

The Call of the Wild

by Jack London

(Published in 1903)

Approved for use in 8th grade

Summary of the Work:

Kidnapped from his family and sold as a sled dog in the harsh, cold north, Buck struggles for his life. He grows stronger and stronger and becomes the leader of all the other dogs. But at night, when he hears the howling of wolves, he realizes that someday he must answer the call of the wild.

Rationale:

In *The Call of the Wild* students may examine the point of view and its effect on the story. The conflicts that exist can be analyzed, and students can discuss the moral dilemmas the characters face. The rich setting created by London may also be reviewed. Its context provides for engaging classroom and small group discussion.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

This is a novel of "devolution" which traces the process of releasing Buck's savage, atavistic nature beneath its civilized veneer. Through the brutality of various human masters and the cunning of the other dogs he meets, Buck learns not only to adapt and survive his ordeal but also to prevail over the hostile wilderness; by the novel's end Buck is leading a pack of wolves in the Yukon. (Magill Book Review)

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

Jack London wrote before the Pulitzer and the Nobel Prizes and other writing awards were established. However, numerous movie, TV, radio, and stage versions have been and continue to be produced throughout the world. The popularity and the staying power of this timeless classic serve as concrete "awards" for this beloved story.

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 1120L
- Readability Level:

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: ([link](#))

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The issue of animal abuse (human-animal and animal-animal) is examined in this text.

Connection to the Curriculum:

This book addresses the conflicts of man vs. self, man vs. nature, and man vs. man. It introduces students to a classic American author from the turn of the century. It has action and adventure that draws the adolescent reader. The theme of returning to the primitive is unique.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

While studying *The Call of the Wild* students also are introduced to the author, Jack London. They may see a biography of his life that examines the turmoil that he faced. Other supplements to this book may include reading *To Build a Fire* by Jack London, *The Wolf and the Dog* by Marie do France, *The Hidden Life of Dogs* by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, *The Wolf Said to Francis* by A. G. Rochelle, *The Man Who Was a Horse* by Julius Lester, *Unsentimental Mother* by Sally Carrighar and *Long Duel* by Robert Murphy. The students may view the movie version of *The Call of the Wild* and compare and contrast the two versions.