

A Guide for Using

The Call of the Wild

in the Classroom

Based on the novel written by Jack London

Written by Philip Denny



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Introduction

A good book can touch our lives like a good friend. Within its pages are words and characters that can inspire us to achieve our highest ideals. We can turn to it for companionship, recreation, comfort, and guidance. It can also give us a cherished story to hold in our hearts forever.

In *Literature Units*, great care has been taken to select books that are sure to become good friends. Teachers who use this unit will find the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas.

- Sample lesson plans
- Pre-reading activities
- A biographical sketch and picture of the author
- A book summary
- Vocabulary lists and suggested vocabulary activities
- Chapters grouped for study with each chapter section including a(n):
 - quiz
 - hands-on project
 - cooperative learning activity
 - cross-curricular connection
 - extension into the reader’s own life
- Post-reading activities
- Book report ideas
- Research ideas
- Culminating activity
- Three different options for unit tests
- Bibliography of related reading
- Answer key



We are confident this unit will be a valuable addition to your planning, and we hope your students will increase the circle of “friends” they have in books as you use these ideas.

The Call of the Wild

by Jack London

(Scholastic, 1993)

(Canada and UK; Maxwell Macmillan; AUS, Macmillan)

This is the story of Buck, a one-hundred-forty pound dog who lived in a lordly fashion in the Santa Clara Valley of California. His life changed drastically, completely, and forever when he was kidnapped, thrown on a train, and shipped to Seattle where he was then placed on a ship to Skagway. This was the time of gold fever, and dogs like Buck were in demand as sled dogs up in the Yukon Territory where they were needed to carry men and supplies back and forth from the sea port to the Klondike gold fields.

This story tells of Buck's adaptation to his new, hostile environment and how he reverts to his deep instincts for survival. He learns the way of the new type of men around him. No longer the lord of the manor, he is introduced to the law of the club and whip. These are the tools of the men who own him, and instant obedience prevents these weapons from being turned loose on him.

Along with the new type of owners who claim him in the gold country, there is also a new type of dog. These are not house dogs, but rather they are a throwback to primeval days of old where fighting to the death was the law of survival. Buck learns the new ways and comes to be a sled-team leader as his St. Bernard and shepherd heritage make him a formidable animal. His power comes in his strong mixture of size, speed, and intelligence.

Just before Buck loses touch with civilization and becomes a savage, primitive animal himself, he meets John Thornton who loves him and nurses him back to health. Buck will do anything for John Thornton, and John Thornton is in awe of Buck. Never has John seen such a dog as devoted as Buck. This is proven when "Black" Burton strikes John, only to have Buck leap upon him and tear his throat open. It is proven again when Thornton is swept into the life-killing rapids.

However, as Buck and John go further and further into the wilderness, the call of the wild comes to Buck from the dark forests, from the rivers, and from the earth itself. It is a call that Buck is increasingly drawn to, even if it means leaving his master, John Thornton.

While Buck is gone, yielding to this call, John Thornton and his partners are murdered by Indians. When Buck returns, he wreaks a vengeance on the Yeehats who killed his master. After mourning, he returns to the wild where he becomes leader of a wolf pack. He continues to pursue the Yeehats, and they create a legend about the Ghost Dog who roams at will and kills only Yeehats, and their legend includes the reason why.

Vocabulary Lists

Section 1

arbors	aristocrat	artesian well
conciliate	despatch	dominion
fawn	genial	impartial
imperiously	interlaced	morose
obscurely	perches	pervaded
progeny	resided	resolved
revelation	trice	uncouth
unkempt	veranda	wan

Section 2

antagonist	appeasement	arduous
belligerent	blunder	cadence
consternation	courier	diabolical
dignity	disconsolate	draught
forlorn	imperative	indiscretion
indispensable	intentness	instincts
malignant	primeval	primordial
scarlet	surged	vicarious

Section 3

abjectly	brute	compel
contemplation	convulsive	daunted
exultant	fang	slavered
grievously	jugular	malingering
mates	nocturnal	pandemonium
perplexed	poise	potent
precipitate	rashness	resiliency
	shirked	

Section 4

apprehensive	cajole	callowness
cell	cherish	chronic
clannish	commence	dismay
dwindle	fatigue	feigned
implore	indeterminate	interval
jaded	mongrel	recital
shorn	slovenly	superfluous
thoroughfare	unwieldy	

Section 5

abundance	communion	contagion
convalescence	demonstrative	entice
equilibrium	expediency	exploit
keenest	impede	indiscreet
lope	mandate	manifested
melancholy	ministrations	miscalculate
pertinacity	plethoric	pompous
quest	romp	stately
vigil	wiliness	