

Dogsong

by Gary Paulsen
Classroom Favorites



Teacher's Guide by Patricia Butler

A Perma-Bound Production

SYNOPSIS

Part One, "The Trance," begins one morning in the Eskimo village where fourteen year old Russel Susskit lives. The usual village sights and sounds—the snowmachines, his father's nicotine cough, the ubiquitous pictures of Jesus on the walls of his home—have a disturbing effect on Russel. They represent the influences of the Outside on his people. Everywhere Russel looks, he sees the infiltration and imposition of the modern white world on the traditions and customs of his village. Unable to express his feelings to his father, Russel is encouraged by his father to seek the advice and guidance of Oogruk, the blind sage of the village.

When Russel visits Oogruk, he steps into the past, for Oogruk, a living museum, has maintained the traditions of his people. His home is warmed and lit by a seal-oil lamp, old weapons and skin clothing line his walls, and up until the past two years Oogruk has hunted and travelled using a sled and a team of dogs. And what he has to offer Russel is knowledge of "the way it was." Russel learns that the oral tradition of songs and dances have been lost, even destroyed by the missionaries. The songs, according to Oogruk, are the essence of the people, the history of the people, the stories of the people. When one creates a song, one creates the self because the song is the individual's story, his experiences, his life.

The story of the songs leaves Russel with a longing to create his own song and a yearning to live the old way. And so he prepares the dogsled and the dogs for his first run. It is a difficult run in the beginning—Russel is dragged on his face for a quarter of a mile—but the incident leaves him with a sense of freedom and a bond with nature. During a second hunt, Russel learns to hunt by looking "inside the center" of his target. With a bow and several arrows, he kills ptarmigan and a caribou with ease. This is the beginning of Russel's song.

Four days later Russel attempts to hunt seal, but an arctic storm comes while he is out on the ice. Russel adroitly erects a makeshift shelter which protects him from the storm. But when the storm passes, he and the dogs get lost on a broken slab of ice which turns and changes his sense of direction. Using his harpoon, he maneuvers a block of ice in place to make a bridge, enabling him to lead the dogs to safety.

As village life settles into the long hours of darkness, Russel, with his father's permission, moves in permanently with Oogruk. Though his skills in hunting ptarmigan and rabbit have improved, he finds caribou and seal still a challenge. On one particular morning when Russel decides to hunt seal, Oogruk goes with him.

The two set out for what seems to be joint hunting experience, but before long Russel realizes that the journey is ending for Oogruk and just beginning for him. Once they get within a few miles of the sea, Oogruk demands that Russel leave him on the ice, for his death is near. He advises Russel to find himself, not by returning home but by heading north to find his manhood.

Part Two, "The Dreamrun," begins eighteen hours later when Russel stops, hunts and kills caribou, and sets up camp for the evening. From this point in the novel Russel's dreams and reality merge. The first dream is of a family, consisting of a man, woman, and two children. There is food, warmth, and happiness. Then the scene changes. The man who Russel recognizes as himself is hunting, tracking down a huge mammoth. And when he kills the beast, he sings a song of conquest. The dream ends.

Russel awakens. A storm is only two days away. The dogs want to run, and for six hours they do run with Russel at the helm but with the mind of the dog and the mind of the man becoming one. When the run finally ends, Russel sets up camp and finds an old stone lamp, which enables him to have warmth and light. With all the comforts of home, Russel dreams again. The second dream takes place in a village where the man (Russel) stops before returning home from the hunt. He is treated like an honored guest and shares his song with the people, and they, in turn, share theirs.

Russel awakens and after the storm he prepares the dogs to run. During the run he experiences the first stages of snow blindness, but he continues to run until he spies the tracks of a snowmachine. Then the real blends into the third dream which shows the man (Russel) trying to return home in a storm. The wife and children are without food and warmth. Their shelter is barely withstanding the gusts of wind blowing around and through their abode. The scene is of death and dying.

Russel finds the snowmachine, but it is unoccupied. With the aid of the dogs he finds a pregnant girl buried in the snow. She reminds him of the girl in his dreams. After he revives her, the dream begins again. This time the storm has finally passed. One of the dogs has to be shot because his feet are frozen. And then the run begins. The man is headed home, but when he arrives, there is no life. Only two bones are left.

When Russel awakens, the girl is staring at him. She tells him her story. Her name is Nancy and she is five months pregnant with no family, no home. Because she is told by the missionaries that she has sinned, she decides to leave her village to die. When fear grips her, she turns back, but the snowmachine is out of gas.

She starts to walk, but the cold overcomes her. She is doomed until Russel saves her and agrees to let her accompany him on his journey north.

The joint run begins, but after ten days they run out of food. Russel builds a shelter for Nancy and goes out to hunt. After six days of surviving on snow, he sees the tracks of a polar bear. After killing the bear (not without losing a dog and being attacked himself), Russel returns to find Nancy in a semi-death state. He revives her again, but this time the labor pains begin. The baby is born dead and Russel buries it on a hill. He returns to find Nancy ill. Five days pass and her condition has not improved. Russel knows what he must do—he must get Nancy to the village doctor. The novel ends with the two young people heading towards the village, towards the dream.

Part Three, "Dogsong," is Russel's song, the song of the dogs that have become a part of him and, therefore, are his life.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

With 40 books, over 200 magazine articles and short stories, and two plays to his credit, Gary Paulsen is one of the most prolific of America's contemporary authors. Born in 1939 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Paulsen turned to writing after working as a field engineer in the aerospace department of Bendix and Lockheed. When he found the job unchallenging, Paulsen entered the world of publishing by becoming an associate editor of a men's magazine in Hollywood, California.

While living in California, Paulsen worked as a film extra. In addition, he took up sculpting and won "Best in Show" at an exhibit in Santa Barbara. Torn between his love for writing and his love for wood carving, he chose writing, and for over a decade he has produced juvenile and adult fiction and nonfiction books and articles on hunting, trapping, farming, animals, medicine, and outdoor life.

Paulsen is presently involved in public readings, performances, and storytelling in small towns near his Minnesota farm.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Paulsen has received numerous awards and honors for his works:

- 1976 — Received the Central Missouri Award for Children's Literature
- 1980, 1981 — *The Green Recruit* was chosen one of New York Public Library's Books for the Teen Age.
- 1982 — *The Green Recruit* and *Sailing: From Jibs to Jibing* were recognized by New York Library.
- 1983 — *Dancing Carl* was selected one of American Library Associations's Best Young Adult Books.
- 1984 — *Tracker* was honored by American Library Association.
- 1985 — Received Society of Midland Authors Award for *Tracker*.
- 1986 — Received Newbery Honor Book Award for *Dogsong* which was also chosen one of Child Study Association of America's Children's Books of the Year.
- 1988 — Received Newbery Honor Award for *Hatchet*.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the elements of the quest story
2. To define man, woman, and home
3. To examine the importance of culture, traditions, and rituals in society
4. To analyze the importance of dreams in everyday life
5. To discuss the problems faced by adolescents
6. To assess modern man's compatibility with nature

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze Russel's initiation into the adult world
2. To create Eskimo fashions, tools, houses, and vehicles
3. To research and report on aspects of Eskimo life, culture, mythology, rituals, and traditions
4. To examine the relationship between Russel and Oogruk
5. To trace Russel's development into manhood
6. To predict an ending to the novel
7. To discuss Russel as a romantic hero
8. To summarize the plot of the novel
9. To choose a favorite character and support that character's actions in the novel
10. To contrast life for the villagers before and after the missionaries arrived in Alaska
11. To analyze mood and discuss examples from the text which show how Paulsen establishes mood
12. To define and illustrate selected Eskimo terms
13. To discuss the many themes presented in the novel
14. To examine similes and metaphors used by Paulsen

MEANING STUDY

aloof	falter	hummock	rebuke
anorak	forlorn	lope	trance
audible	gangline	mukluk	tundra
breechclout	gratitude	opaque	ulu
cache	grimace	parka	umiak
caribou	grit	protrude	wince
douse	gully	ptarmigan	wraith
exultation	harpoon	rancid	

COMPREHENSION STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does Russel mean by the "Outside"? Cite examples of how the Outside has affected the people of his village. (*The Outside refers to the white settlers who have done more than just move to Alaska. They have, in the name of progress, destroyed the culture and traditions of the people. Paulsen presents the following changes in village life:*
 - A. Russel's father smokes—a definite influence from the Outside.

- B. The people live in government dwellings or "boxes." (Boxes implies "cornered" or "cut off from" something.)
- C. Eskimo religion has been replaced by Christianity. (Russel states that his father believes in Jesus whose pictures—cut from magazines—are plastered all over the house.)
- D. People use snowmachines instead of dogsleds and generators instead of oil lamps.
- E. Villagers use guns to hunt instead of the tools of their ancestors. (Oogruk comments on the museum in town which displays the tools he uses.)
- F. People cook their food instead of eating it raw. And, according to Oogruk, people don't eat the eyes anymore.
- G. The missionaries have denounced the songs and dances of the people by labelling them evil and uncivilized.
- H. Rituals and traditions have been lost: TV has been introduced.
- [Students may find it interesting to debate the pros and cons of progress.]
2. Account for Russel's emotional confusion at the beginning of the novel.
(It is evident that Russel has reached puberty, a period in a young person's life when he/she is searching for a clearer definition of himself/herself. Russel is not only struggling with emotional and physiological changes, but he is wrestling with the changes that have taken place in his village. These changes have effaced his past which defines who he is. He is longing for knowledge of his past.
Is knowledge of one's past important? Explain.)
3. Contrast the descriptions of Oogruk's home to Russel's home. What is implied in the comparison?
(Here is an excellent example of tradition vs. change. Oogruk lives the "old" way without any of the modern conveniences. Russel's home is described as a government "box" with the comforts but without a trace of what makes the people who they really are.
Discuss the difference between a "house" and a "home.")
4. Analyze Oogruk's significance in the novel.
(Oogruk symbolizes wisdom and the past. As a symbol of wisdom, he is the accumulator of the knowledge that Russel needs in order to become the man he wants to be. He represents the past basically because he is one of the founders of the village and, therefore, instrumental in establishing the culture of the people. Finally, he is the father figure that Russel needs but cannot find in his own father.
What is the role of a father?)
5. Describe Russel's first run with the dogs.
(The first run begins with Russel being dragged on his face for a quarter of a mile and ends with his feeling a sense of power and a oneness with nature.)
6. What hunting rituals does Russel perform?
(Russel uses a bow and arrow for the first time when he hunts for hare and ptarmigan. Unable to make a hit until he "looks inside the center," Russel is able to kill whatever he hunts. And taking Oogruk's advice, he thanks each animal by putting food in its mouth.)
7. How does life change when the long darkness begins?
(People move in with each other for company and convenience.)
8. Why does Russel want to hunt seal?
(Oogruk needs oil for his lamp and the dogs need heavy meat.)
9. How is Oogruk's death significant?
(Oogruk is "in tuned" with nature and its cycles of birth-death-rebirth. Because of this, he knows when he will die. He goes back to nature and faces death with dignity and without fear. And, without the father figure, Russel is forced to make it on his own.)
10. Evaluate Oogruk's final words to Russel.
(The advice is "you must not go home." Oogruk realizes that in order for Russel to become a man he must "go it alone." Russel has to learn the universal lesson that being an adult is not based on age but on accepting one's responsibilities and depending on one's self.)
11. List the perils encountered by Russel on his quest.
(Russel encounters the following on his journey:
A. Snowstorms
B. Bear
C. Hunger, thirst, cold, and darkness
D. Fear
E. Loss of control [of dogs]
F. Emotions [sadness, confusion, etc.]
12. Identify the conflicts in the novel.
(Man vs. Nature—Russel vs. cold, animals
Man vs. Society—Russel and Oogruk's way of life vs. villagers'
Man vs. Himself—Russel's internal struggle with growing up and his evolving manhood)
13. Describe Russel's dreams. How do they merge into reality?
(See summary of novel.)
14. Examine Russel as a romantic hero.
(The typical romantic hero, young and innocent, travels on a perilous journey that forces him to encounter negative forces, beings, or animals which are out to destroy him. Sometimes magic is available to him, or an adult befriends him and guides him. At times he must use his own knowledge and skills to rescue himself or a "damsel in distress." The journey in a romance usually ends with the hero reaching his destination and being exalted for his achievements.
Russel fits this pattern perfectly.
[Name modern romantic heroes who fit the same pattern. Be sure to explain fully.]
15. What are the possible themes of the novel?
(The following themes can be used as subjects for speeches, essays, debates, poems, songs, or class discussions:
A. The Importance of Dreams
B. At what age is one mature enough to leave home?
C. Man needs to commune with nature
D. Experience makes the individual
E. Growing Up
F. What is adolescence?
G. Knowing one's history is/is not crucial

- H. *Ways Man Can Preserve His Environment*
- I. *Traditions Which Have No Meaning Today*
- J. *Personal Dreams/Goals*
- K. *Self-Knowledge is Self-Preservation*
- L. *Being Responsible*

16. Share your feelings about the novel.
(*Opinion*)
17. Are the characters and situations in the novel realistic? Explain.
(*Opinion*)
18. Is the ending appropriate? Explain.
(*Opinion*)

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Create a collage on *one* of the following topics: heroes, home, quest, manhood, family, tradition, or nature.
2. Write a quest story about your life. What is your quest? What preparations have you undergone? What dangers must you overcome? What villains or obstacles will you meet? What do you hope to gain at the end of your quest?
3. Design a miniature igloo, kayak, umiak, or sled.
4. Define culture, tradition, and ritual. Apply these terms to the novel. How are they used today?
5. Research a popular fairy tale, movie, or television show for its romantic qualities and the quest theme.
6. Debate whether Russel is a runaway.
7. Research and report on the effects of white settlers on Eskimo culture and lifestyle.
8. Present a skit dealing with the themes of manhood, womanhood, and/or the concept of home.
9. Retell a scene from a different character's point of view:
 - A. Russel's first run from the lead dog's point of view
 - B. The fight scene between Russel and the bear from the bear's point of view
 - C. Nancy's story from a missionary's point of view
 - D. The birth scene from Nancy's point of view
10. Report on dreams as symbols.
11. Create Eskimo doll clothes.
12. Write a poem about an experience. Then turn the poem into a song. Sing your song to the class.
13. Write a theme on *one* of the following:
 1. Oogruk as a Father Figure
 2. What makes a man (woman)?
 3. Someone I Admire
 4. What makes a home?
 5. A Tradition in My Family
 6. A Lesson I Would Teach My Child
 7. The Importance of Being Happy With Oneself
 8. How I Have Changed
 9. Is new always better?
 10. A Modern Day Hero
 11. What makes Russel a hero?

12. A Moment I Would Like to Relive
 13. Does age mean wisdom?
 14. A Decision I Recently Made
 15. A Dream That Came True
 16. A Time I Helped Someone
14. Research and report on Eskimo life in the following areas:
 1. Legend and Myths
 2. Family Structure and Life
 3. Customs
 4. Food Sources
 5. Clothing
 6. Language
 7. Crime and Punishment
 8. Sports and Recreation
 9. Government and Control
 10. Life on an Alaskan Island
 - Diomed Island
 - Seal Island
 - Kodiak
 - Aleutian Islands
 - Nunivak Island
 15. Illustrate major scenes from the novel. (For example, Oogruk's house, Russel's first run, Russel's first hunting experience with the bow and arrow, Oogruk's death, Russel's encounter with the bear, etc.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SUGGESTED READINGS: THE QUEST

- Baldwin, James, *The Story of Roland*
- Bradbury, Ray, *S Is For Space*
- Burnford, Sheila, *The Incredible Journey*
- Clarke, Arthur C., *2001: A Space Odyssey*
- Courlander, Harold, *The King's Drum and Other African Stories*
- Doyle, Arthur Conan, *The White Company*
- Eliot, T. S., "The Journey of the Magi"
- Frost, Robert, "The Road Not Taken"
- Green, Roger L., *The Tale of Troy*
- Hieatt, Constance, *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*
- Hodges, C. Walter, *The Namesake*
- Lang, Andres, *Arabian Nights Entertainment*
- Lawrence, D. H., "The Rocking Horse Winner"
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, *Hiawatha*
- Marryat, F., *Children of the New Forest*
- Noyes, Alfred, "The Highwayman"
- Pyle, Howard, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*
- Rouse, W. H. D., *The Odyssey*
- Schulz, Charles M., *You're My Hero, Charlie Brown*

Tolkien, J. R. R., *The Hobbit*
_____, *The Lord of the Rings*
Twain, Mark, *The Prince and the Pauper*
Wyndham, John, *Chocky*
_____, *Rebirth*

Plays

"Communications" (one-act), first produced in New Mexico at a local group theatre, 1974

"Together-Apart" (one-act), first produced in Denver at Changing Scene Theatre, 1976.

OTHER WORKS BY PAULSEN

Novels

The Implosion Effect, 1976
The Death Specialists, 1976
Winterkill, 1977
The Foxman, 1977
Tiltawhirl, 1977
C. B. Jockey, 1977
The Night The Deer Died, 1978
Hope and A Hatchet, 1978
The Green Recruit (with Ray Peekner), 1978
The Spitball Gang, 1980
Campkill, 1981
The Sweeper, 1981
Clutterkill, 1982
Popcorn Days and Buttermilk Nights, 1983
Dancing Carl, 1983
Tracker, 1984
Dogsong, 1985
Sentries, 1986
The Crossing, 1987
Hatchet, 1987

Nonfiction

The Special War, 1966
Some Birds Don't Fly, 1969
The Building A New, Buying An Old, Remodeling A Used Comprehensive Home and Shelter Book, 1976
Farm: A History and Celebration of the American Farmer, 1977
Hiking and Backpacking (with John Morris), 1978
Canoeing, Kayaking, and Rafting, 1979
Beat The System: A Survival Guide, 1983

THE PLOT OF A ROMANCE

Dogsong is a romance which in very basic terms is a story about a hero who exemplifies the qualities of innocence, youth, and/or beauty and who is involved in a quest. The quest includes a perilous journey, a struggle or test in which the hero must prove himself, and the triumph of the hero when his quest is successfully completed.

Using the following romances, complete the chart below.

TITLE OF ROMANCE	HERO/HEROINE	STRUGGLE/TEST	FINAL OUTCOME
1. <i>Cinderella</i>			
2. <i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i>			
3. <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>			
4. <i>Batman</i>			
5. <i>Dick Tracy</i>			

Discuss your responses with the class.

READING COMPREHENSION: SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Below is a list of actions taken by Russel. Number each in the order in which they occur in the novel.

- _____ 1. kills a bear
- _____ 2. heads for coastal village
- _____ 3. takes eyes to Oogruk
- _____ 4. moves in with Oogruk
- _____ 5. rescues Nancy a second time
- _____ 6. is dragged on his face by the dogs
- _____ 7. leaves Oogruk on the ice to die
- _____ 8. breaks in lead dog
- _____ 9. sets up camp for Nancy
- _____ 10. uses a chunk of ice as a bridge to safety
- _____ 11. buries Nancy's baby
- _____ 12. attempts to express his feelings to his father
- _____ 13. finds tracks of a snowmachine
- _____ 14. hunts for ptarmigan and caribou with a bow and arrow

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

There are *two* types of characters: *dynamic* (those who undergo a change as a result of the events which take place in the novel) and *static* (those who undergo no change as a result of the events which take place in the novel.) Russel is a dynamic character and his change is central to the novel. Answer the following questions using specific examples from the novel. Be prepared to discuss your responses with your class.

1. What is Russel like at the beginning of the novel?
2. What is he like at the end of the novel?
3. How has he changed? What changes are positive? Negative?

CHARACTERIZATION

Below is a list of the characters in *Dogsong* and a list of characteristics that describe people. On a separate sheet of paper write each character's name and list all of the words that can be used to describe the characters. (Some words may describe more than one character; some words may not apply to any character.) For each word be prepared to cite an example from the novel.

Characters

Russel
Oogruk
Nancy
Mr. Susskit

restless
lonely
bored
religious
brave
dreamer

Characteristics

hospitable
wise
responsible
self-pitying
gentle
cooperative
mature
clever
homeless
weak
proud
skillful

blind
instructive
accepting
afraid
traditional
modern

Write a brief paragraph about *one* character, using the characteristics you associated with him/her.

VOCABULARY

VISUAL SYNONYMS/MEANING IN CONTEXT

From magazines and newspapers, cut out a picture that illustrates the meaning of each of the words below. Then next to each word, write a sentence using the word.

1. ulu
2. caribou
3. umiak
4. breechclout
5. muktuk
6. parka
7. lemmings
8. mukluk
9. ptarmigan
10. anorak

FIGURES OF SPEECH: SIMILES AND METAPHORS

Paulsen is very descriptive in *Dogsong*. Two figures of speech used throughout are the simile and the metaphor. A simile is a comparison of two things using the words "like" or "as." A metaphor is also a comparison, but it does not use the words "like" or "as." The comparison is implied.

In the spaces provided indicate whether the comparison is a *simile* or *metaphor*. Underline the items being compared.

- _____ 1. . . . "it always amazed Russel to hear Oogruk's voice. He was so old but the voice moved like strong music." (p. 14)
- _____ 2. "With the meat under one arm like large red pages from a thick book he went back into the house." (p. 24)
- _____ 3. "They ran, Grandfather. They ran for me like the wind." (p. 40)
- _____ 4. "Soon everything glistened with ice, even the dogs looked like jewels running ahead of him in the dark with the ice frozen on their backs." (p. 62)
- _____ 5. "The sea was a blue line on the horizon when they crossed the high points and could see ahead." (p. 71)
- _____ 6. "The lance entered like light, like a beam of light shot into the mammoth . . ." (p. 97)
- _____ 7. "That is what life is. A journey." (p. 119)
- _____ 8. ". . . now the land was so flat that it seemed to rise around him like a great lamp bowl sloping up to the sky." (p. 120)
- _____ 9. "He rubbed her cheeks but there was no response and yet he could see that she was breathing . . . There was life inside the frozen shell." (p. 135)
- _____ 10. "The bear was a mountain of meat. It weighed close to three quarters of a ton." (p. 161)

WRITTEN LANGUAGE: MOOD

A mood is a state of feeling. A writer uses specific words and phrases to create a particular mood. Read the following passage from *Dogsong*. Then note the details that Paulsen uses and the mood or feeling the description creates in your mind. In the space provided, list the mood and the specific details which create those impressions.

Russell opened the door without knocking, as was the custom, and went in and closed the door. Outside there had been bright-light and sea-wind off the frozen sea ice, salt-wind. Inside it was almost pitch-dark. The windows were covered with smoke grime, and the room was full of smoke from the lamp on a box in the corner, a seal-oil lamp with a moss wick that threw a tiny yellow glow around the room.

Leaning against the wall were harpoons and lances, hanging on nails were arrow-bags and bows and small ivory carvings. On other nails were skin clothes, squirrel-skin undergarments and caribou-skin parkas, some old and some not so old, all hanging loosely and thick with the smoke.

Against the far wall sat Oogruk. At first it was hard to know where the smoke ended and Oogruk began. Except for a small breechclout he was nude, and his skin was the same color as the smoke, a tan-brown, rich and oily. His hair had gone white, or would have been white, but it had taken the smoke, too, seemed to have flown into the smoke and become part of the smoke from the lamp. (p. 14)

Mood:

Details that create that mood:

Write a description of a familiar person, place or thing. Focus on the details and use those details to create a mood or impression.

VOCABULARY TEST

Match the words in the first column with the definitions in the second column. Place the letter of your answer in the space provided.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| _____ 1. aloof | A. a ditch cut in the earth by flowing water |
| _____ 2. audible | B. stick out |
| _____ 3. douse | C. shadows |
| _____ 4. exultation | D. cool, distant; unfriendly |
| _____ 5. falter | E. easy gait |
| _____ 6. forlorn | F. happiness |
| _____ 7. gratitude | G. a scolding |
| _____ 8. grimace | H. to shrink back from |
| _____ 9. grit | I. ridge or pile of ice |
| _____ 10. gully | J. sudden wish, desire, or change of mind |
| _____ 11. hummock | K. sleep-like state |
| _____ 12. wraith | L. having an unpleasant smell or taste |
| _____ 13. protrude | M. tiny bits of stone and sand |
| _____ 14. whim | N. not reflecting light |
| _____ 15. rebuke | O. feeling of appreciation |
| _____ 16. trance | P. loud enough to be heard |
| _____ 17. wince | Q. a twisting of the face |
| _____ 18. rancid | R. stumble |
| _____ 19. lope | S. drench or plunge into water |
| _____ 20. opaque | T. sad and lonely |

TEST

Part I: True/False (15 points)

Mark each statement either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Russel is restless because he is an only child.
- _____ 2. Oogruk and Russel's father are the founders of their village.
- _____ 3. When he first visits Oogruk, Russel brings him caribou skins.
- _____ 4. Russel finally moves in with Oogruk after he and his father argue.
- _____ 5. To show that he is in control, Russel bites the lead dog across the bridge of its nose.
- _____ 6. During his first run with the dog team, Russel is dragged several miles on his back.
- _____ 7. After his first kill, Russel puts berries in the mouth of the animal.
- _____ 8. Oogruk is killed by outsiders before Russel returns from his second hunt.
- _____ 9. Russel encounters Nancy living in a nearby village.
- _____ 10. Russel suggests that Nancy accompany him on a deer hunt.
- _____ 11. While Russel is hunting, Nancy has her baby.
- _____ 12. The baby is born dead.
- _____ 13. Russel buries Nancy's baby in a pile of snow.
- _____ 14. Because Nancy becomes ill after delivery, Russel decides to take her to a doctor in a nearby village.
- _____ 15. The novel ends when Russel and Nancy arrive at the doctor's office.

Part II: Matching Quotations (20 points)

Match parts of quotations. Write the letter of the quotation's ending in the space provided next to the quotation's beginning.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. We used to eat everything raw, | A. and now that he had made a decision to act the fear had gone. |
| _____ 2. Sometimes words lie, | B. They cannot run on fat and meat. |
| _____ 3. Now they use guns and make noise, | C. but now we have learned to cook it. |
| _____ 4. The fear had come from the unknown, from not acting, | D. and you will never be cold. |
| _____ 5. An old man knows when death is coming, | E. or just because they think they want to run, or because you <i>make</i> them think they want to run. |
| _____ 6. It was the kind of smile all men look for in women, | F. but the song is always true. |
| _____ 7. Save the best for the flame | G. up through his ankles and into his muscles so that he grows with what he takes from it. |
| _____ 8. His legs are the earth and they take strength from it, | H. back then we were quiet and the animals felt different about dying. |
| _____ 9. They need fuel that is not part of the land. | I. the kind that reaches inside, and Russel felt warm to see it. |
| _____ 10. The dogs run because they want to run, | J. and he should be left to his own on it. |

Part III: Identification (25 points)

Discuss the significance of the following items as they relate to the plot of the novel. Be specific.

1. eyes

2. fog

3. two bones

4. lamp

5. songs

Part IV: Sentence Completion (10 points)

Complete the following statements.

1. Russel detests the Outside because
2. Nancy leaves her village because
3. Russel's father sends him to Oogruk because
4. Russel bites the lead dog because
5. Russel hunts for seal because
6. Russel finds it difficult to talk to his father because
7. Russel races to the coastal village because
8. Oogruk accompanies Russel on a hunt because
9. The people of the village cannot pass down their traditions because
10. Nancy decides to go with Russel because

Part V: Essay (30 points)

1. Man vs. Nature is a major conflict in *Dogsong*. Cite examples from the novel to prove this statement.
2. Examine Oogruk as a father figure.
3. Discuss *one* of the important lessons that Russel learns on his quest. (The following are only examples.)
 1. "Look *inside* the center." (p. 42)
 2. "You must be part of the dogs, but you must run them." (p. 56)
 3. "Sometimes it was better to wait." (p. 17)
 4. "You must not go home." (p. 72)
 5. "Life is a journey." (p. 119)

ANSWER KEY

SIMILE/METAPHOR WORKSHEET

1. Oogruk's voice—strong music (simile)
2. meat—thick book (simile)
3. dogs—wind (simile)
4. dogs—jewels (simile)
5. sea—line (metaphor)
6. lance—beam of light (simile)
7. life—journey (metaphor)
8. land—bowl (simile)
9. Nancy—frozen shell (metaphor)
10. bear—mountain of meat (simile)

READING COMPREHENSION: SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- | | |
|-------|--------|
| 1. 11 | 8. 3 |
| 2. 14 | 9. 10 |
| 3. 2 | 10. 6 |
| 4. 7 | 11. 13 |
| 5. 12 | 12. 1 |
| 6. 4 | 13. 9 |
| 7. 8 | 14. 5 |

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 11. I |
| 2. P | 12. C |
| 3. S | 13. B |
| 4. F | 14. J |
| 5. R | 15. G |
| 6. T | 16. K |
| 7. O | 17. H |
| 8. Q | 18. L |
| 9. M | 19. E |
| 10. A | 20. N |

Part I: True/False (15 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 9. F |
| 2. F | 10. F |
| 3. F | 11. F |
| 4. F | 12. T |
| 5. T | 13. F |
| 6. F | 14. T |
| 7. T | 15. F |
| 8. F | |

Part II: Matching Quotations (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. I |
| 2. F | 7. D |
| 3. H | 8. G |
| 4. A | 9. B |
| 5. J | 10. E |

Part III: Identification (25 points)

(Answers will vary.)

1. eyes — Oogruk is blind.
Russel remembers the eyes of the dogs.
Russel brings eyes to Oogruk.
Russel almost suffers snow blindness.
2. fog — Russel's dreams are shrouded in fog imagery.
3. two bones — All that is left of the woman and the children in Russel's dreams.

4. lamp — Russel is told to keep the best fat for the lamp.

Russel finds an old lamp, makes a wick, and lights a fire which provides light and warmth on his journey.

Oogruk and his home are described as being covered with the smoke from the seal-oil lamp in his home.

5. songs — The village has lost the tradition of songs. Songs express the experiences of the singer. The man in the dream creates a song and shares it with the villagers.
Russell creates his song, a dedication to the dogs.

Part IV: Sentence Completion (10 points)

(Answers will vary.)

1. the outside has destroyed the culture of his people
2. she is pregnant, ashamed, and homeless
3. Oogruk has the knowledge Russel is seeking
4. he needs to control the lead dog in order to control the team
5. Oogruk wants the fat for his lamp and the meat for his dogs
6. his father has lost contact with the past that Russel wants to regain.
7. Nancy needs medical attention
8. he wants to die surrounded by nature
9. they have no knowledge of them
10. she has no family

Part V: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

TEACHER'S NOTES



A DIVISION OF HERTZBERG NEW METHOD, INC.

PERMA-BOUND • VANDALIA ROAD • JACKSONVILLE, ILLINOIS 62650

Call toll free 1-800-637-6581