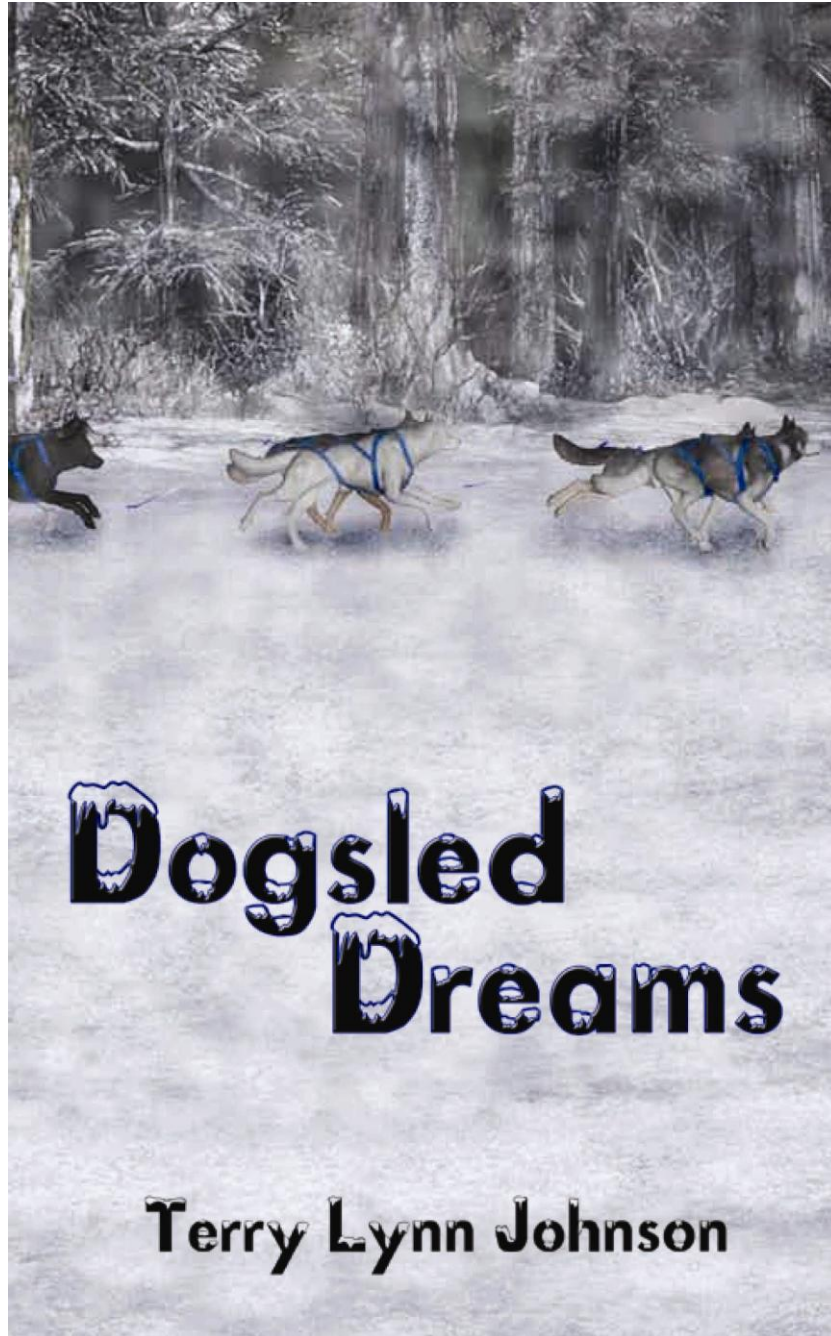


A Teacher's Guide to
Dogsled Dreams

Written By Terry Lynn Johnson



Text copyright 2010 by Terry Lynn Johnson and 4RV Publishing
Book Design by Aidana WillowRaven
ISBN 13: 978-0-9826423-4-4; 141 pages

STORY SUMMARY

Twelve-year-old Rebecca dreams of becoming a famous dogsled racer. She's an inventive but self-doubting musher who tackles freezing blizzards, wild animal attacks, puppy training and flying poo missiles. All of her challenges, though, seem easier than living up to the dogs' trust in her abilities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Terry Lynn Johnson's passion for the outdoors evolved as she paddled twelve summers in Quetico Provincial Park as a Canoe Ranger. One winter she worked for a dogsledding company and eighteen huskies followed her home. She was hooked.

Now Terry continues to work in the outdoors and shares her love of adventure through writing. She enjoys kayaking, competitive swimming, and hiking. Occasionally, she likes to torture herself in a canoe race. She lives in Whitefish Falls, Ontario.



PRAISE FOR DOGSLED DREAMS

“Exhilarating ... I was drawn into the world of dogsled dreams learning quite a bit about the nuances of the sport.” ~**BiblioReads.com**

“I was charmed by Rebecca and her focus ... *Dogsled Dreams* is a great book for moms and daughters to read together and talk about setting goals.” ~ **Cindy Hudson, author of THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CREATING MOTHER-DAUGHTER BOOK CLUBS**

“Rebecca's experiences are applicable to any young girl ready to emerge from the security of childhood to the freedom of adolescence. *Dogsled Dreams* is a captivating and exciting debut novel.” ~**Superior Outdoors Magazine**

“Any teacher using Gary Paulsen’s *WOODSONG* would want Terry Johnson’s *DOGSLED DREAMS*. Terry’s realistic writing style and word choice bring the reader through experiences that bring emotions to the surface ...emotions of real life living with sled dogs.” ~ **Diane Johnson, Iditarod’s Education Director**

“Johnson's intimate knowledge of the dogs she describes is real, heart-warming, and often humorous... This is a high-impact story that both elementary and secondary teachers can use in their classrooms to engage at-risk readers.” ~ **Teri Treftlin, Secondary School teacher, Geraldton, Ontario**

“A warm, coming-of-age story about hopes and dreams, but most of all, finding the true meaning of family and friends, whether they have two legs or four!” ~ **Darcy Johns, Youth Services Librarian, Nova Scotia**

“There is much about the book to enjoy, but the most exciting part to us is that the story includes a very good description of mushing. Through Rebecca's eyes, you see life in the dog yard and being out on the trail, as well as the excitement, butterflies, and self doubting that comes with entering your first race. We highly recommend this book for our BRR teachers and students.” ~ **Bark River Racing and Rides**

TEACHER'S GUIDE CONTENTS

1. Pre-Reading Activities

Activities and discussion-starters to activate students' prior knowledge.

2. Chapter Guides

Chapter guides may be used to encourage whole class discussions, lead teacher-guided reading groups, or to provide structure for students working either in cooperative small groups or independently. **The guide is not meant to be assigned to students in its entirety.**

Each chapter guide includes:

- ▶ **Vocabulary** that might be new for your students. Choose a few words from each list and guide students in using context clues to infer meanings. Words with an * may be found in the book's glossary.
- ▶ **Discussion Starters** inspired by Bloom's Taxonomy that lead students from basic comprehension to higher-level thinking skills.
- ▶ **Predicting** where students are invited to make predictions based on their analysis of the characters' traits in the story.

The chapter guides address the following curriculum standards:

Students will:

- √ Analyze literary elements and devices by point of view
- √ Make connections between a text and personal experiences, experiences of others, or other texts, and locate details in the text to illustrate these connections
- √ Apply knowledge of word origins, root words, structure and context clues and use glossaries to determine the meaning of new words and to comprehend text
- √ Use a variety of strategies to support comprehension including predicting, questioning, rereading, and monitoring own comprehension
- √ Infer meaning from text

√ Locate evidence in the text and from related experiences to support understanding of a main idea

√ Identify and describe basic plot, main characters, and setting

√ Analyze and evaluate narrative elements including plot, character, setting, and point of view to determine their importance to the story

√ Express opinions about a text and support these opinions with textual evidence

√ Write for a specific audience

3. Culminating Activities

Following the chapter guides, you'll find suggested culminating projects that address the eight multiple intelligences identified by Dr. Howard Gardner:

√ Bodily-Kinesthetic

√ Interpersonal

√ Intrapersonal

√ Logical-Mathematical

√ Musical

√ Naturalistic

√ Verbal-Linguistic

√ Visual-Spatial

Consider having students choose a culminating activity that best matches their learning styles.

4. Author interview with Terry Lynn Johnson

5. Teacher Resources

Websites with educational activities and information on dog sledding

PRE-READING

1. Open the book and look at the front and back covers together. Who is on the sled? Where is this person going?
2. Now read the book's cover blurb. What is this story about? What could Rebecca's dog sled dreams be?
3. What are your dreams for the future? What can you do to make those dreams come true?
4. Using a t-chart like the one below, record students' background knowledge about dog sledding and their questions about the story. Visit <http://www.iditarod.com/> and watch the short video about the Iditarod, a famous annual dog sled race in Alaska. Allow students to add to the chart after viewing the video.

What I know about dog sledding:	Questions I have about the story:

CHAPTER 1

Word Study

giddy	anorak	runners	mushed	gee*
veered	haw*	gait	fixated	homely
on by	agape	lunged	writhing	deter
tug lines*	reeled	lurched	surged	braced
gang line*	neck lines*	gangly	smug	abyss

Discussion Starters

1. Why does Rebecca's father cut their outing short? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Rebecca love most about the ride? (*comprehension*)
3. When Rebecca's dad tries to separate the dogs, he says, "Sacre bleu." Using the context of the paragraph, what might this mean? What language is this? Where do you think the story is set? (*application*)
4. How does Rebecca feel when her dad asks if she can drive the sled? What clues from the text help you to infer her feelings? Why do you think she didn't share her feelings with her father? (*analysis*)
5. Name two instances in which Rebecca is certain that the dogs are communicating with her. What are some other ways animals and people communicate? (*synthesis*)
6. As Rebecca's confidence grows, she dreams of entering the Iditarod race. Learn more about the Iditarod race here: <http://www.iditarod.com/>. Is Rebecca's dream realistic? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will Rebecca guide the sled safely around the bend? Will Apollo survive? If so, will he be able to run as the lead dog again?

CHAPTER 2

Word Study

careened	fumbled	flawlessly	beaming	mukluks
soles	splaying	scrabbled	snickered	ruckus
resigned	gnaw	beelined	berth	podium

Discussion Starters

1. What news is Rebecca waiting to hear? (*knowledge*)
2. What is Rebecca's plan for convincing her dad to let her enter the race? (*comprehension*)
3. When Rebecca's dad asks her to take care of the team, she thinks: *The sled handling skills displayed in that ride — just mind-blowing, folks. Keep watch for this rising star.* What kind of voice is Rebecca using? Imagine yourself achieving your dream. How might a television announcer report your victory? (*application*)
4. Why did Rebecca throw the boot back to Minden? What clues from the text give hints about Rebecca feelings toward her stepmother? (*analysis*)
5. Rebecca makes a mental list of ways she might convince her father to let her race. What are some ways you try to convince your parents to let you do something? Categorize your answers into dialogue (what would you say?) and actions (what would you do?). (*synthesis*)
6. Rebecca is convinced that Blaze wants to enter the race, too. Is she right? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will Rebecca convince her dad to let her enter the race? If so, how?

CHAPTER 3

Word Study

chipper	engrossed	imps	reams	erupted
muzzle	scampered	puncture	gait	void

Discussion Starters

1. Why did Jackie call Rebecca? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Rebecca want to give rides at the Winter Carnival this year?
(*comprehension*)
3. What did the glass bottle remind Rebecca of? What is your happiest memory? Use a photo or a drawing of your favorite memory and place it in a clean, clear plastic peanut butter jar. Close the lid and label it with a caption that describes the event. Display it along with your classmates' favorite memories. (*application*)
4. While Rebecca waits for her dad's answer about her driving the team in the Winter Carnival, she thinks: *Poker face, poker face. If he says no, I may have to flash the dimple. Parental manipulation. Sacrifice my pride for the good of the team.* What does Rebecca mean here? (*analysis*)
5. Read the description of Rebecca's room on page 21. How is it different from Jackie's room? How does the décor reflect Rebecca's personality and values? Sketch your own bedroom. Be sure to include everything that is important to you, such as posters, photos, souvenirs, etc. [Teacher note: Have all students do the same, and then sign the backs of their sketches. Post the sketches around the room and let students guess which room belongs to each student. What parts of students' personalities are reflected in their sketches? (*synthesis*)
6. Rebecca thinks she isn't "normal" because she's not like the rest of her classmates. Do you agree with her assessment? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will Rebecca's father let her run the races at the Winter Carnival? If not, how will Rebecca react? If so, what could go wrong?

CHAPTER 4

Word Study

trailhead	seizure	chase team	to run in wheel
swivel	toques	snubs	car axle
skirted	dominant	indignant	psychotic
mishap	cruising	flourish	careening

Discussion Starters

1. How did Rebecca react when she saw her dad doing chores? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Rebecca like hooking up the dogs? (*comprehension*)
3. Rebecca has mixed feelings about running her own team at the Winter Carnival. Tell or write about a time when you felt both excited and nervous about doing something for the first time. (*application*)
4. How are Rebecca's visions of driving her own sled different from reality? Will her visions lead to disappointment? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Rebecca dreams of having a bronze statue erected in her honor, like Balto the sled dog. Read about the statue of Balto in New York City's Central Park (<http://www.centralpark.com/guide/attractions/balto.html>). What three words are written on the statue? What might Rebecca's statue look like? If someone made a bronze statue of you, what would it show? Which three words would be written at the base? (*synthesis*)
6. What is Rebecca's motivation for entering a race on her own? Are her motives good ones? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

How will Rebecca's visit go with the Kindergarten class? Will she impress her father with her handling of the pups? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 5

Word Study

toxic	socializing	cheeky	gneiss
twinge	trundled	dire	

Discussion Starters

1. How does Rebecca's mom feel about dogs? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Rebecca think it's important to bring the puppies to a Kindergarten class? (*comprehension*)
3. Finding the pen door open is one of several strange things that has been happening around the dogs. What do you think is going on? Make a plan that would help Rebecca to find some answers. (*application*)
4. Would Robin make a better friend for Rebecca than Jackie? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Is Rebecca doing a good job taking care of the dogs? Create a dog musher report card to evaluate Rebecca's care of her team. (*synthesis*)
6. Why does Rebecca decide not to tell anyone about the pen door? Do you think this is a good decision? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will Rebecca find the pen door open again? What will Rebecca do to keep the pups safe?

CHAPTER 6

Word Study

sauntered	fidged	chided	teetered
downy	scampered	muffled	lunge
hysterics	barged	menagerie	script

Discussion Starters

1. Why do the dogs travel in small boxes? (*knowledge*)
2. How is the puppies' fur like wolves' fur? How does this help them to adapt to the cold? (*comprehension*)
3. When the teacher in the parking lot asks Rebecca about the dogs, she thinks, *Everyone always asks the same questions*. Make a list of questions you would ask Rebecca if she and her dogs came to your classroom. (*application*)
4. Was the puppy disaster all Rebecca's fault? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. What do you think Rebecca's dad is thinking? Script or improvise the conversation between Rebecca and her dad as they drive away from the school. (*synthesis*)
6. Do you think Rebecca's dad is angry with her or with himself? Explain your reasoning. (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will Rebecca's dad change his mind about letting her run the carnival sled rides? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 7

Word Study

surveyed	distaste	seethed	falsetto	manuscript
nape	glowered	booties	festive	throngs
visualizing	chiseled	dominated	cooed	coiffed

Discussion Starters

1. When does Jackie finally show some interest in the dogs? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Rebecca feel about Heather? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (*comprehension*)
3. Rebecca explains to Robin that the pups need to experience stressful situations so they can better handle stress when they're older. List three things that may be stressful for you now that will help you to better deal with certain situations when you are older. (*application*)
4. How do you think Chris feels about Rebecca? How do his actions show his feelings? How does Rebecca feel about Chris? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (*analysis*)
5. How might Rebecca's conversation with Chris had gone if they hadn't been surrounded by friends? Pair up with a classmate and role play the conversation. (*synthesis*)
6. Rebecca read that, "... athletes perfected their routine by visualizing their whole event beforehand." What does this mean? Do you think this would help? Try it before you perform an event, athletic or otherwise. Did it help? (*evaluation*)

Predict

How will everything go with the sled rides? Will Chris sign up for a ride on the sled?

CHAPTER 8**Word Study**

groomed	wavered	mascara	hyperventilating	crescendo
bucked	daintily	wedge	parasailer	Bien fait

Discussion Starters

1. Who is the first to sign up for a sled ride? (*knowledge*)
2. What is Phase 2 of Rebecca's plan? (*comprehension*)
3. List some of the details the author uses to create Mascara Lady's personality. (*application*)
4. Why does Rebecca feel like rolling her eyes at Heather? Why doesn't she roll her eyes? (*analysis*)
5. Which foreshadowing clues hint that Rebecca's first sled ride will not go well? (*synthesis*)
6. How would you characterize Rebecca's father? How do his actions show what kind of father he is? (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will Rebecca change her attitude about Heather? If so, how? If not, why?

CHAPTER 9

Word Study

yearlings	writhed	crazed	All Terrain Vehicle	momentum
frenzied	clamored	tamaracks	duff	initial
sustain	bouge	hurtling	déjà vu	ambled
brandished	wistful	froth	embedded	adrenaline
draped	epic			

Discussion Starters

1. What do the dogs run into on the trail? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Rebecca train the pups to pull a sled? (*comprehension*)
3. How does Rebecca remove the porcupine quills from Tarzan's nose? Read about porcupines here: <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/porcupine.html>. Why did Tarzan snort, shake his head and paw his nose when Rebecca removed the quills? (*application*)
4. What is the difference between the yearlings' and the adult dogs' behavior on the run? (*analysis*)
5. When Rebecca thinks about asking her dad if she can enter the race, she has an imaginary conversation between Doppler and herself. Role-play a conversation that Rebecca might have with her dad about entering the race. (*synthesis*)
6. Rebecca thinks that *Heather's probably telling [Dad] not to let me race — I'm too young and irresponsible. I can just hear it.* Do you think Rebecca's evaluation of Heather is accurate? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

Is Rebecca ready to enter the race? Will she enter with her father's permission?

CHAPTER 10

Word Study

cringing	muted	prospector
canvas	staggered	twinge

Discussion Starters

1. Why is Rebecca surprised when she looks outside her window? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Rebecca wish for a snow day home from school? (*comprehension*)
3. Review the reasons that Rebecca loves camping with the dogs. Which ones do you think would be fun (a plus)? Not fun (a minus)? Interesting? Record your thoughts on a chart like the one below. (*application*)

Plus	Minus	Interesting

4. Why was Jackie rude to Robin? How do the two girls feel about each other? How does Rebecca feel about each of them? (*analysis*)
5. Jackie tries to get Rebecca to be more like her. Which of Rebecca's qualities would you like to see in Jackie? Why? (*synthesis*)
6. Why did Rebecca refuse Jackie's offer for eye shadow? Why is Jackie offering? Should Rebecca care more about her appearance? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

How will Rebecca's camping trip with her father go? What could go wrong?

CHAPTER 11

Word Study

pungent	veered	lope	trot
floundering	neck dickey	wafted	

Discussion Starters

1. What did Rebecca see in the sky? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did Rebecca's dad give her the team that included Doppler? (*comprehension*)
3. Rebecca thinks famous mushers don't need math. Make a list of situations (from dog care to racing) in which mushers might use math. (*application*)
4. Using description from the chapter, sketch the scene using colored pencils. Now look at images of the northern lights (Google "northern lights" in images). How are the images similar to your drawing? How are they different? (*analysis*)
5. Rebecca compares herself with the Queen of Narnia (from *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*) and Mowgli (from *The Jungle Book*). Which one is she most like? What other comparisons could she make? (*synthesis*)
6. As weather and terrain conditions become more difficult, Rebecca visualizes herself as a famous musher. Is this an effective technique? Why or why not? In which situations might visualization be useful for you? (*evaluation*)

Predict

What will happen during the night? What dangers will Rebecca face?

CHAPTER 12

Word Study

ice auger	stakeout cable	sauna	eerie	bristled
mEEK	long johns	toggles	disheveled	peculiar
invigorating	precariously	crest		

Discussion Starters

1. Why does Rebecca's dad drill a hole in the ice? (*knowledge*)
2. What sound wakes Rebecca during the night? (*comprehension*)
3. Rebecca and her father have moose meat chili for dinner. What is the most unusual food you've tried? Write it down on a sticky note and have your classmates do the same. When everyone has finished, place the sticky notes on a wall in bar-graph format. What is the most common unusual food? The least common? How many foods are listed? Which ones would you like to try? (*application*)
4. Why did Rebecca lose the dogs and sled? Was it her fault? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. With another classmate, come up with a plan for Rebecca to catch up with the dogs. Have your other classmates do the same and compare. Which plan seems the most feasible (likely to succeed)? (*synthesis*)
6. If you were Rebecca's father, would you deem her ready to enter a race on her own? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will Rebecca catch up with the dogs? How will her father react when he learns what happened?

CHAPTER 13

Word Study

outcrops	crested	oblivious	catastrophe	numb
----------	---------	-----------	-------------	------

Discussion Starters

1. What does Rebecca imagine will happen to the dogs? (*knowledge*)
2. What differences does Rebecca notice between running through the snow and riding on the sled? (*comprehension*)
3. Rebecca's dad tells her that she's "...one of the most dedicated, caring mushers..." he knows. Find examples from the story that support his opinion. (*application*)
4. On their way home, "Rebecca's dogs, oblivious to the near catastrophe, ran well and happy. No one saw the black cloud that hovered just over Rebecca's bouncing head." What does the black cloud represent? (*analysis*)
5. When her father tells her she can enter the race, Rebecca is both excited and nervous. Make a list of reasons why she's feeling both emotions. Which list is longer? Should she enter the race? (*synthesis*)
6. Rebecca's father says, "You'll never feel good about yourself if you never do anything hard." Is this good advice? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

How will Jackie react to the news that Rebecca is entering the race? How will her reaction affect Rebecca?

CHAPTER 14**Word Study**

pursed	rep	PR	seeped	B string
--------	-----	----	--------	----------

Discussion Starters

1. Who does Rebecca look like in the photo that Jackie gives her? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Rebecca consider Doppler for her racing team? (*comprehension*)
3. Make a list of theories you have about why the dogs disappeared. Which is the most likely? (*application*)
4. After her father and Heather leave to look for the dogs, why does Rebecca use "deafening" to describe the silence in the house? (*analysis*)
5. Make a list of the dogs and what you know about their personalities. Which ones like to run together? Which ones like to be in charge? Which ones tire the quickest? Based on your list, predict what is happening with the dogs and where they might be. (*synthesis*)
6. What do Jackie's gifts reveal about her personality? Do you think she is a good friend? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will the dogs return? If so, how? Will they return in time for the race?

CHAPTER 15

Word Study

niggled	seething	fury	warped
venomous	festering	tormented	shrill
remorse	leer	racking	boughs

Discussion Starters

1. What does Rebecca find in the snow? (*knowledge*)
2. What happened to the dogs? Why? (*comprehension*)
3. List some of the verbs that show how Rebecca feels in this chapter. How does she walk out to the yard? How does she approach Robin's house? Act out this scene with Rebecca and Robin using only actions, not words. (*application*)
4. What made Rebecca suspicious of Robin's story? (*analysis*)
5. Rebecca feels sorry about what she said to Heather. Pretend to be Rebecca and write a note to Heather. Give the letter to a classmate who will pretend to be Heather and write back. (*synthesis*)
6. Will Heather be angry at Rebecca? Should she be? Will Rebecca's outburst hurt their relationship or ultimately help it? (*evaluation*)

Predict

What will Rebecca's father do now that he knows Robin let the dogs free?

CHAPTER 16

Word Study

barren	shards	mournful	mocked
ordeal	probing	draped	nonchalantly

Discussion Starters

1. What surprise gift does Jackie have for Rebecca? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Rebecca want to tell Jackie what happened to the dogs?
(*comprehension*)
3. When Rebecca wants to confront Robin about Blaze's injured leg, her father says, "What's done is done." If you were Rebecca's friend, what would you advise her to do about Robin? (*application*)
4. When Heather said that Rebecca had hurt her feelings, "Rebecca struggled with the baseball in her throat." What does this metaphor mean? What other metaphors illustrate the same emotion? (*analysis*)
5. Throughout the story, Rebecca has visualized herself winning races. Sometimes this has inspired her, and at times it has distracted her. Come up with a visualization sequence that would help Rebecca do her best in the race. (*synthesis*)
6. Heather tells Rebecca that "When people do things even though it scares them, that's called courage. You *should* be a little afraid of racing. It means you know what you're doing." Do you agree with Heather? Why or why not? What are some instances in which you've shown courage? (*evaluation*)

Predict

How will Rebecca deal with the race day stress? How will the dogs perform?

CHAPTER 17

Word Study

coax	cues	crazed	veteran	jittery
ulcer	bib	entice	mesmerized	mock
milled	chute	marshal	cacophony	sponsor
stanchions	burly	lurched		

Discussion Starters

1. What did Chris give Rebecca before the race? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Rebecca wish she had drawn a lower race number? (*comprehension*)
3. When Rebecca feels nervous during the TV interview, she takes one look at Apollo and feels calm. What are some things that calm you down when you get nervous? (*application*)
4. Why do you think the news reporter was mesmerized by Rebecca's words? (*analysis*)
5. Rebecca hopes that Robin sees the evening news. What effect might Rebecca's interview have on Robin, if any? Jot down what Robin's reaction might be. Have classmates do the same. How many think Robin's view of dog sledding will change? How many think her opinion won't change? (*synthesis*)
6. Rebecca tells the reporter that trust is important with a team. Do you agree? Give examples to support your opinion. (*evaluation*)

Predict

Will Rebecca finish the race? Will she win? What will her finish look like?

CHAPTER 18

Word Study

barreled	shoulder	surge	rummaged	doled
sternest	adrenaline	receding	ladled	tepid

Discussion Starters

1. What do the dogs see lying in the middle of the trail? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Doppler want to do as he passes another sled near the beginning of the race? How does Rebecca know what he wanted? (*comprehension*)
3. When Rebecca stops for a break, she figures she has 80 more kilometers to go. How long does she estimate it will take her to finish? If she finishes as estimated, what will her average speed be? (Calculate her speed in both kilometers and miles per hour.) (*application*)
4. When did Rebecca realize she could trust herself? Is she right to do so? (*analysis*)
5. When the dogs spot the sandwich on the trail, Rebecca jokes that the headlines will read, "Youngest Musher Foiled by Mystery Meat." Brainstorm a list of headlines that might appear if Rebecca wins. Make another list of potential headlines if she doesn't win. (*synthesis*)
6. When Tarzan and Denali fight over the sandwich, Rebecca pulls the dogs apart. Is this a wise decision? What might have happened if she hadn't have separated the dogs? (*evaluation*)

Predict

How will Rebecca feel when she wakes up? Will the dogs be ready to go?

CHAPTER 19

Word Study

gawked	stragglers	wry	mandatory	obscuring
wormhole	furrowed	dexterity	vicious	wraiths
gait	perfunctory	raging	gnarled	hoarfrost
dejectedly	gaped	constricted		

Discussion Starters

1. What time does Rebecca's dad wake her up? (*knowledge*)
2. Why is Rebecca's dad worried about her completing the rest of the course? (*comprehension*)
3. What lesson does Rebecca learn from the dogs? How could you apply this lesson to your own life? (*application*)
4. How does Rebecca decide on Doppler to take Soho's place? Do you agree with her decision? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. What will Rebecca's friends and family say to her after she finishes the race? Write the following names on index cards, one name per card: Rebecca's father, Heather, Jackie, Robin, Chris. On the back of each card, write two or three sentences that each character might say to Rebecca at the finish line. Display the cards so that the characters' names are face down. Can a classmate guess who said what? (*synthesis*)
6. Do you think Rebecca will remember to "Live in the moment," or will she be focused on fame? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

Predict

What will Rebecca's next dream for the future be? How will she make it come true?

CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

The following projects incorporate Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Consider having students choose a culminating project that best matches their learning styles.

A Dog's Life

(Verbal-Linguistic)

Show the following video of a 4-time Iditarod champion talking about a dog's point of view: http://www.iditarod.com/flashmap/free/video_CC231D9B-B07B-57CB-6C2D752004AF3D94.html

Choose a scene from the story and rewrite it from one of the dog's points of view. Suggestions include:

- * When Rebecca chooses Doppler to join the dog sledding team in the race
- * When Tarzan and Denali fight over the sandwich on the trail and Rebecca breaks up their fight
- * When Robin lets the dogs out of their yard
- * When an injured Blaze cannot enter the race

Have students share their rewritten scenes and see if their classmates can guess the scenes and their "narrators."

Mushing Math

(Logical-Mathematical)

Although Rebecca is not crazy about math, she often uses mathematical skills as a musher. Challenge students to complete the Yukon Quest Math Challenge at <http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/yukonquest/math>. Once they've completed their quest, challenge them to invent their own mushing math problems to trade and solve.

On Your Mark, Get Set, Mush!

(Visual-Spatial)

Give students a copy of a map from a real-life dog sledding race (You can find one at <http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/yukonquest/> when you click on *Blackline Master Trail Map*).

Have students work in teams to create a board game on a large piece of poster board. Using the map as a reference, students create a path of squares that mirror the path mushers follow in the race. In the squares, have students write at least 3-5 obstacles and 3-5 victories that reflect their knowledge of the characters in the story, dog sledding, and taking care of sled dogs. Have them add illustrations that match Rebecca's descriptions on the trail. Students may use the planning sheet (like the one below) on the following page:

Game Square Text	Obstacle	Victory	Character	Dog Sled Racing	Dog Care
Beaver in Path! Go back 4 spaces.	X			X	
Broken Harness! Return to Start.	X				X
Chris gives Rebecca a pin for good luck. Move to the next checkpoint.		X	X		
Apollo's leg has healed. Take another turn.		X			X
Blizzard! Lose one turn while you take cover.	X			X	

Name of Game: _____ **Game Creators:** _____

Use the chart below to plan your board game. Include both obstacles and victories that show your knowledge of the book's characters, dog sled racing and dog care.

Game Square Text	Obstacle?	Victory?	Character	Dog Sled Racing	Dog Care

A Window of Your Own

(Naturalistic)

Rebecca's favorite place to be is on the trail with her dogs. Read the description of the setting on pages 74 and 75. Have students fold a paper in half and draw, paint, or sketch the natural setting that Rebecca describes. Include the trees mentioned most in the story, birch and pine. On the other half of the paper, have students illustrate their own favorite outdoor settings in their favorite seasons. Compare and contrast students' favorite places with Rebecca's.

Dreams and Visions

(Intrapersonal, Linguistic)

Rebecca visualizes herself winning races and becoming famous. Reread the last scene where she finishes the race. What sights and sounds do you notice?

Have students write their own goals and then ask them to visualize themselves achieving their goals. Have them write a paragraph or make a recording describing their own moments of victory. Remind them to include sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings. Tell them to keep their descriptions in a special place where they can revisit them for inspiration.

The Music of Dog Sled Racing

(Musical)

Give students a piece of paper divided into 8 sections labeled "Minute 1," "Minute 2," and so on. Listen to the music from the following 8-minute video of the Iditarod dog sled race in Alaska:

http://www.iditarod.com/flashmap/free/video_CC1E8446-09D3-529A-C0CD2829C81DF34F.html

The first time through, have students listen to the music (without viewing the images). During each minute of the music, have students write ideas or sketch images that they think will appear in the video in the corresponding box. What do they think is happening when the music grows in volume and intensity? What is happening during the lighter parts of the music?

Once students have recorded their ideas, show the video along with the music. Did their images match the ones shown in the video?

Finding Your Center

(Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal)

On the first page of Chapter 2, reread the section that describes how Rebecca positions her body as the sled goes into the curve. She knows about *center of gravity*, her body's balancing point.

To illustrate this concept to students, have them try the following activities. Encourage them to predict the outcomes first.

1. Stand with your right leg and right ear touching a wall. Try and lift your left foot. What happens when you aren't able to shift your center of gravity?
2. Stand back-to-back with a partner, feet shoulder-width apart. Make sure your heels are about 6 to 10 inches from your partner's feet. Keeping your feet planted, slowly lean backwards until you feel your partner's back touch your own. Your center of gravity is now at the point where your backs touch. Bend your knees and lower yourselves to the ground. If you feel yourself losing balance, communicate with your partner to slow down or shift the pressure on your back. As long as you keep the center of gravity the same, you will not lose your balance.

Teacher Resources

Visit these websites for more educational activities and information on dog sledding:

<http://iditarodblogs.com/teachers/>

<http://www.barkriverracing.com/education.html>

<http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/yukonquest/>

AN INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR TERRY LYNN JOHNSON



When did you know you wanted to become a writer?

I started to write really cheesy science fiction stories when I was about ten. I loved reading, and thought one day, I'd be a writer. Or a horse jockey. In grade nine, I had one of those great teachers who help you find your talents. He taught creative writing. It was my favourite class.

Once you decided you wanted to write professionally, which steps did you take on your path to publication?

My writing dreams got put to the back of the bus for a while as I was busy running dogs, camping, and canoeing. I finally settled enough to take a correspondence course for writing. My tutor gave me assignments to research magazines and write articles. I had a few stories to share with outdoor magazines and dog magazines. All my articles were sold, which gave me writing credits. In fact, my very first articles sold on the same day. One was about how to pee from a kayak. The other was called *Frozen Turd Wars*. So, my writing career started in the toilet.

How did your own life experiences influence the characters and plot in your novel?

Well, this is the story of my life experiences with my dogs in Thunder Bay, Ontario. All the dogs in the story are my actual sled dogs. I used all their real names and included some of their personality quirks. Most of the adventures Rebecca had in the story actually happened to me. Yes, that includes getting peed on and frozen to the ground.

Who or what have had the biggest influences on your writing?

Nature influences every part of my life. I live in the bush on a lake. I work as a Conservation Officer. I camp and play outdoors in my spare time. Being outside fills up my soul. There is so much to be learned if we listen to the beat of nature. Gary Paulsen is a master at capturing that on the page. I'm still trying and learning.

What were some of the biggest rewards about writing this book?

So far, the biggest reward is right now. Knowing that the book is being read by people interested in learning more about dogsledding. I want everyone to understand the special relationship a musher has with their dogs. I want every reader to feel the sheer magic of the trust and responsibility that brings. How the dogs wrap around your whole life. How the sport is more than going fast down a trail.

What's the best piece of writing advice you've ever received?

Write what you are passionate about. Don't write what you think will sell, what the current trends are, just write for you.

When you aren't writing, what are some of your favorite things to do?

Hiking, snowshoeing, competitive swimming, canoe racing, kayak expeditioning, and - okay, I'll admit to slothing on the couch and watching movies.