

Tales from the Trail Storytelling and the Iditarod

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Discipline / Subject: Language Arts/Social Studies

Topic: Tales from the Trail/ Storytelling and the Iditarod

Grade Level: 4-12 (can be easily modified for younger grades)

Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:

Classroom visitors/presenters, like mushers, vets, handlers, and dogs, should be invited if possible to bring the stories alive. Local storytellers will also be excellent resources.

- <http://wiki.bssd.org/index.php/Storytelling> (storytelling unit from the Bering Strait School District)
- <http://jukebox.uaf.edu/site7/akmushing> (Incredible resource including slide shows of many historic mushers with audio recordings)
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eH1P36924NNmY2YjhfBi0K49iC6fL43j5-GSMT1-JF4/edit?usp=sharing> (story of legendary dog musher George Attla)
- <http://tinyurl.com/lunbax7> (the video of Jeff King)
- Winterdance by Gary Paulsen (non-fiction account by a rookie musher and accomplished nature writer)
- www.arcticentri.es.com (Anchorage based storytelling organization and event)
- map of the Iditarod trail (see iditarod.com)

Lesson Summary: Students will listen to accounts from primary/secondary sources, watch video clips, and read primary/secondary stories from the Iditarod. Then, they will either rewrite a historical tale from the trail with a fresh and unique perspective, or they will write their own original fictional account from the trail based on a historic event.

Standard's Addressed: (Local, State, or National) Alaska uses Common Core Standards, which have not been created yet for science or social studies. The state is in the process of revising curriculum for science and social studies. I have included applicable Language Arts standards from the Common Core.

1.10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 4–12 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

6. Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–12 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

7. Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

Anchorage School District's Social and emotional learning standards:

1A. Student demonstrates awareness of his/her emotions.

2D. Student demonstrates ability to set and achieve goals.

3A. Student demonstrates awareness of other people's emotions and perspectives.

4A. Student uses positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will read at a level which teaches individual terminology and vocabulary.
2. Students will listen to primary resources (either guest speakers, Gary Poulsen's Winterdance or video clips) to connect with the 1st person narration.
3. Students will watch an exciting and dangerous live video clip from Jeff King in Iditarod 2015.
4. Students will learn about historic events.
5. Students will learn about overcoming adversity and obstacles despite repeated challenges.
6. Students will integrate the shared stories to write their own fictional or historical tale from the trail.

Procedural Activities

1. First, using the resources above, teachers will share real stories from the trail.
2. I've included a URL of footage of Jeff King mushing down the Alaska Range with virtually snowless conditions in 2014. Teachers can show this video as a resource.
3. Teachers should share 3 to 4 stories or videos so that students get a feel for the atmosphere, mood, and tone of the Iditarod. A chapter or two from Winterdance by Gary Poulsen would be an excellent resource. Teachers can share slide shows from famous mushers like Joe Redington, Sr. at the jukebox website above from UAF. Arctic Entries also has videos of live storytelling events from Alaska.
4. If possible, the teacher should invite a local musher, veterinarian, dog handler, or dog team into the classroom for story telling.
5. Students may then choose to do some further research on their own.
6. Finally, students should write their own original story, modeling off a real historic event from the Iditarod. Have a map of the Iditarod trail available in the room or photocopies so that students can pick a geographic focus for their story and include relevant geographic details.
7. Time to publish! Students can share their stories with a partner, small group, or class. A display of the stories can be made. Students can illustrate the scene or use photography or drawing.

Assessments

To assess the short story, a rubric is attached at the end of this unit.

Materials Students Need:

The teacher will coordinate the stories for the unit. Students will need a pen and paper or a computer to write their own story.

Use the attached worksheets as a resource.

Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:

See resources section above.

Other Information:

The Anchorage Daily News and the Iditarod.com website have excellent stories from the trail for many mushers. Many mushers also have written autobiographic books or have autobiographies on their websites.

Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities:

Students who have difficulty writing can deliver the presentation orally. They may also want to illustrate their story. Recorded versions of the stories and slide shows are available online.



Tales from the Trail: Storytelling and the Iditarod

Directions: During this unit, you will hear several different stories about the Iditarod. During the stories, take notes below to practice listening for key details.

Your name _____ Date _____ Period _____



Story #1

- The storyteller's name: _____
 - Tell the storyteller's job or relation to the Iditarod: _____
 - What type of format the story came in: _____
 - Write two or three complete sentences summarizing the story told. Include interesting details about Alaska, the musher/team, and nature.

 - What obstacles did the team encounter?

 - How did the team overcome the obstacles?
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Story #2

- The storyteller's name: _____
 - Tell the storyteller's job or relation to the Iditarod: _____
 - What type of format the story came in: _____
 - Write two or three complete sentences summarizing the story told. Include interesting details about Alaska, the musher/team, and nature.
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- What obstacles did the team encounter?
 - How did the team overcome the obstacles?



Story #3

- The storyteller's name: _____
- Tell the storyteller's job or relation to the Iditarod: _____
- What type of format the story came in: _____
- Write two or three complete sentences summarizing the story told. Include interesting details about Alaska, the musher/team, and nature.

- What obstacles did the team encounter?

- How did the team overcome the obstacles?

Tales from the Trail

Storytelling and the Iditarod

Adversities and Obstacles planning/brainstorming

In the stories you heard about the Iditarod, what are some difficulties and obstacles the characters had to go through?

How did the characters cope with the problem?

What do you think the hardest part of doing the Iditarod would be? Why?

What's a tough obstacle you've had to overcome? How did you do it?



Time to Write!

To get into the mindset of a musher, and to practice creative writing, you will choose to either:

A: rewrite a story we heard from a different perspective. Write from another dog musher, a dog, a vet, a person who lives in a checkpoint, a spectator, or an impartial observer.

B. write your own creative story about the Iditarod.

Stories need to include creative details, an obstacle that is overcome and real historic or geographic details. Stories should be two to four pages.

Tales from the Trail **Storytelling and the Iditarod**

Prewriting for your story

Your name _____ Date _____ Period _____

1. Who is/are the main character(s) in your story?
2. How did you choose this character?
3. Will you have a limited or omniscient narrator? Why did you choose this style of narration?
4. What obstacle will your character encounter?

5. How will the character deal with the problem?
6. What type of describing details do you want to include?
7. Where on the trail do you want to the story to occur, and what real geographic details will you include?
8. How will the story end?

Tales from the Trail

Storytelling and the Iditarod/ Assessment

Score yourself using the following rubric. Then, your teacher will also score you after reading your story. Give yourself a score from 1 to 10, 10 being the highest score. Circle the score that matches best. Then, write a comment saying why. If you give yourself a 1-5, that means it was missing or underdeveloped. 7 means you had the basics. 8 would mean you did well. 9 or 10 means you mined a gold nugget! You did your best possible.

1. Style of narration. Did you pick a consistent narration style? Did it work well for your story?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

2. Did you include good details that helped the reader to visualize your story?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

3. Did include a clear obstacle that your team overcame?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

4. Did you follow your teacher's directions on page limit, formatting, and publishing?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

5. Overall, how did you do?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments: