Display Handout (if you are not posting on KidBlog)

Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:

Insider Video of Brent Sass--<http://iditarod.com/race/?vid=103013>

Kid Blog—www.kidblog.org

Other Information:**Adapt for Primary Grades:**

Begin by discussing what happens when students break a classroom rule or a school rule. Then, discuss how sometimes mushers make mistakes too, and talk about Brent's mistake. As a class, or small group, have students decide whether or not Brent should have been disqualified or not.

Adapt for Middle School Grades:

I suggest having them learn about Brent's 2015 race, and have them research another athlete who also broke a rule in their sport. Did the sports player demonstrate integrity and respect like Brent, or were they dishonest? Students can then compare and contrast the two situations or write an opinion piece about either the sport player or Brent Sass.