

Lesson Title:	Training Time: “Harness Up!” for Reading Stamina
Background Information	
Created By:	Kate Newmyer, Seabrook, TX, 2024 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™
Grade Level/ Subject:	K-5 Reading 6-12 English Language Arts, Science, History, or any content that depends on “reading to learn”
Learning Objectives/ Essential Questions:	How can I evaluate myself to determine my strengths and weaknesses as a reader?  What are the factors I need to be successful at reading for long periods of time?  How do mushers train their young sled dogs for strength and stamina?
Standards Addressed:	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) ELA.K-8.5 <i>Developing and sustaining foundational language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking—self-sustained reading. The student reads grade-appropriate texts independently. The student is expected to self-select text and read independently for a sustained period of time.</i>
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student notebooks &amp; pencils</li> <li>• Iditarod Education recommended books: <a href="#">Recommended Reading Lists – Iditarod</a></li> <li>• A variety of reading materials—fiction books in various genres, nonfiction texts, or the texts used in your curriculum</li> <li>• Photos: a) Puppies in harness, b) Iditarod race veterans in harness—see post</li> </ul> <p>Included at the end of this lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kate’s Favorite Iditarod and Sled Dog Books</li> <li>• “Harness Up!” Cards with Training Plan Bookmark-- make one set for each student.</li> <li>• Training Log Chart—make one for your classroom, or use as individual logs</li> <li>• Suggested Stamina anchor charts</li> <li>• Sample reading survey questions</li> </ul> <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorful Markers</li> <li>• Pillows, plush dogs</li> <li>• Headlamps or flashlights</li> </ul>

## Procedure

### Engagement:

It's Fall, and that means training time for young sled dogs. It's also training time for readers getting ready for a year of learning. Research shows that one of the most important skills for future success is reading stamina. In [Dogs on the Trail](#), Braverman writes, "we focus on building consistency and strength." (p. 39) With the help of the [Iditarod Education Recommended Books](#), or using my list of favorite sled dog books, included below, you can help your students build consistency and strength in reading.

Step 1: Show your students the two photos side by side or one after the other. Share that one photo represents young sled dogs on fall training runs, and the other photo represents elite canine athletes prepared to complete the 1,000-mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. What do they notice? How are the dogs similar and different? What do they wonder?

Step 2: Ask your students what they know about stamina. Ensure that students have a strong understanding of the definition: stamina means being able to do something with focus for a long period of time. Do they use stamina in other parts of their lives? What helps them stay focused? What helps them get through the hard parts? What do they think Iditarod mushers and their dogs do to help them have stamina on the long race? Answers might include having a goal, enjoying what you are doing, self-awareness when you become unfocused, having skills and tools to overcome challenges, getting support from other readers or a teacher, etc.

Step 3: Share that you will be working on reading stamina. Right now, they are in training to become better readers. Help students understand that reading stamina will enable them to have a better understanding of the world around them, and for older students, will benefit them in college and jobs. Stamina for sled dogs and mushers means they have the physical ability and desire to complete the Iditarod.

### Lesson:

Note: As the lesson unfolds, use the steps for any length of time and at all points of the year that you feel is best for your students. Sled dog training takes many months. This lesson can be a target of your elementary reading block for however long you need, or you can follow these steps throughout the year. For HS teachers, consider using this lesson for end-of-class reading time to give students focus and goals.

#### Step 1: Student Reflection

Give students a reading survey. A sample survey is included at the end of this lesson. You can use any or all of the questions in either digital, oral, or written form, or add your own.

This step will help develop student self-awareness of their reading habits, likes or dislikes, and goals. Remind students that sled dogs have preferences just like they do. The goal is to become good racers/readers.

#### Step 2: Determining a Purpose

Grades K-8:

Just Right Books. Ask, what makes a "just right book?" Create a chart to record factors like, the blurb/cover looked interesting, it is a book in the same series/by an

author I've read, the reading level is right for me, or I want to learn more about the topic, etc. Share Iditarod-themed books with your students and talk about how each book is a just right book for someone, based on genre, level, content, etc. Then share that it is important to have a purpose when you get ready to read. Does that change their definition of what a "just right book" is?

**Grades 9-12:**

**Approaching Your Text.** In these grades, students may already have an assigned text to read, but they may not be able to clearly articulate the purpose, or training goal, for reading it. For a few minutes with a partner or small group, have students discuss the question, what is my purpose in reading this text today? What am I training for? As a teacher, your purpose may be to examine a literary exemplar of a genre, period, or style, or to utilize a textbook and its tools to study history, science, math or other concepts. Then bring students back together and let them share out responses, guiding them toward your intended goal. Have students write the "training goal" in their notebooks prior to reading their text.

**Step 3: Setting Goals**

First, create an anchor chart (such as the examples included) with your students to determine what having stamina looks like and doesn't look like, for both readers and sled dogs in training.

**Step 4: Building Stamina on Daily Training Runs**

Tell students that the first puppy training runs or walks are usually short, and everyone is back home before breakfast. Before reading time or diving into your text, set a timed goal appropriate for your students. Each day, set an incrementally longer amount of time. Use a timer such as the one at [classroomscreen.com](http://classroomscreen.com) and display it for students. You can also display their reading purpose on the screen or make sure they have it visible on their desks.

Mushers take young dogs out multiple times a day in various combinations. Consider having students read multiple times a day or class period, even outside of your normal reading block; assign reading buddies or partners, confer with individual students during morning or bell-ringer time, or make this part of your small group or cooperative learning planning. The goal is to instill in students that reading matters and it takes consistency to build stamina, which makes it more fun.

**Step 5: Training Plan Bookmark and "Harness Up!" Cards**

Before students read, have them place the bookmark at a goal place in their reading. Model this for your students with your favorite Iditarod book. Show them how to refer to the bookmark for tips to stay focused. The harnessed sled dog image is there to remind them they are in training! As students read, they can keep a set of "Harness Up!" cards close by to engage with their reading. Model for your students how to use the cards during a read-aloud or guided whole-class reading of a section of your text. When the timer rings, students respond to a question—one you've chosen, or allow them to choose it. Students can write short answers in their notebooks or share on a sticky note on a class bulletin board.

**Assessment:**

Celebrate  
Students can record stamina growth in their notebook or use the included training log. Alternatively, use the training log to record class stamina growth. Then have

	<p>students compare over a period of time such as a week, several weeks, or quarter, to review their progress and set goals for the future. Consider giving all or part of the survey again.</p> <p>Sled dog puppies love their delicious snacks at the end of a training run. Many easy, low-to-no-cost rewards exist for students to celebrate progress in reading stamina. You might consider getting a stash of dog paw stickers (see resources) to reward individual students. Class rewards might include slipper day or plush dog day when a goal is reached. Many mushers arrive at checkpoints during the Iditarod in the middle of the night, so have students bring musher headlamps or flashlights to read with as they reach their stamina goals.</p>
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Notes:

<p>Enrichment/ Reinforcement Suggestions:</p>	<p>Take your students down different trails:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be sure to model reading aloud to your students, including in high school. Model strategies for working through difficult words or passages.</li> <li>2. Have students partner-read and work through difficult words and passages together. Model using the “Harness Up!” cards, taking turns being the Asker and Answerer, or answer the questions together.</li> <li>3. Students can opt to read aloud to the class for a few minutes. Sled dog leader training takes place with an experienced lead dog showing the way.</li> </ol> <p>Make your reading stamina training spaces interesting for growing readers. Consider getting some thrift store pillows, inexpensive fleece fabric, or other cozy accessories, and gradually introduce these as rewards while students are building their stamina. Make clear to students how to earn a pillow and/or read around the room.</p> <p>For HS students, encourage them to visit their school or local library to find related texts, then give rewards for a presentation or leading a quick class discussion. For example, students can read a biography of a historical figure, mathematician, scientist, or artist, or dive into a narrower topic.</p>
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<p>Other:</p>	<p>Resources: <a href="https://www.amazon.com/paw-print-stickers">Amazon.com : paw print stickers</a></p> <p>Blair Braverman and Quince Mountain, <u>Dogs on the Trail: a Year in the Life</u>. New York: Ecco, 2021.</p> <p>“Five easy strategies for building reading stamina from day 1.” Primary Planet. <a href="https://theprimaryplanet.com/building-reading-stamina/">https://theprimaryplanet.com/building-reading-stamina/</a> Accessed July 10, 2023.</p> <p>Kittle, Penny. <u>Book Love: Developing Depth, Stamina, and Passion in Adolescent Readers</u>. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Portsmouth: Heinemann, Inc., 2012.</p>
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Puppy Walks. Photo Credit: Terrie Hanke





Joanna Jagow, Ceremonial Start, Campbell Airstrip, 2023. Photo Credit: K. Newmyer

# 2024 Teacher on the Trail™ Kate's Favorite Iditarod and Sled Dog Books

## Picture Books for All Ages

*Granite* by Susan Butcher

*Born to Pull: The Glory of Sled Dogs* by Bob Cary

*Big Enough Anna: The Little Sled Dog Who Braved the Arctic* by Pam Flowers

*Doggie: The Playful Pup Who Became a Sled Dog Hero* by Pam Flowers

*Togo & Balto: The Dogs who Saved a Town* (Animalographies series) by Jodie Parachini et. al.

Kamik Series, by Donald Uluadluak and Qin Leng: *Kamik: An Inuit Puppy Story*, *Kamik's First Sled*, *Kamik Joins the Pack*, *Kamik Takes the Lead*



## Novels for Middle Grades

*Sojo: Memoirs of a Reluctant Sled Dog* by Pam Flowers

*Sled Dog School*, *Ice Dogs*, and *Dog Driven* all by Terry Lynn Johnson

*Dog Diaries #4: Togo* by Kate Klimo and Tim Jessell

*Balto of the Blue Dawn* (Magic Treehouse #26) by Mary Pope Osborne

*Dogsong* by Gary Paulson

## Informational Texts for Middle Grades

*Dogs on the Trail, a Year in the Life* by Blair Braverman

*Togo and Leonhard* by Pam Flowers

*Ordinary Dogs, Extraordinary Friendships* by Pam Flowers

*Storm Run: The Story of the First Woman to Win the Iditarod Sled Dog Race* by Libby Riddles and Shannon Cartwright

## Memoirs & Biographies for Upper Grades

*Alone Across the Arctic: One Woman's Epic Journey by Dog Team* by Pam Flowers

*Born to Mush* by Dallas Seavey

*Race Across Alaska* by Libby Riddles and Tim Jones

*One Second to Glory: The Alaska Adventures of Iditarod Champion Dick Mackey* by Lew Freedman

*No End in Sight: My Life as a Blind Iditarod Racer* by Rachael Scdoris

*Champion of Alaska Huskies: Joe Redington Sr., Father of the Iditarod* by Katie Mangelsdorf

## READING SURVEY SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. How do you feel about reading?
2. What is one book, author, or series you have really liked, and why?
3. Where do you like to read?
4. Would you rather read fiction stories or informational text?
5. What is your favorite subject in school?
6. How do you spend your free time?
7. How would you choose a book to read?
8. Do you have books at home? Would you say a lot or just a few?
9. Do you ever go to the public library or a bookstore?
10. What do you think people have to do to be a good reader?



→ Readers...

<p><u>With Stamina</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• eyes in book</li><li>• reading in your mind</li><li>• lots of books you've read</li><li>• reading all the words</li><li>• not bothering others</li><li>• work together through tricky parts</li></ul> <p>♥ ✓ 😊 🐾</p>	<p><u>Without Stamina</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• eyes looking everywhere</li><li>• making noises</li><li>• not many books</li><li>• out of your seat</li><li>• bathroom/drink</li><li>• playing with objects</li><li>• bothering others</li><li>• skip or give up on tricky parts</li></ul>	<p>🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 Sled Dogs 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾</p> <p><u>With Stamina</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• eyes + noses on the trail</li><li>• lots of miles + trails you've traveled</li><li>• Knowing the trail</li><li>• not bothering teammates</li><li>• working to get through tricky parts</li></ul> <p>🌿 🌿 🌿 🌿</p>	<p><u>Without Stamina</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• getting distracted</li><li>• not knowing many trails</li><li>• few trails traveled</li><li>• bothering other dogs</li><li>• chasing wildlife + getting tangled</li><li>• giving up on tricky parts</li></ul>
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### “Harness Up!” Card 1--Reflection

After reading, do I think this is a “just right” book? Why or why not?

What images enter my mind as I read?

What questions do I have about this book?



### “Harness Up!” Card 2—Connection

What connections can I think of between this book and something I already know?

Is this book similar to another book I’ve read?

Does this book connect with an experience I’ve had in my life?



### “Harness Up!” Card 3—Inferring

What is something I can say about the information, story, or characters so far?

Why do I think the author wrote this?

How does this information or character’s experiences change my understanding of the world?



### “Harness Up!” Card 4—Next Steps

How does this information add on to what I already know?

How will this story or information help me in my own work of reading, writing, or understanding of content?

What do I want to read next?



Training Plan:

**STAMINA**

I can...

1. Place this bookmark at a goal point in my reading today.
2. Read more minutes than I read yesterday.
3. Use my strategies to get through hard parts.
4. Celebrate my progress!

