

# LIFE'S LESSONS: SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

**Grade Level:** Seventh Grade  
**Presented by:** Randa Knobel, O.L. Slaton Junior High School, Lubbock, Texas  
**Length of Unit:** Eight lessons

## I. ABSTRACT

The success or failure of any society depends heavily on the mentality of its leaders. Through the use of anthropomorphism, Jack London enables students to realize the key to success is adaptability, not only in the animal world, but also in the human world. Students realize that in order to survive in any environment or society, one must adapt to the rules and regulations, whether they are written or unwritten. Along with the elements of fiction, students will predict actions and outcomes, use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, and evaluate and make judgements based upon the innate instinct for survival and the differences between primitive and civilized behavior.

## II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives
  - 1. Students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.
  - 2. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
  - 3. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.
- B. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
  - 1. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
  - 2. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
  - 3. Elements of Fiction-Plot, Setting, Theme, Point of View, Conflict, Suspense
  - 4. Literary Terms-Irony, Flashbacks, Foreshadowing,
  - 5. Spelling-commonly misspelled words
  - 6. Foreign Phrases- commonly used in English language
- C. Skill Objectives
  - 1. The students will locate and identify the level of conflict throughout the novel and relate them to real life.(TEKS:7.4:A)
  - 2. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries. (TEKS: 7.6:C)
  - 3. The students will focus on sequencing, cause and effect, and predicting outcomes. (TEKS: 7.10:A,D,E,F,G,H)
  - 4. The students will compare and contrast one's life with the actions and emotions of the characters and animals in the novel.(TEKS: 7.12;E,F,J; 7.15:A)
  - 5. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel. (TEKS: 7.11:A-D; 7.14:A)

## III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers:
  - 1. *The Call of the Wild and other stories by Jack London.* Listening Library, 1987. ISBN# 0-8072-2984-9.
  - 2. Kane, Dennis B. and Skinner, Thomas. "YUKON PASSAGE." *National Geographic Video.* Pittsburgh, PA: The National Geographic Society and WQED, 1977. ISBN# 0-7922-1466-8.
  - 3. United States Geography Series: Alaska and Hawaii. *National Geographic Society.* 1983,1986.
  - 4. Jack London's The Call of the Wild: Dog of the Yukon. Hallmark Home Entertainment,

1998. ISBN # 1-57492-593-8.

B. For Students:

1. *The Call of the Wild, White Fang, and Other Stories*. Ed. By Andrew Sinclair. Penguin Books, 1981.
2. *To Build a Fire, and Other Stories*. New York: Bantam, 1986.
3. "Jack London." DLB American Writers 1900:Vol.12, pages 350-373.

#### IV. RESOURCES

- A. DLB American Writers 1900. *Jack London*. Volume 12, pages 350-373.
- B. Kraft General Foods Premier Movie. *The Call of the Wild Teacher's Manual*. April 25, 1993.
- C. London, Jack. *The Call of the Wild*.
- D. Novel Ideas Plus: Active Reading Guide. *The Call of the Wild*. Littleton, MA:Sundance, 1983.
- E. The Perfection Form Company. *The Call of the Wild*.
- F. World Book Encyclopedia. *Jack London*.
- G. Copies of Appendices A-F

#### V. LESSONS

##### Lesson One: The Klondike Territory

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
  - a. Students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.
  - b. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
  - c. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.
2. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
  - a. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
  - b. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
  - c. Foreign Phrases- commonly used in English language
3. Skill Objectives
  - a. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries.
  - b. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel.

B. *Materials*

1. Copy of the novel *The Call of the Wild*
2. Notebook paper, pen, pencil
3. An overhead projector
4. Jack London's Background Notes (Appendix C)
5. Reading "About the Author" from The Perfection Form resource
6. Student Greek/Latin Root Words and Foreign Phrases lists in their binder

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Latin/Greek Root Words studied in this unit
  - a. demos (G): people
  - b. erro (L): wander
  - c. ex (L): from, out of
  - d. extra (L): outside
  - c. facio (L): affect
  - d. fero (L): bring, bear
2. Foreign Phrases studied in this unit
  - a. in extremis: in extreme circumstances
  - b. in medias res: in the of midst of things

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Teacher will have the Latin and Greek root words on the board throughout the week for *The Call of the Wild* unit.
2. Students will need to add the Latin and Greek root words to current list along with the foreign phrases.
3. Teacher will review and ask students for examples of the Greek and Latin and foreign phrases relating them to *The Call of the Wild*.
4. (Appendix C): The teacher will place a transparency of Jack London's background notes on the overhead for the students to copy. Distribute the notes to less able or monitored students.
5. After discussing and reviewing notes together, students need to select a partner.
6. With their partner, students will read and annotate the selection "About the Author."
7. Students will also work together to answer the map questions about Jack London's travels.
8. Give students 15-20 minutes to complete the activity on "About the Author."
9. Teacher and students will discuss and review answers to questions.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Using at least three Greek/Latin root words and both foreign phrases, students begin a *Call of the Wild* journal with a list of ten facts, drawn or written, about Jack London.

**Lesson Two: Into the Primitive**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
  - a. Students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.
  - b. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
  - c. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.
2. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
  - a. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
  - b. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
  - c. Elements of Fiction-Plot, Setting, Theme, Point of View, Conflict, Suspense
  - d. Literary Terms-Irony, Flashbacks, Foreshadowing,
3. Skill Objectives
  - a. The students will locate and identify the levels of conflict throughout the novel and relate them to real life.
  - b. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries.
  - c. The students will focus on sequencing, cause and effect, and predicting outcomes.
  - d. The students will compare and contrast one's life with the actions and emotions of the characters and animals in the novel.
  - e. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel

B. *Materials*

1. TV/VCR
2. Locate possible video or information on Iditarod
3. Copy of *The Call of the Wild*
4. (Appendix E): *Call of the Wild* Character List
5. *Call of the Wild* audio cassette tapes
6. (Appendix B): *Call of the Wild* Novel Literary Terms
7. (Appendix F): *Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Iditarod: annual competition held in March, in which *mushers* (dogsled drivers) race

teams of up to 16 dogs on a grueling course between the Alaskan cities of Anchorage and Nome. The dogsledding event, which covers about 1850 km (1150 mi), is called “The Last Great Race on Earth” and demands strength, endurance, and courage from mushers and their dogs. The difficult and challenging conditions of Alaska’s winter wilderness can include deep snow, unpredictable weather, and encounters with wild animals.

2. mushers: dogsled drivers
3. brumal: wintery
4. ferine: a wild animal
5. primitive: earliest ages; original
6. nomadic: having no permanent home
7. aristocrat: a Noble
8. calamity: a great misfortune
9. metamorphosed: changed
10. dominion: control

D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY ONE

1. Open class with a short question and answer quiz either orally or on paper from Jack London background.
2. After locating a short clip on the Iditarod (pay attention to television in the month of March for T.V. specials covering the subject), show my personal video taped from A&E two years ago. The video is only 10-11 minutes in length.
3. Students need to take notes as they watch the video.
4. Discuss with class the important facts and details relating them to *The Call of the Wild*.
5. Discuss the similarities and differences they will notice in the book.

DAY TWO

1. Students bring personal copy of *The Call of the Wild*.
2. (Appendix E & B): Distribute copies of *The Call of the Wild* Character List and *The Call of the Wild* Novel Literary Terms. Review and discuss.
3. Remind students that as they read or listen they need to highlight characters and descriptions along with any unfamiliar words, character quotes, and information that represents the novel literary terms.
4. Teacher should make reference to information above in class discussion.
5. Students will listen to Chapter One on the audio-cassette tape. This sets the tone for the entire book.
6. Students should be prepared for a discussion or possible quiz over Chapter One.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students complete Chapter Chart (Appendix F) for homework.
2. Look back at the four-line poem that begins the novel. This summarizes the essential theme of the entire work. Compare and contrast primitive beast within animals to the primitive beast within humans. Students may do this in a T-chart form, Venn diagram, or they may simply list the similarities and differences.

**Lesson Three: The Law of Club and Fang (Two Days)**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
  - a. Students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.
  - b. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
  - c. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.

2. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
  - a. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
  - b. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
  - c. Elements of Fiction-Plot, Setting, Theme, Point of View, Conflict, Suspense
  - d. Literary Terms-Irony, Flashbacks, Foreshadowing,
  - e. Spelling-commonly misspelled words
  - f. Foreign Phrases- commonly used in English language
3. Skill Objectives
  - a. The students will locate and identify the levels of conflict throughout the novel and relate them to real life.
  - b. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries.
  - c. The students will focus on sequencing, cause and effect, and predicting outcomes.
  - d. The students will compare and contrast one's life with the actions and emotions of the characters and animals in the novel.
  - e. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel.

B. *Materials*

1. *The Call of the Wild* Student Journals
2. (Appendix D): *The Call of the Wild* Journal Transparency
3. Copy of the novel *The Call of the Wild*
4. (Appendix F): *The Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart
5. (Appendix A): "What Do You Know About Instinct?"
6. overhead projector, overhead pens, dry erase markers, chalk, transparency

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. primordial: primitive
2. wheeler: person or thing that wheels; steers
3. discomfiture: defeat of plans or hopes
4. prowess: bravery; daring
5. trice: a very short time
6. courier: messenger sent in haste
7. gee-pole: a pole to direct a team of animals to turn right
8. fastidiousness: hard to please
9. instinct: natural ability

D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY ONE

1. Students begin class with opening journal activity by answering journal entry number one. These will be turned in at the conclusion of the novel (Appendix D.)
2. Students need to copy journal question and answer each journal in at least ½ page.
3. Give students 3-5 minutes to respond to journal.
4. Some students may want to share.
5. Discuss how greed is present in chapter one.
6. Teacher may want to give possible quiz over chapter one once he/she has reviewed the *The Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart over chapter one.
7. Put students into groups of three.
8. Follow directions of (Appendix A) "What Do You Know About Instinct." The teacher needs to give students an example within each side of the Venn diagram to help students get started.
9. The teacher needs to monitor groups as the students work to make sure they stay on task.
10. At the end of 15-20 minutes, the teacher takes groups responses and recreates a class Venn diagram either on the overhead or on the board.

## DAY TWO

11. Students begin class with opening journal activity by answering journal entry number two (Appendix D.)
  12. Give students 3-5 minutes to respond and discuss the journal aloud. Some students may want to share their answers.
  13. Have students put journals away.
  14. Begin reading Chapter Two aloud.
  15. Using inference, ask students what the title of chapter two tells us about Buck.
  16. While reading, have students complete the Chapter Chart (Appendix F.)
  17. During reading, the teacher needs to emphasize the vocabulary words and specific character changes.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Student completed Chapter Charts (Appendix F.)
  2. Possible quiz.
  3. With a partner, students compare sequencing (order of events) to create a specific list of 7-8 major events that took place in Chapter Two. Have each pair of partners share their results and compile one list.

### **Lesson Four: The Dominant Primordial Beast**

#### A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
  - a. Students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.
  - b. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
  - c. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.
2. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
  - a. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
  - b. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
  - c. Elements of Fiction-Plot, Setting, Theme, Point of View, Conflict, Suspense
  - d. Literary Terms-Irony, Flashbacks, Foreshadowing,
  - e. Spelling-commonly misspelled words
  - f. Foreign Phrases- commonly used in English language
3. Skill Objectives
  - a. The students will locate and identify the levels of conflict throughout the novel and relate them to real life.
  - b. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries.
  - c. The students will focus on sequencing, cause and effect, and predicting outcomes.
  - d. The students will compare and contrast one's life with the actions and emotions of the characters and animals in the novel.
  - e. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel.

#### B. *Materials*

1. Copy of the novel *The Call of the Wild*.
2. (Appendix D): *The Call of the Wild* Journal Transparency
3. *The Call of the Wild* Student Journals
4. (Appendix F): *The Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart

#### C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. pandemonium: chaos, complete confusion
2. nocturnal: nightly or at nighttime
3. articulate: to speak clearly and distinctly
4. dubiously: doubtfully, not sure

5. prostrate: face down
  6. aurora borealis: called the Northern Lights; streams or arches of light that appear in the sky in polar regions
  7. insidious: treacherous, harmful
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Teacher needs to review major events of Chapters One and Two.
  2. Students begin class with opening journal activity by answering journal entry number three (Appendix D.)
  3. Give students 3-5 minutes to respond and discuss.
  4. Using the overhead and a transparency, the teacher makes a T-chart labeling one side with Buck's old life and the other side with Buck's new life.
  5. The teacher records student responses discussing important aspects of each one.
  6. The teacher begins Chapter Three with a short preface of certain details. For example, London begins this chapter by stating that the "dominant primordial beast was strong in Buck," meaning that the primitive need to survive is now the most important thing in Buck's life. This entire chapter is spent showing Buck's will and determination for survival. That beastly, survival instinct will be climaxed at the end of this chapter in a dramatic fight-to-the-death scene between Buck and Spitz. The chapter ends with the same words.
  7. The students read aloud or listen to Chapter Three.
  8. Students complete the Chapter Chart (Appendix F) as they read or listen.
  9. Using at least 15 vocabulary words from the last three chapters, students create at least a 5-8 sentence summary.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Up until now, Buck has been avoiding fights whenever possible, even though he deeply despises Spitz. On an index card, locate and list the three major events from Chapter Three that illustrate what Spitz does to arouse Buck's jealousy.
  2. Chapter Chart (Appendix F)
  3. Vocabulary Summary

### **Lesson Five: Who Has Won to Mastership**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objectives
    - a. The students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.
    - b. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
    - c. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
    - b. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
    - c. Elements of Fiction-Plot, Setting, Theme, Point of View, Conflict, Suspense
    - d. Literary Terms-Irony, Flashbacks, Foreshadowing,
    - e. Spelling-commonly misspelled words
    - f. Foreign Phrases- commonly used in English language
  3. Skill Objectives
    - a. The students will locate and identify the levels of conflict throughout the novel and relate them to real life.
    - b. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries.
    - c. The students will focus on sequencing, cause and effect, and predicting outcomes.
    - d. The students will compare and contrast one's life with the actions and emotions of the characters and animals in the novel.

- e. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel.
- B. *Materials*
- 1. Copy of the novel *The Call of the Wild*
  - 2. (Appendix D): *The Call of the Wild* Journal Transparency
  - 3. *The Call of the Wild* Student Journals
  - 4. (Appendix F): *The Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart
  - 5. Possible quiz over Chapters One –Three
  - 6. construction paper, markers, chalk
  - 7. index card from Lesson Four assessment
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- 1. obdurate: stubborn
  - 2. celerity: swiftness
  - 3. monotonous: lacking in variety
  - 4. morose: gloomy
  - 5. lugubriously: mournfully
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- 1. Students share the three events where Spitz is continually arousing Buck for their opening activity. Record in journal.
    - a. Spitz is the dog that first stole Buck’s food
    - b. Spitz is the dog who laughed at Curly’s death
    - c. Spitz is now the leader of the dogsled team
  - 2. Students take possible quiz over Chapters 1-3.
  - 3. Students will complete Chapter Chart (Appendix F) while reading Chapter Four.
  - 4. The teacher will discuss the importance of the title in Chapter Four. How has the theme of the novel (survival of the fittest) affected Buck?
  - 5. When finished with Chapter Four, students will need a sheet of notebook paper.
  - 6. From this chapter, students will select three profound quotes, statements, thoughts, etc. that help support the meaning of the novel.
  - 7. On torn pieces of construction paper, students may use marker, chalk, pen, etc. to write down the three statements they believe to be helpful in understanding the theme.
  - 8. Once the students have completed their statements, the teacher displays them out in the hallway, around the room, etc.
  - 9. Some students may want to share what they chose and why they chose that statement, thought, or quote.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
- 1. Chapter Chart (Appendix F)
  - 2. Construction paper activity
  - 3. Possible quiz

**Lesson Six: The Toil of Trace and Trail**

A. *Daily Objectives*

- 1. Concept Objectives
  - a. Students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.
  - b. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
  - c. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.
- 2. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
  - a. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
  - b. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
  - c. Elements of Fiction-Plot, Setting, Theme, Point of View, Conflict, Suspense

- d. Literary Terms-Irony, Flashbacks, Foreshadowing,
  - e. Spelling-commonly misspelled words
  - f. Foreign Phrases- commonly used in English language
3. Skill Objectives
- a. The students will locate and identify the levels of conflict throughout the novel and relate them to real life.
  - b. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries.
  - c. The students will focus on sequencing, cause and effect, and predicting outcomes.
  - d. The students will compare and contrast one's life with the actions and emotions of the characters and animals in the novel.
  - e. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel.
- B. *Materials*
- 1. Copy of the novel *The Call of the Wild*
  - 2. (Appendix D): *The Call of the Wild* Journal Transparency
  - 3. *The Call of the Wild* Student Journal
  - 4. (Appendix F): *The Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart
  - 5. overhead projector
  - 6. white typing paper
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- 1. taut: stretched firmly
  - 2. gaiety: cheerfulness
  - 3. inexorable: relentless
  - 4. superfluous: more than is required
  - 5. averred: affirmed
  - 6. perambulating: walking through
  - 7. innocuously: harmless
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- 1. Students begin class with opening journal activity by answering journal number ten (Appendix D.)
  - 2. Teacher should allow students 3-5 minutes to respond to question in their journal.
  - 3. Some students may want to share their responses aloud.
  - 4. Students should have their copy of *The Call of the Wild*.
  - 5. Read Chapter Five.
  - 6. Students need to complete Chapter Chart (Appendix F) with Chapter Five.
  - 7. Teacher may want to give possible quiz over Chapters Four and Five.
  - 8. After reading Chapter Five, give each student a piece of white typing paper. Fold the piece of paper in half vertically, and then fold it in half once and then again resulting in a total of eight squares.
  - 9. Students will create their own comic strip of Chapter Five. They must have at least four scenes with a summary sentence at the bottom of each scene. If they do not finish in class, students may take home for homework.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
- 1. Possible quiz over Chapters Four and Five.
  - 2. Chapter Chart
  - 3. Chapter Five Comic Strip

### **Lesson Seven: For the Love of a Man**

#### A. *Daily Objectives*

- 1. Concept Objectives
  - a. Students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.

- b. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
    - c. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.
  - 2. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
    - a. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
    - b. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
    - c. Elements of Fiction-Plot, Setting, Theme, Point of View, Conflict, Suspense
    - d. Literary Terms-Irony, Flashbacks, Foreshadowing,
    - e. Spelling-commonly misspelled words
    - f. Foreign Phrases- commonly used in English language
  - 3. Skill Objectives
    - a. The students will locate and identify the levels of conflict throughout the novel and relate them to real life.
    - b. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries.
    - c. The students will focus on sequencing, cause and effect, and predicting outcomes.
    - d. The students will compare and contrast one's life with the actions and emotions of the characters and animals in the novel.
    - e. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. Student copy of *The Call of the Wild*
  - 2. (Appendix D): *The Call of the Wild* Journal Transparency
  - 3. *The Call of the Wild* Student Journals
  - 4. (Appendix F): *The Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart
  - 5. (Appendix B): *The Call of the Wild* Novel Literary Terms
  - 6. overhead projector
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  - 1. peremptorily: insisting on obedience
  - 2. provocation: provoking
  - 3. quibble: petty objection
  - 4. contagion: the spreading of a disease by contact or close association
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Students will begin opening activity by responding to journal entry number eleven (Appendix D.)
  - 2. Give students 3-5 minutes to respond in their journals. Be prepared to discuss and give examples.
  - 3. Relate student responses back to *The Call of the Wild* and Buck, Hal, Charles, Mercedes in Chapter 6.
  - 4. While reading Chapter Six, students need to complete the chapter chart paying close attention to the literary element of foreshadowing.
  - 5. After reading, students need to get into groups no larger than three. Each group needs to select a recorder and a reporter. Divide the Novel Literary Elements between group members. They may work together to help each member locate their answer, or they may work individually until the group's paper is complete.
  - 6. When finished locating the answers pertaining to Chapter Six, the reporter from each group will share with the rest of the class. Each group may add information or examples to the element that each group presents.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
  - 1. Possible study questions or quiz over the chapter.
  - 2. Novel Literary Element group presentations
  - 3. Chapter Chart

## Lesson Eight: The Sounding of the Call (Two Days)

### A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objectives
  - a. Students will understand that in life one must adapt to survive.
  - b. Students will recognize that literature reflects the unique aspects of a society.
  - c. Students will understand and appreciate that characters undergo a transformation due to events in the story.
2. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
  - a. Speaking and Listening-Participate civilly and productively in group discussions
  - b. Vocabulary-Greek and Latin Root Words
  - c. Elements of Fiction-Plot, Setting, Theme, Point of View, Conflict, Suspense
  - d. Literary Terms-Irony, Flashbacks, Foreshadowing,
  - e. Spelling-commonly misspelled words
  - f. Foreign Phrases- commonly used in English language
3. Skill Objectives
  - a. The students will locate and identify the levels of conflict throughout the novel and relate them to real life.
  - b. The students will interpret and apply vocabulary in meaningful written summaries.
  - c. The students will focus on sequencing, cause and effect, and predicting outcomes.
  - d. The students will compare and contrast one's life with the actions and emotions of the characters and animals in the novel.
  - e. Through interactive journals, the students will respond to specific situations in the novel.

### B. Materials

1. Student copy of *The Call of the Wild*.
2. (Appendix D): *The Call of the Wild* Journal Transparency
3. *The Call of the Wild* Student Journal
4. (Appendix F): *The Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart
5. white paper (11 x 17)
6. map colors, different colored pens

### C. Key Vocabulary

1. pertinacity: persistence
2. carnivorous: flesh-eating
3. palmed: hand shape
4. incarnate: human form
5. excrescence: unnatural growths

### D. Procedures/Activities

#### DAY ONE

1. Students will begin opening activity by responding to journal entry number sixteen (Appendix D.)
2. Give students 3-5 minutes to respond to question in their journals. Journals will be collected today after they finish. Make sure they have a complete heading and journal dates.
3. Discuss and share student responses to the journals.
4. Students read *Call of the Wild* Chapter Seven aloud, or they may listen to the cassette. I feel that reading the last chapter together makes an impact on the entire theme of the novel.
5. While reading the novel, students need to complete the *Call of the Wild* Chapter Chart.

#### DAY TWO

6. Review Chapter Chart and discuss answers in class.

7. When finished, give each student a piece of 11x17 white paper. Fold the paper into 5 vertical columns. Labeling from left to right, write “Character” in the first column, “Traits” in the second column, “Represents” in the third column, “Result” in the fourth column, and “Purpose” in the fifth column. Under “Character”, name five characters from the novel leaving space between them. Under “Traits”, give at least 2 adjectives that describe the behavior of that character and 2 descriptive words from the book. Under “Represents”, ask yourself, “What kind of person (generally speaking) does this character represent?” Under “Result”, look at what happens to this character because of his/her traits. Be very specific. Lastly, under “Purpose”, ask yourself, “What does Buck learn from this character?” Your information does not have to be in complete sentences. Use present tense. When you get to the purpose column regarding Buck, consider what the READER learns from Buck. One should have at least 2-3 good answers.
  8. Students may complete this project with a partner, but the work must be equal collaboration.
  9. The work may not be done on the computer.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Possible chapter quiz.
  2. Chapter Chart
  3. Character Traits Chart discussed above.

## VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. Create a book cover for each chapter of *The Call of the Wild*. Your illustrations may be final draft pencil sketches, or you may complete the illustrations in color. They need to be done on white drawing paper no larger than 8 ½ in. x 11in. The illustrations must reflect the title of each chapter.
- B. Create a greeting card from Buck’s point of view to Judge Miller and his family in the Santa Clara Valley. The greeting card must include an illustration on the front of where Buck is located at the time he is writing. The letter to them must include the following:  
Where is he located?  
What strife has he overcome?  
How did he overcome it?  
What does he think about on the trail?  
Where is he headed?  
Other information that might be pertinent.
- C. Create a mask of one of the characters (dogs included) or author from *The Call of the Wild*. The mask does not have to look like the character, but it may be covered with items that represent that character. The items may be drawn, or they may be actual items you have around the house that may represent that character. Your mask outline may be cardboard, foam board, construction paper, etc. The size of the mask must be at least 6” x 6”.

## VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

Appendices A – F

## VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## **Appendix A – Life’s Lessons: Survival of the Fittest**

### *Call of the Wild*

#### What Do You Know About Instinct?

Think about what you need to do to survive in the extreme conditions of the Yukon. With a partner, create a Venn diagram of what you would do by instinct and what you think you would need training to do in order to stay alive. Use different colors to denote the difference between the instincts and what you would need training to do. You will only have 10 minutes to complete your diagram. Be prepared to discuss your answers and tell why.

## Appendix B – Life’s Lessons: Survival of the Fittest

### *The Call of the Wild*

#### Novel Literary Terms

1. Novel: a work of fiction an author creates-longer than a short story  
Includes: Plot- complicated  
Characters- more, more developed  
Setting- more than one  
Theme- more than one
2. Plot: sequence of events
3. Characters: Major- Buck  
Minor- Perrault, Francois, John Thornton, other men, other dogs
4. Setting: How does the setting affect characters and outcome?  
1897 during Klondike gold rush
5. Conflict: problem
  1. humans searching for gold
  2. sled dogs and how they get along
6. Theme: main idea
  1. survival of the fittest
  2. relationship between humans and dogs
  3. destructive power and greed
  4. force of loyalty and love

## Appendix C – Life’s Lessons: Survival of the Fittest

### *The Call of the Wild*

#### Jack London Background Notes

##### **I. Childhood**

- A. born in San Francisco, CA
- B. parents were not married; his mother soon married John London who gave Jack his last name
- C. John London was a kind man but not much of a worker
- D. Jack was one of 12 children
- E. Jack left school in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade to help support the family
- F. Jack loved to read and constantly checked out books from the public library

##### **II. Education and Work**

- A. Jack tried many careers but usually failed at each. He spent 30 days in jail in New York for vagrancy at one time.
- B. He was a newspaper correspondent, an oyster pirate, a sailor, and a prospector.
- C. Jack returned to California after being in jail.
- D. He passed the necessary tests to graduate from high school.
- E. He attended college for one semester.
- F. After winning a newspaper prize in 1896 for a story he had written about a typhoon in Japan, he considered becoming a writer; unsuccessful at first.
- G. In 1897, he began writing about his adventures in the Klondike.
- H. In 1903, *The Call of the Wild* made him instantly famous and known world wide.
- I. He sold the rights to the book for \$2000.
- J. He became a prolific writer; wrote 50 books including *Sea Wolf* (1904) and *White Fang* (1906).
- K. Jack spent all his money on travel, yachts, ranches, and women.
- L. He went through two stormy marriages.
- M. He became a socialist (better known in Russia than in U.S.).
- N. He ran for mayor of Oakland, California.
- O. Jack London died in 1916.
- P. His death is still debatable: from illness due to drinking or suicide?

##### **III. Miscellaneous**

- A. One can visit Sonoma Valley, CA., today where London and his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife spent his last years
- B. Beauty Ranch is an 800 acre historic park.
- C. The walls to Wolf House, his dream home, are still standing; though the house mysteriously burned a few days before he and his wife were to move in.
- D. Jack London is one of America’s most famous writers. His brutal, raw style emphasizes his theory that only the fittest survive.
- E. Anthropomorphism, the most important theme, is a literary technique, which gives human feelings, emotions, and abilities to animals. An animal acts, thinks, and behaves as a human would. This is much more than personification.

## Appendix D – Life’s Lessons: Survival of the Fittest

### *The Call of the Wild*

#### Journal Topics

1. How does greed affect most people?
2. If greed were an animal, it would be a/an \_\_\_\_\_. Why?
3. Through observation, Buck learns that men and animals in his new life are different from those who were part of his old. Compare and contrast Buck’s experiences on the Judge’s ranch with his new ones.
4. Describe other events in history when greed took over and determined man’s behavior. Do not mention the Yukon Gold Rush.
5. Buck develops a set of behaviors in the Northland based on the generalizations he makes. Write a list of rules Buck follows as a result of these generalizations.
6. Animal behaviorists say that animals when threatened or in danger will either fight or flee. From what kinds of situations are humans most likely to flee? Under what conditions will humans fight? What options are available to humans in danger that are not available to animals?
7. The law of club and fang governed Buck’s new life. Describe the law of club and fang and the consequences of disobeying it.
8. Throughout the history of humankind, primitive or ancestral behaviors have become softened or diminished through the process of civilization. Sometimes, however, these behaviors resurface when humans encounter dilemmas that cannot be solved using civilized behavior that might emerge when humans encounter a difficult situation. Explain.
9. Memories of heredity have great power over Buck. Explain the effects of these memories.
10. People can learn from hindsight by applying what they have learned to new situations and problems. Imagine that Hal, Charles, and Mercedes are given a second chance. What would they do differently?
11. Obstacles such as stubbornness or self-centeredness often prevent people from being good problem solvers. Describe a time when your own stubbornness or self-centeredness prevented you from solving a problem.
12. John Thornton exclaims that Buck can all but speak. If Buck could speak, what would he say to Thornton? Describe his feelings for Thornton and explain why Thornton is his best master.
13. The novel depicts a special relationship between a dog and a man. Discuss the ingredients that make this relationship so special.
14. Those people who ventured into the Northland might be said to have heard and followed their own call of the wild. Define this call and describe the talents, abilities, and instincts necessary for survival in the wilderness.

## **Appendix D (cont'd) – Life's Lessons: Survival of the Fittest**

### *The Call of the Wild*

#### Journal Topics

15. Suppose Buck had returned to find his master and the camp just as he had left it. Describe what happens between Buck and John Thornton after Buck returns.
16. Some readers have considered Buck's struggle to return to nature similar to their own struggle to escape the bureaucracy and technology of most everyday lives. Do humans have the same options as Buck? Is it possible for them to return to nature? Why do you think as you do?
17. Some philosophers believe that pain should not be avoided but welcomed because it makes man stronger and better equipped to survive. So you agree?

## **Appendix E – Life’s Lessons: Survival of the Fittest**

### *Call of the Wild*

#### List of Characters

*The following human beings appear in the book:*

#### **Judge Miller**

Buck’s owner; a man who owns a huge plantation in California’s Santa Clara Valley.

#### **Molly and Alice Miller**

The Judge’s daughters whom Buck protects when they go on long walks.

#### **Manuel**

A Mexican; one of the Judge’s gardener’s helpers. Because of his mounting gambling debts, Manuel steals Buck and sells him to a ring of dognappers.

#### **The Man in the Red Sweater**

An unnamed person whom Buck remembers for the rest of his life because this is the person who teaches Buck the lesson that “a man with a club was a lawgiver, a master to be obeyed.”

#### **Perrault and Francois**

Two Frenchman who are Buck’s first new masters. They work for the Canadian government, delivering dispatches to outposts throughout the frozen North.

#### **A Scotch Half-breed**

Buck’s second master; he also delivers mail in the North. He is a competent master, but because of the demands made on him, he has to overwork the dogs.

#### **“Black” Burton**

A vicious who attacks Thornton; he, in turn, is attacked by Buck.

#### **An Ape-like Man**

A “hairy” man with a bent back; he accompanies the Scotch half-breed on the mail routes.

#### **Charles**

An inept middle-aged master of Buck’s; Charles comes from the South, and he does not understand the ways of the North or how to handle dogs.

#### **Mercedes**

Charles’s wife; she attempts to live in the North as if she were on an “extended social camping trip.”

#### **Hal**

Mercedes’s brother; he carries a whip, a gun, and a knife, and he is cruel to Buck.

#### **John Thornton**

The man who rescues Buck from Charles, Hal, and Mercedes, and he is the man to whom Buck becomes immensely devoted.

## Appendix E (cont'd) – Life's Lessons: Survival of the Fittest

### *Call of the Wild*

#### List of Characters

##### **Hans and Pete**

John Thornton's partners; they accompany him on his expedition for the lost gold mine.

##### **Matthewson**

The man who bets Thornton that Buck cannot pull a thousand-pound loaded sled.

##### **Jim O'Brien**

John Thornton's friend; he lends Thornton a thousand dollars to make the wager with Matthewson.

##### **The Yeehats**

A fierce tribe of Indians who murder John Thornton and his partners, Hans and Pete.

*The following animals play an important role in this novel and have characteristics very similar to those of human beings (called anthropomorphism):*

##### **Buck**

This dog is the "main character" of the novel. Buck's father was a huge Saint Bernard, and Buck's mother was a huge Scotch shepherd dog. The central concern of *The Call of the Wild* is Buck's transformation from a civilized dog of the South to an animal capable of coping with the most adverse conditions in the Far North. Buck is used to illustrate London's idea of the "survival of the fittest" and the retreat to the potential primitive or primordial beast which lies within each animal or individual. This is also a magnification of the philosophy of naturalism, a philosophy which London was often concerned with in his writings.

##### **Curly**

Buck's friend and companion on the arduous boat trip to the North. Curly is described as a "good-natured Newfoundland." Curly does not survive long, however, and Buck learns a painful lesson when he sees how easily Curly is killed while trying to be friendly with another dog.

##### **Spitz**

The dog which kills Curly; not unexpectedly, Spitz becomes Buck's most bitter enemy. Later, Spitz is killed by Buck in a dog fight incident which is central to the novel. Buck's victory entitles him to take over the commanding power position, which once belonged to Spitz. Buck's fight-to-the-death with Spitz illustrates Buck's ability to survive among even the most primitive elements.

##### **Dave, Billee, Joe, Sol-leks, Dolly, Pike, and Dub**

Other dogs which serve on the dogsled team with Buck.

##### **Skeet and Nig**

Two of John Thornton's dogs which he owned before he adopts Buck.

**Appendix F: Life's Lessons: Survival of the Fittest**

*Call of the Wild*

Chapter Chart

*The Call of the Wild*, Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

**SETTING:** (Briefly describe setting)

**CHARACTERS: MAJOR:** (Briefly describe)

**MINOR:** (Briefly describe)

**VOCABULARY:**

**SEQUENCE PLOT:**

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

**PROFOUND THOUGHTS/IDEAS/COMMENTS:**