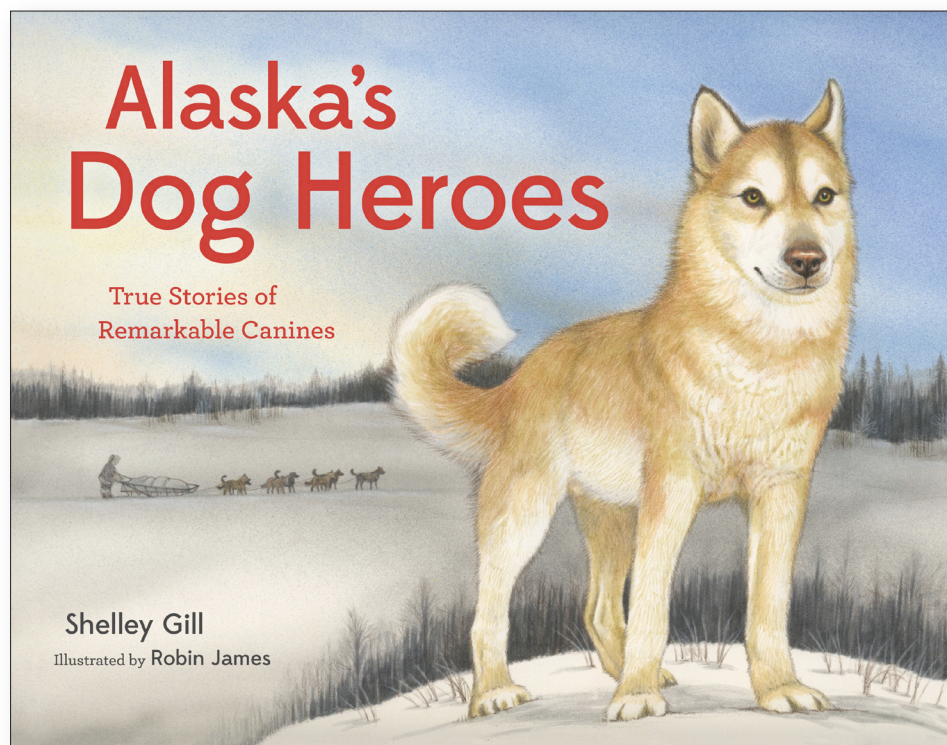


The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for Grades 2–3.

Teacher's Guide



ALASKA'S DOG HEROES

True Stories of Remarkable Canines

Written by Shelley Gill

Illustrated by Robin James

little bigfoot
an imprint of sasquatch books
www.sasquatchbooks.com



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GRADE LEVEL

2-3

OBJECTIVE

Students will read this nonfiction title independently, extend vocabulary, and participate in a class discussion. Then they will complete individual research and writing exercises based on the book, making oral presentations from their research.

OVERVIEW

Dogs really are a person's best friend in Alaska. These true canine stories from the last frontier describe remarkable acts of intelligence, stamina, loyalty, and heroism by some of Alaska's most famous dogs. From traversing mountains in winter with deliveries of life-saving medicine to fighting off bears and finding lost children, these canines perform amazing deeds. Each exciting story is accompanied by realistic illustrated portraits of these remarkable dogs.

PRE-READING

Ask students to keep a vocabulary notebook as they read the book. Instruct them to record any unfamiliar words or phrases, note their interpretation of the word from the context, and then use a physical or online dictionary to look up and record the real definition.



POST-READING CLASS DISCUSSION

Ask students to describe some of the dog “jobs” and the ways that dogs helped and rescued people, as described in the book.

- * Is one of the dogs’ contributions more important than the others?
- * Which dog would they most like to have met?
- * Had they heard of any of these dogs before they read the book?
- * Do they know any other dog or animal rescue stories?
- * What does it mean to be a hero?

There are many different dog breeds represented in the book through both narrative and illustrations.

- * Did students enjoy the illustrations?
- * What words would they use to describe the images (realistic, detailed, colorful)?
- * How many of the students have pets?
- * Do any of the students have a similar dog to one of these heroes?
- * What jobs could their pet do?
- * Do they feel that their pet is capable of heroic action?

Lead a discussion about Alaska.

- * Have any students been to Alaska, or lived there?
- * What did they know about Alaska before reading the book?
- * What did they learn about the state from reading the book?
- * What do the backgrounds of the illustrations tell them about Alaska?
- * How is the state different from the one where they live?
- * Do they find any of the Alaskan jobs depicted in the book interesting? (Examples: dog musher, scientist, explorer, police officer.)
- * Have they read any other books about Alaska? How are those books different from this one?



POST-READING GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Show the class a map of Alaska. Page through the book again together, finding and marking places and dates mentioned in the book: cities, rivers, mountains, etc.
2. Measure out a length of string equivalent to the map's length of the Iditarod Trail (1,150 miles, from Anchorage to Nome). Then show a map of the United States and place one end of the string on your town. How far away does the string take the class? Can students imagine taking such a long trip—by dogsled?
3. Create a historical timeline using the dates mentioned in the book. What does this say about dogs' value to people living in working in Alaska?

POST-READING INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

Have students choose one of the following topics, do research and write a report, following up with an oral presentation to the class.

1. Choose one of the dog breeds featured in the book. Examples: Alaskan husky mix; Siberian husky; yellow mastiff; Saint Bernard; bull terrier; border collie; German Shepherd.
2. Choose one of the following events or awards, mentioned in the book:
 - * Fur Rendezvous
 - * Iditarod
 - * Alaska Sweepstakes
 - * Humanitarian Award
 - * Golden Harness Award
 - * National Dog Hero of the Year Award
3. There are working dogs all over the world, not just in Alaska. Include dogs from a variety of geographic locations, and investigate why the location might be important to the work done.

CRITICAL WRITING—WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Have students choose one of the following to write about:

1. Choose two narratives from the book and compare them. Do they think one story is more interesting than the other? Why? Do the dogs behave the same way, or differently? How?
2. Choose one of the pictures in the book and describe how it shows the heroism of the dog. How does the picture illustrate the character and personality of the dogs? Which animal do they think was the bravest? Why?
3. The inscription on Balto's statue reads: Endurance, Fidelity, Intelligence. Describe what these words mean and how those words apply to Balto and his actions.

CREATIVE WRITING

Have students choose one of the following to write about:

1. Choose an illustration from the book and write an original story about what is happening.
2. Choose an illustration and narrative from the book and rewrite the narrative from the dog's point of view. Would the dog have thought its actions heroic, or was it just doing its job? Does the dog enjoy its "work"?
3. Write an original story about a dog helping or rescuing a person.

MORE RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

The official Iditarod website has an excellent education center with teacher resources and games and activities for students: Iditarod.com/teachers/students

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS THIS GUIDE ALIGNS WITH:

Grade 2

Reading Informational Text and Foundational Skills: RI.2.1, RI.2.2, RI.2.3, RI.2.4, RI.2.6, RI.2.7, RI.2.10, RF.2.3, RF.2.4, RF.2.4a, RF.2.4c

Writing: W.2.1, W.2.2, W.2.5, W.2.8

Speaking and Listening: SL.2.1, SL.2.1a, SL.2.1b, SL.2.1c, SL.2.3, SL.2.4, SL.2.6

Language: L.2.1, L.2.2, L.2.3, L.2.4, L.2.4a, L.2.4e, L.2.5

Grade 3

Reading Informational Text and Foundational Skills: RI.3.1, RI.3.2, RI.3.3, RI.3.4, RI.3.5, RI.3.6, RI.3.7, RI.3.8, RI.3.10, RF.3.3, RF.3.4, RF.3.4a, RF.3.4c

Writing: W.3.1, W.3.1a, W.3.1b, W.3.1c, W.3.1d, W.3.2, W.3.2b, W.3.2c, W.3.2d, W.3.3, W.3.3c, W.3.3d, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.7, W.3.8, W.3.10

Speaking and Listening: SL.3.1, SL.3.1a, SL.3.1b, SL.3.1c, SL.3.1d, SL.3.3, SL.3.4, SL.3.6

Language: L.3, L.3.2, L.3.2g, L.3.3, L.3.3a, L.3.3b, L.3.4, L.3.4a, L.3.4d

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards> - visit the Common Core State Standards website to read about the individual standards.