

Togo vs. Balto Opinion Writing

Developed by: Jim Deprez

Discipline / Subject: Reading & Writing

Topic: Opinion Writing with Character Traits

Grade Level: 2-4

Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:

Picture Book - Togo by Robert J. Blake

Chapter Book - Balto and the Great Race by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel

Writing Series - Units of Study by Lucy Calkins - specifically the Opinion Writing book

Graphic Organizer for character traits

Stencils of a huskie head and paws (optional)

Lesson Summary:

- Start by reading aloud the picture book of Togo
- As it's read, write down character traits of Togo that are discovered, and examples of them on chart paper
- Read aloud the story of Balto - will take a few days to a week
- As it's read, write down character traits of Balto that are discovered, and examples of them on chart paper
- Students then form an opinion, and choose a dog
- After choosing a sled dog, students choose character traits that describe the lead dog and record them on their graphic organizer
- This then forms their thesis statement for their piece
- Students then refer back to the books to find as many examples of these character traits as possible to help defend their opinion
- The number of traits determine the number of paragraphs in the body of the writing
- Next, the students provide some background information to include in the introduction of their piece so that people unfamiliar with the story gain understanding
- Students then finish their writing by restating their thesis statement in the conclusion and have the option to provide counter examples against the other dog
- Finally, students have completed the rough draft, then they go through the entire writing process of revising, editing and writing a final draft
- Revising and editing can be done with the teacher or a peer
- Once final draft is finished, students design their own dog head based on shapes and patterns cut out ahead of time by the teacher

Standard's Addressed: (Local, State, or National)

1. Ohio State writing standard W.3.1 - Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons. b. Provide reasons that support the opinion. c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons. d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

2. Ohio State writing standard W.3.4 With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
3. Ohio State writing standard W.3.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 3.)
4. Ohio State writing standard W.3.6 With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills), as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
5. Ohio State reading standard 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.

Learning objectives:

1. Students will use the information and character traits learned about the dogs to write a 5-paragraph opinion piece on who they feel was the more important sled dog

Assessment:

Using the Lucy Calkins rubric for assessing opinion writing, the teacher will determine level of understanding for each student on opinion writing

Procedural Activities

1. Teacher must have a writers workshop type format in place so students know how to revise and edit their writing
2. Students need to have read other information about the Great Serum Run to have background information to include in the introduction
3. Students need to have examples of the dog heads to see a finished example

Materials Students Need:

- Togo/Balto character trait graphic organizer
- Pencil
- Notebook or lined paper
- Stencils of dog head and paws

Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:

- iPads or computers and internet to help further research on Togo & Balto

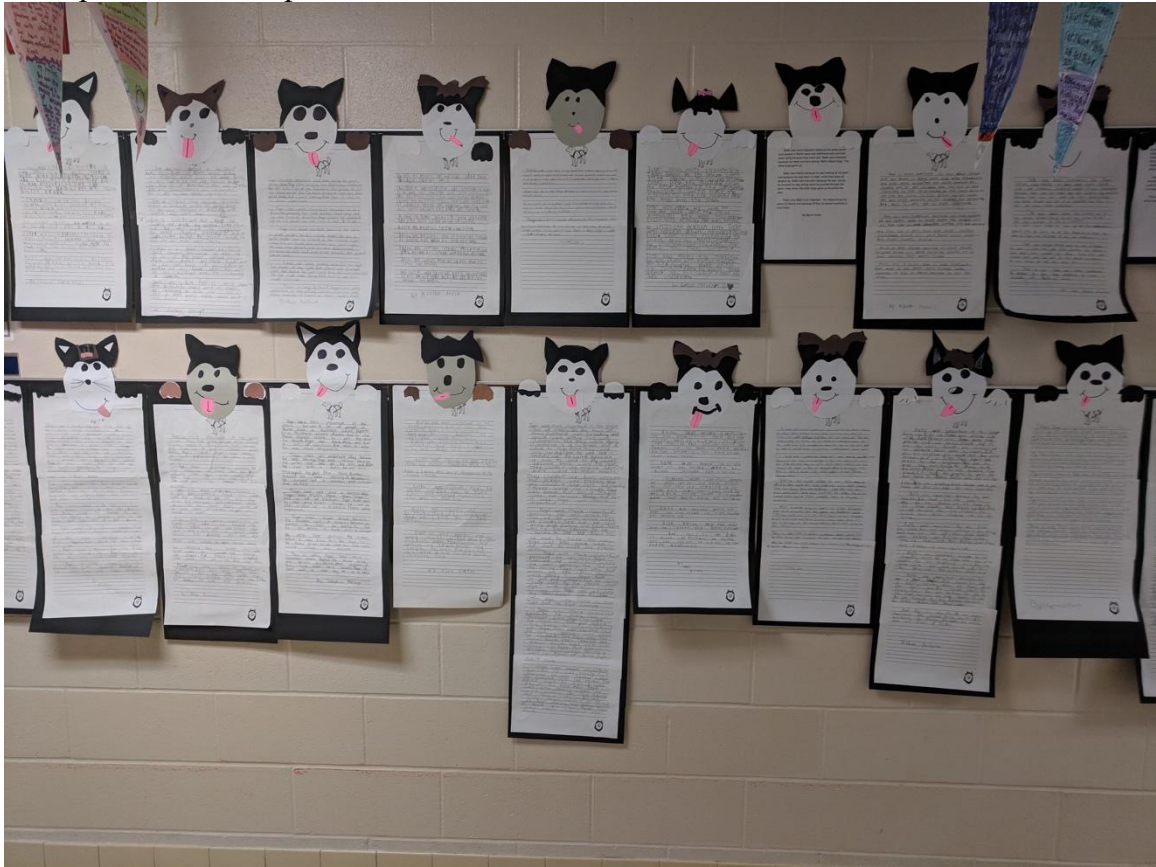
Other Information

- This lesson can be easily adapted to other grade levels based on teacher discretion
- I have used this lesson teaching 2nd grade as well as 3rd

Modifications for special learners/ Enrichment Opportunities

- Differentiation for students is based on the number of character traits chosen
 - Higher students are asked to find more (4) traits and examples
 - Lower students are asked to find fewer (2) traits & examples

Examples of finished products:



The Following page is the planning/brainstorming page to distribute to students:

Balto



Togo



What was special about these two dogs?
List the character traits below!

NEXT PAGE: Student planning sheet – the character trait goes on the top of the bubble, and the evidence from the story goes below:



Balto
vs.
Togo



