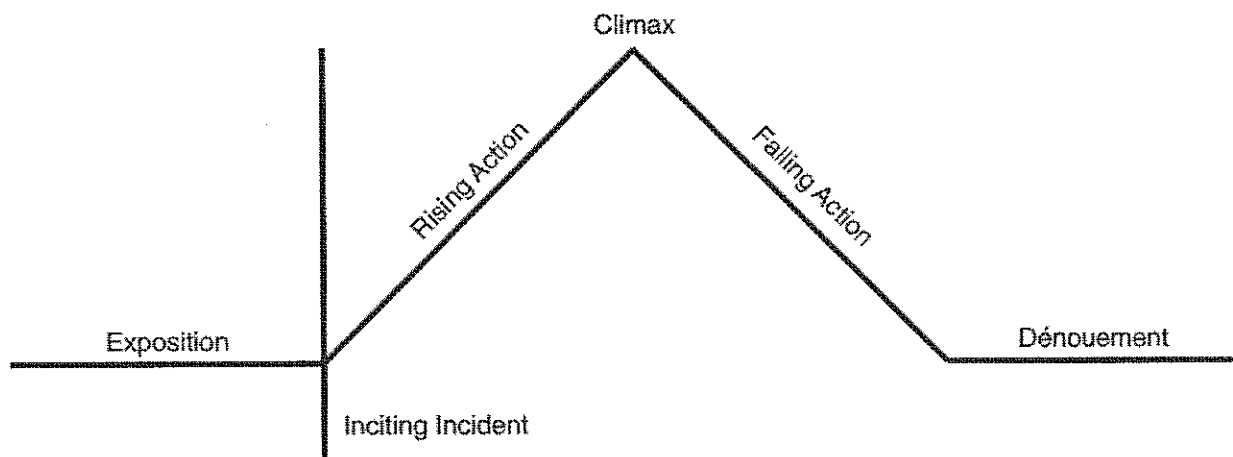


Overview

1. *Dramatic structure* refers to the parts into which the plot of a story or novel can be divided. A German novelist and dramatist named Gustav Freytag (1816–1895) developed a diagram that is widely used today, to analyze dramatic structure.



Freytag's Pyramid, shown here, typically divides the plot into specific parts, as follows:

- *Exposition*—The writer introduces the characters and setting, providing the background information needed to understand the story.
- *Inciting incident*—A single incident in the story's action without which there would be no story. This is sometimes called "the complication."
- *Rising action*—The story builds and secondary conflicts are introduced. Various obstacles come into play that keep the protagonist from reaching his or her goal.
- *Climax*—The moment of greatest tension in the story, as well as the turning point in the action.
- *Falling action*—Events take place as a result of the climax, and the story begins to be resolved.
- *Dénouement*—(day noo mah) a French term, literally meaning "unraveling" or "unknot," this is the resolution of the story. Any remaining questions are answered and the final outcome of the conflict is revealed.

Next to each of the headings for dramatic structure below, fill in the events from *The Call of the Wild* that occur in this stage. Do not try to list every event that takes place in the novel, but summarize those that propel the plot forward.

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Exposition:

Inciting incident:

Rising action:

Climax:

Falling action:

Dénouement:

2. The *theme* of a story is the lesson about life, or main idea, an author hopes to get across to the reader, though often more than one theme may be found in a work of literature. Themes can be discovered in many ways: by observing character growth and change; by evaluating conflict and resolution; by evaluating symbolism; and by paying attention to ideas that are stressed and repeated in the story. Select one of the following themes and explain how this theme is presented in the novel. What does the author seem to be saying about this subject? Use examples from the text to support your statements. You may also name and write about your own theme.

purity of nature
survival of the fittest

pride
greed

moral relativism
transitory nature of man

Chapter 1

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Part Two:

Match each of the following words with its definition on the right.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 7. _____ imperiously | a. to hint at |
| 8. _____ insular | b. yieldingly |
| 9. _____ progeny | c. regally; domineeringly |
| 10. _____ intimated | d. present throughout |
| 11. _____ calamity | e. offspring; children |
| 12. _____ impending | f. sullen and gloomy |
| 13. _____ genial | g. pleasant and friendly |
| 14. _____ docilely | h. disaster |
| 15. _____ morose | i. isolated and protected |
| 16. _____ pervaded | j. about to occur |

Questions:

1. Describe Buck's life at Judge Miller's house.
2. Why does Manuel kidnap and sell Buck?
3. Why does Buck allow Manuel to put a rope around his neck?
4. Describe the change in Buck's appearance and temperament after his two days on the express train.
5. What is the "reign of primitive law," and how does Buck learn about it?

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6. How does Buck meet this new law halfway?
7. How does Buck feel about his new masters, Perrault and François?

Anthropomorphism/Personification:

Anthropomorphism (sometimes also called *personification*) is a literary technique in which animals, objects, or even abstract concepts are given human qualities and characteristics.

8. Describe three ways in which London treats Buck as a human character.

9. How does Buck's anthropomorphism affect the story and the way it is told?
10. Why do you think London chose to tell the story through Buck's perspective?

Analysis:

11. Why does the author describe Buck as royalty in the beginning of the chapter?
12. Describe the feelings of oppression that Buck experiences during his journey and his breaking by the man in the red sweater. To what human experience could this be similar?

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13. The author makes several statements about Buck during his ordeal with the man in the red sweater. Explain the following statements:
- a. "He was beaten (he knew that); but he was not broken."
 - b. "The facts of life took on a fiercer aspect; and while he faced that aspect uncowed, he faced it with all the latent cunning of his nature aroused."
14. Why is Buck ashamed when the others laugh at his reaction to snow?
15. After Buck's fight with the man in the red sweater, London says it was Buck's "introduction to the reign of primitive law," or "the law of club and fang," as London says in the next chapter. This "law" is well-known but called by different names in our culture. Write down one or two phrases that are similar to the law of club and fang and describe the same thing.

Dig Deeper:

16. Read 1 Timothy 6:6–10. What people mentioned in this first chapter illustrate the warning in verses 9 and 10? How might this set the tone for the book?
17. What does London mean by the phrase "the reign of primitive law"? Does it imply cooperative or antagonistic relationships between characters in the novel? Read Matthew 22:34–40. How do these verses compare with "primitive law"?

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18. The “reign of primitive law” implies that the law is created and enforced by the strong, and those under the law obey only so far as they are weaker than those in power. In other words, men and dogs obey only by force and coercion. Read 1 Peter 2:13–25. What do these verses say about obedience to man’s laws and to God’s laws?
19. Why does God command us to submit to harsh masters as well as good and gentle ones? Whose example are we to follow?

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Chapter 2

Vocabulary:

Part One:

Many words we use are actually word combinations from other languages. For instance, the word *combine* comes from Latin *com* (together) + *bini* (two together) or “two by two”; so *combine* means joining several things together. Using the word segments in the table below, determine the meanings of the following words. Use a dictionary to confirm your definition.

| Word Segments | |
|-----------------------|---|
| carn: flesh | ord/order: order, rank, class |
| con-: with; together | pense: hang, weigh, think |
| dis-/di-: apart, away | prim-/prime-/primo-: first, chief, foremost |
| ev-: time, eternity | retro-: back, backwards |
| gress: step | sola/sol: comfort |
| in-: on, into, not | spect-/spic-: to look at |
| intro-: in, into | |

1. primordial:
2. introspective:
3. incarnation:
4. disconsolate:
5. retrogression:

Questions:

1. How does Curly's death teach Buck about the law of club and fang?
2. Describe Buck's two reactions to Curly's death.
3. How does Buck learn to pull the sled?
4. Why can't Spitz discipline Joe?

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5. Both Dave and Sol-leks seem indifferent to the other dogs. Describe the transformation of their personalities when they pull the sled.
6. Explain why this personality change is important to the story.
7. List four characteristics Buck acquires as he transforms into a more primitive sled dog.

Analysis:

8. *Setting* refers to the time, place, and environment in which a story takes place. Describe the setting of the opening of Chapter 2.
9. Why does London describe Buck's fear of being trapped when he awakens in his snow nest as a "token that he [Buck] was harking back through his own life to the lives of his forebears?"
10. London focuses on Buck's education in the ways of the frozen north, from his learning the primitive laws to finding a place to sleep. Even Perrault "prided himself on his knowledge . . . which . . . was indispensable." Why is knowledge so important?
11. *Hyperbole* (hi-PER-bo-lee) is a literary term for dramatic exaggeration to emphasize, shock, or amuse. For example, "Randall was so skinny, when he stuck out his tongue he looked like a zipper" is hyperbole to amuse. On the other hand, "When Henrietta realized she had slept through her

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8:00 a.m. biology exam, her head exploded,” is hyperbole for shock or emphasis. Find one instance of hyperbole in the first paragraph of Chapter 2, and explain why the statement is hyperbole.

12. In the last paragraph of Chapter 2, London says of the changes in Buck, “Thus, as token of what a puppet thing life is, the ancient song surged through him and he came into his own again.” What does London mean by the phrase “a puppet thing”? Look up the term *determinism*. Based on London’s language in this paragraph, do you think his statements are deterministic?

13. By calling Buck’s former life a “puppet thing,” London suggests that perhaps his former life was not real living, but the harshness of his new life allows him to truly live. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.

Dig Deeper:

Toward the end of Chapter 2, London makes some statements about Buck and about changes in his value system as he struggles to adapt to his new situations and environment. Consider the following passages:

Read

This first theft marked Buck as fit to survive in the hostile Northland environment. It marked his adaptability, his capacity to adjust himself to changing conditions, the lack of which would have meant swift and terrible death. It marked further decay or going to pieces of his moral nature, a vain thing and a handicap in the ruthless struggle for existence. It was all well enough in the Southland, under the law of love and fellowship, to respect private property and personal feelings; but in the Northland, under the law of club and fang, who so took such things into account was a fool, and in so far as he observed them he would fail to prosper.

. . . the completeness of his decivilization was not evidenced by his ability to flee from the defence of a moral consideration and so save his hide. . . . In short, the things he did were done because it was easier to do them than not to do them.

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14. According to London, how does Buck's theft of food enable him to adapt to the ways of the North?

15. Why does London say that Buck's moral nature was "a vain thing and a handicap"?

16. Look up the terms *moral relativism*, *pragmatism*, and *moral absolutism*. According to the definitions you find, which term best describes what London is describing in the quotations above?

17. Read Exodus 20:1–17 and Mark 12:28–34. Referring back to the definitions you found of moral relativism, pragmatism, and moral absolutism, which term best describes the statements in these scriptures?

18. In the large quotation above from the book, London writes that whoever followed "the law of love and fellowship . . . private property and personal feelings . . . was a fool, and in so far as he observed them he would fail to prosper." We remember that in the context of the book London is talking about a dog, but do people have such beliefs about their own lives and situations? Must one cheat in school to get good grades? Do business people have to cheat customers or employees to keep ahead and compete? Do we have to hedge the truth, bend the rules, to succeed?

explain!

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do 2 19 Read Genesis 39; Daniel 3:1–30; Daniel 6; Acts 3:1–10 and 4:1–21. Next to the names of the people below, write what hardship or threat they faced and how they responded.

Threat/Hardship

Response

Joseph:

Shadrach, Meshach,
Abednego:

Daniel:

Peter & John:

20. London also says that anyone who does not discard his moral nature “would fail to prosper.” Review the situations of the men in the previous question. Is it true that holding to the truth caused them to fail to prosper? Is prospering more important than being right and having a clear conscience? Read Matthew 6:19–21, 25–34. What does this passage say about worrying about prospering and our priorities?

Chapter 3

Vocabulary:

Part One:

Many words have more than one meaning. Use the context clues to choose the correct meaning of the underlined word in each sentence.

1. _____ "He was not prone to rashness and precipitate action . . . he betrayed no impatience, and shunned all offensive acts."
 - a. casting down
 - b. done hastily or without deliberation
 - c. separating from a solution
2. _____ "But when Buck finished his ration and returned, he found his nest occupied."
 - a. a fixed allowance of food
 - b. to restrict consumption
 - c. to supply
3. _____ "Perrault was carrying dispatches if anything more urgent than those he brought in . . ."
 - a. conveyances for delivering goods
 - b. written messages
 - c. acts of putting to death
4. _____ "... Dub turned up a snowshoe rabbit, blundered it, and missed."
 - a. uttered something thoughtless
 - b. made a serious error
 - c. moved clumsily
5. _____ "He was ranging at the head of the pack . . ."
 - a. to cover a large area, great distance
 - b. to stretch out or extend
 - c. the scope of a project

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Part Two:

Match the vocabulary word on the left with its definition on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. _____ divined | a. intensely |
| 2. _____ timid | b. acting hastily |
| 3. _____ capsized | c. perceived |
| 4. _____ goaded | d. not submitting to authority |
| 5. _____ treacherously | e. unyielding |
| 6. _____ marauders | f. unity |
| 7. _____ resolutely | g. urged |
| 8. _____ rashness | h. unavoidable |
| 9. _____ inevitable | i. shy or unsure |
| 10. _____ insubordination | j. characterized by determination |
| 11. _____ solidarity | k. something shadowy; ghost |
| 12. _____ placatingly | l. traitorous |
| 13. _____ wraith | m. done in an appeasing way |
| 14. _____ keenly | n. attackers; thieves |
| 15. _____ inexorable | o. overturned |

Questions:

1. What provokes Buck's attack on Spitz when the team is camped on the ice?
2. What does the word *score* mean as it is used in the statement "starving huskies, four or five score of them"?
3. What stops the first fight between Buck and Spitz?

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4. Why is François worried about “madness” after the husky invasion?

5. Name two ways in which Buck interferes with Spitz’s leadership.

6. What is the result of the lack of discipline on the team?

Character:

London uses the character of the dogs to advance the story and to give meaning to the fight between Buck and Spitz.

7. Throughout the novel, Buck has continued to devolve into a primitive beast. Describe his character at the beginning of Chapter 3.

8. Describe Spitz’s character.

9. Why does London imply that Buck and Spitz were destined to fight to the death?

10. Twice Spitz takes advantage of Buck when he is at a disadvantage—when the huskies attack and when Dolly chases him to the point of exhaustion. What does this tell about Spitz’s character?

Analysis:

11. London notes that most Southland dogs do not make it in the North. What makes Buck different?

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12. Authors often use word repetition to bring emphasis to an idea and make it stick in readers' minds. Sometimes repetition can bring a lyrical rhythm or a staccato punctuation to a passage as it drives home the association of the repeated word with the desired subject. The apostle John, in the first chapter of his gospel in the Bible, makes good use of this technique. In John 1:1–2, he writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." John repeats *Word* (referring to Jesus) and *God*, drawing a strong connection and relationship between the two. In verses 4 through 9, he uses the technique again,

In him [the Word, Jesus] was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

Within these verses, John very quickly and effectively connects the *Word* (Jesus), *God*, and *light* in readers' minds, creating a clear and lasting association that communicates much of what John wants to say about Jesus in a very short time.

In Chapter 3, shortly after Dolly goes mad with rabies, London describes why Buck wants leadership of the team and why the dogs of the team work as they do. What word does London repeat to describe their motivation and actions? What impression does the repetition of the word create?

13. London says about the final fight with Spitz, "...the scene came to Buck with a sense of familiarity. He seemed to remember it all . . ."
- In what way could Buck remember the fight?
 - What is London implying about Buck?

14. How is Buck finally able to defeat Spitz?

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15. Why do you think imagination works against Spitz?

Dig Deeper:

do 4 16. As mentioned in an earlier question, in one segment of Chapter 3 London writes about the pride of Buck and the other dogs in their work. Read the following verses on pride and figure out whether each is describing or discussing acceptable or unacceptable pride, then mark each one G for good pride or B for bad pride.

- _____ a. Proverbs 8:13
- _____ b. 2 Corinthians 8:24
- _____ c. Proverbs 11:2
- _____ d. Galatians 6:4
- _____ e. Proverbs 13:10
- _____ f. Proverbs 16:18

- _____ g. James 1:9
- _____ h. Proverbs 17:6
- _____ i. Proverbs 21:24
- _____ j. Proverbs 29:23
- _____ k. 2 Corinthians 7:4

17. Based on the passage in the book and the above scriptures, is the pride Buck feels and acts on a good pride or a bad pride? ~~How about the pride the other dogs feel?~~ Explain your answer.

18. In the middle of Chapter 3, London describes Buck's campaign to gain leadership of the team:

He openly threatened the other's [Spitz's] leadership. He came between him and the shirks he should have punished. . . . Buck still continued to interfere . . . but he did it craftily. . . . Trouble was always afoot, and at the bottom of it was Buck. . . . The insidious revolt led by Buck had destroyed the solidarity of the team. . . . In fact, his conduct approached that of a bully. . . .

★ What are the results of Buck's actions? Are his actions fair to the rest of the team and Perrault and François?

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19. Again we keep in mind that London is writing about dogs, but we also want to examine the ideas of the story as they may relate to our own lives. Read Matthew 10:16; Romans 16:19; and Luke 16:8–13. What do these verses say about our knowledge of the way in which the world works versus our own actions within the world? How is this different from Buck's actions?

20. Read Romans 12.

- a. What does God command in relation to pride?
- b. How does he expect us to live with each other?
- c. How does he tell us to deal with our enemies?
- d. How well do Buck's actions in this chapter fit with the instructions in Romans 12?

Optional Activities:

Group discussion: How can we tell good pride from bad pride? Is it always bad to be proud of something we have done? Is it always good to put ourselves down, deflect attention to someone else, or minimize our accomplishments or actions? How do we find the right balance between bad pride and good pride?

Chapter 4

Vocabulary:

Part One:

Use the context clues in the following sentences to determine the meanings of the underlined words. Compare your definitions with the dictionary definitions.

1. "At the Rink Rapids, two native huskies, Teek and Koona, were added; and the celerity with which Buck broke them in took away François's breath."

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

2. "For three days Perrault and François . . . were deluged with invitations to drink, while the team was the constant centre of a worshipful crowd of dog-busters and mushers."

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

3. "It was a monotonous life, operating with machine-like regularity."

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

4. "About his body there was . . . a quick alertness as of one who lived in perpetual fear of things seen and unseen."

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

Questions:

1. Why does François harness Sol-leks as the lead dog after Spitz is killed?

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2. What does Buck do in response?

3. François threatens Buck with the club when Buck refuses to allow Sol-leks the lead. How does Buck finally get his way and become lead dog?

4. What kind of lead dog is Buck?

5. Name three changes in the team as a result of Buck's leadership.

6. What happens to François and Perrault? How does this affect Buck?

Dialect:

Dialect refers to the unique way characters speak. Authors often use it to distinguish between characters and to tell more about the geographic and social status of a character.

7. In Chapter 1, London tells us François was a French-Canadian half-breed. Translate the following statement made by François:

a. "Eh? Wot I say? I spik true w'en I say dat Buck two devils."

b. "Look at dat Buck. Heem keel dat Spitz, heem t'ink to take de job."

8. How does the dialect add to the authenticity of the story?

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Analysis:

9. Why does Buck insist on being the lead dog?
10. London states that Buck does not like the monotonous toil of delivering the mail. Why do you think he liked working François's and Perrault's assignment better?
11. Why do the drivers attend to the dogs first each night when they stop to make camp?
12. In the middle of Chapter 3, Buck dreams of his past and of things deeper in the past. Describe Buck's dream of the deep past. Look up *instinct*. Is Buck's dream part of instinct or something else?
13. Why does Dave still attempt to pull the sled even though he is deathly ill and too weak to pull?
14. Dave chews through the traces of the other dogs in order to be allowed back in place. Why do the men let him pull even though they know it will kill him?
15. Why does the Scottish man shoot Dave?

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Dig Deeper:

16. London was influenced by his readings of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and Herbert Spencer's ideas of the survival of the fittest. Look up these terms and briefly summarize each of these theories.

17. Read Genesis 1:20–31. How does the Bible describe the creation of living things on the earth? Is there a specific phrase in these verses that seems to contradict Darwin's theory of evolution?

18. The last two chapters have dealt with the stronger animal, Buck, ascending to superiority through conflict and death, and a weaker dog, Dave, dying. Read Matthew 5:38–48, 20:25–28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12–15. What does the Bible say about the interactions of the strong and the weak and how people should treat each other? How do these principles differ from the world-view London presents in these chapters?

19. At the end of Chapter 3, London writes,

The men ceased talking. A revolver-shot rang out. The whips snapped, the bells tinkled merrily, the sleds churned along the trail; but Buck knew, and every dog knew, what had taken place behind the belt of river trees.

What do you think London is trying to say by the last sentence? What do you think he is implying?

Chapter 5

Vocabulary:

Part One:

Using the word parts in the Word Segments box, determine the meanings of the words below. Use a dictionary to confirm your definition.

Word Segments

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ambulate: to move, steps | pend: hang |
| articul: joints, jointed | pre-: before |
| con-: with; together | per: thoroughly, completely; all over |
| fluere: to flow | sens: feeling, awareness |
| jud/judis: to form an opinion | super-: excessive, more than |
| in-/im-: upon, into, not | vuls: pull, tear, twitch |

1. superfluous:
2. prejudices:
3. perambulating:
4. insensible:
5. impending:
6. inarticulate:
7. convulsed:

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Part Two:

Match the vocabulary word on the left with its definition on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. _____ feigned | a. abrupt |
| 2. _____ interval | b. complaint |
| 3. _____ remonstrance | c. craving a large quantity |
| 4. _____ repugnance | d. full of |
| 5. _____ imperative | e. pretended |
| 6. _____ voracious | f. begged for |
| 7. _____ incompetence | g. necessary |
| 8. _____ importuned | h. period of time |
| 9. _____ terse | i. lack of ability |
| 10. _____ fraught | j. strong distaste |

Questions:

- ① Why are Buck and the other dogs so tired and worn out when they arrive at Skagway?

- ② London initially describes Buck's new owners, Hal and Charles, as, "manifestly out of place." Why does London say this about them? If they are so out of place, why are they in the North?

3. How does Mercedes impede the packing of the sled?

- ④ List ²three reasons the dogs cannot move Hal and Charles' sled.

5. Why do Buck and the team scatter all of their new owners' belongings?

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6. Why does Mercedes insist on riding on the sled, even when the dogs are weak and literally starving to death?
7. Why does Buck refuse to move when they finally stagger into John Thornton's camp?
8. How does Buck's refusal to continue both almost kill him and ultimately save his life?

Irony:



Irony is an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant, or between appearance and reality. Types of irony include *verbal irony*, *dramatic irony*, and *situational irony*. In verbal irony, the author or character says one thing but means something entirely different. Dramatic irony describes when the reader sees a character's mistakes but the character is unable to see his mistakes. Read the following passage and describe how each is ironic:

9. "She was Charles's wife and Hal's sister—a nice family party."
10. "But Mercedes interfered, crying, . . . 'Now you must promise you won't be harsh with them for the rest of the trip, or I won't go a step.' 'Precious lot you know about dogs,' her brother sneered."
11. "The two men, however, were quite cheerful. And they were proud, too. They were doing the thing in style, with fourteen dogs."
12. "They worked the trip out with a pencil, so much to a dog, so many dogs, so many days, Q.E.D. Mercedes looked over their shoulders and nodded comprehensively, it was all so very simple."

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13. "Charles and Hal wrangled whenever Mercedes gave them a chance. . . . Sometimes Mercedes sided with her husband, sometimes with her brother. The result was a beautiful and unending family quarrel."

Analysis:

14. Why does Buck not trust his new masters?

15. When the food runs low, Hal shoots Dub. Compare and contrast this shooting with the Scottish half-breed's shooting of Dave in the previous chapter. How are the two the same? How are they different?

16. Describe Mercedes' character. Use examples from the text to illustrate your answer.

17. In literature, a *foil* is something, that, by contrast, reveals more clearly or dramatically the thing with which it is being contrasted. In the middle of Chapter 5, London describes two things that are almost opposite to each other, yet are happening at the same time. What are these two things? What is London trying to emphasize by putting them in juxtaposition?

18. A *paradox* is a statement that seems to contradict itself, yet is true. For example, in 2 Corinthians, Paul says, "For when I am weak, then I am strong." In the middle of Chapter 5, London describes the dogs as "perambulating skeletons." What is paradoxical about "perambulating skeletons"?

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19. An *allusion* is a reference in one work of literature to something found in another work of literature or an historical event or person. An author's use of allusion is intended to add another level of meaning to the events in his story. What possible allusion does London make shortly after Hal tells John Thornton, "All the same, we'll go on to Dawson."

- 20 John Thornton knows that Hal, Charles, and Mercedes will not follow his advice, and he believes that it is fruitless to come between fools and their folly. Why then does he stop Hal from beating Buck to death?

Dig Deeper:

21. Near the middle of Chapter 5, London describes how Charles and Hal figured out the supplies they needed to feed the dogs on their journey:

They worked the trip out with a pencil, so much [food] to a dog, so many dogs, so many days, Q.E.D. Mercedes looked over their shoulders and nodded comprehensively, it was all so very simple.

Was it actually "so very simple"? Why or why not? Explain why their planning did or did not work.

- 22 Read Proverbs 12:15; 15:22; 19:20; 24:5–6. How do these verses relate to Hal's, Charles', and Mercedes' actions in this chapter? How might their fate have been different if they had acted in accordance with these verses?

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23. Review the attitudes and actions of Hal, Charles, and Mercedes toward each other. Using two or three examples from the text, explain how their attitudes and interactions affected the group and their progress.
24. Read Galatians 5:13–15. Using each example you cited above, how would the situation have been different if the characters had followed the command in verse 14? How does verse 15 illustrate what happens to Hal, Charles, and Mercedes?
25. Read Ephesians 4:25–32. List five very practical ways these verses say we are to act and speak toward each other to help us keep the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Chapter 6

Vocabulary:

Part One:

Many words have more than one meaning. All of the following definitions are correct in the right context. Use context clues to choose the correct meaning of the underlined word in each sentence.

1. _____ "... Buck waxed lazy as his wounds healed, his muscles swelled out, and the flesh came back to cover his bones."
a. coated or treated
b. increased in size
c. grew or became
2. _____ "Skeet was a little Irish setter who early made friends with Buck, who in a dying condition, was unable to resent her first advances."
a. attempts to make a friendship
b. forward movements
c. salary paid ahead of time
3. _____ "And often, such was the communion in which they lived, the strength of Buck's gaze would draw John Thornton's head around, and he would return the gaze, without speech, his heart shining out of his eyes as Buck's heart shone out."
a. sharing of thoughts or emotions
b. an association or group
c. the sacrament of the Lord's Supper
4. _____ "Then the crowd was upon Buck, and he was driven off. . . he prowled up and down, growling furiously, attempting to rush in, and being forced back by an array of hostile clubs."
a. to put in order
b. a large number of something
c. to clothe with garments
5. _____ "Hans promptly snubbed with the rope, as though Buck were a boat."
a. treated with contempt by ignoring
b. rejected with a rebuke
c. pulled or stopped

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6. _____ "Buck swung to the right, ending the movement in a plunge that took up the slack and with a sudden jerk arrested his one hundred and fifty pounds."
a. engaged the attention of
b. incarcerated
c. stopped

Part Two:

For each of the words below, write the definition and use the word in a sentence of your own.

1. convalescence

Definition:

Sentence:

2. expediency

Definition:

Sentence:

3. peremptorily

Definition:

Sentence:

4. tolerated

Definition:

Sentence:

5. tenderfoot

Definition:

Sentence:

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6. appalled

Definition:

Sentence:

7. contagion

Definition:

Sentence:

8. suppressed

Definition:

Sentence:

9. incoherent

Definition:

Sentence:

10. indiscreet

Definition:

Sentence:

Note: The “kings” mentioned near the end of Chapter 6 refer to “Klondike Kings.” When gold was first discovered in the Klondike, the early stakeholders were local men who rushed to stake claims. These early stakeholders became quite wealthy and were known as Klondike Kings.

Questions:

1. How are Skeet and Nig different from other Northland dogs Buck has known?

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2. Why does Buck allow Skeet to befriend him and nurse his wounds?

3. Why does Buck not like to let Thornton out of his sight?

4. Buck obeys Thornton and treats him well. How does Buck treat the other humans?

5. What does Buck do when Thornton tells him "Jump, Buck!"? What do the men do?

6. How does Buck react to "Black" Barton when Barton strikes Thornton? Why?

7. What does Thornton bet Matthewson concerning Buck? What is the result?

Figurative Language:

do 2
Figurative language is writing that uses nonliteral meanings of words to create interesting word pictures. A *simile* is a comparison of two unrelated things using "like" or "as" to compare them ("Pfc. Thompson fights like a lion."). A *metaphor* is a comparison made between two seemingly unrelated objects in which the one is described as being the other ("Pfc. Thompson is a lion in battle."). In the following examples, state whether the underlined portions contain a simile or a metaphor, and explain the author's intended meaning.

8. "This he had never experienced at Judge Miller's down in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley."

9. "His master's voice acted on Buck like an electric shock."

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10. "... Buck struck him like a battering ram. . . ."

11. "... the one hundred and fifty pounds that he weighed were so many pounds of grit and virility."

Analysis:

12. Why do you think Buck's love for John Thornton does not civilize Buck or turn him away from the primitive inside of himself?

13. London says of Buck,

So peremptorily did these shades beckon him, that each day mankind and the claims of mankind slipped farther from him. Deep in the forest a call was sounding, and as often as he heard this call, mysteriously thrilling and luring, he felt compelled to turn his back upon the fire and the beaten earth around it, and to plunge into the forest. . . .

- a. What are the "shades" that beckon Buck?
- b. Explain what London means when he says Buck, "felt compelled to turn his back upon the fire and the beaten earth around it."
- c. How does this passage relate to Buck's devolution to a primitive state?

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Dig Deeper:

14. Early in Chapter 6, London writes,

And Buck was merciless. He had learned well the law of club and fang, and he never forwent an advantage or drew back from a foe he had started on the way to Death. . . . He must master or be mastered; while to show mercy was a weakness. Mercy did not exist in the primordial life. It was misunderstood for fear, and such misunderstandings made for death.

Do some people believe this is true in human relations? If so, in what types of situations? Have you ever been in a situation in which you felt like this or another person seemed to feel this way? What happened?

15. Read Matthew 5:38–48; Luke 6:27–36; Ephesians 2:1–5, 8–10; Colossians 3:12–14. According to these verses, how are we to act in times of conflict? How has God shown us mercy? How should our actions be affected by his mercy?

16. In the middle of Chapter 6, John Thornton is nearly swept away in the rapids of Forty Mile Creek. How does Buck save Thornton, and at what cost to himself?

17. Read John 15:12–13.
- What does Jesus command of us?

b. What is the greatest love?

c. How does Jesus fulfill this commandment and demonstrate his love?

Chapter 7

Vocabulary:

Part One:

Use context clues in the following sentences to determine the meanings of the underlined words. Compare your definitions with the dictionary definitions.

1. "It caused him to feel a vague, sweet gladness, and he was aware of wild yearnings and stirrings for he knew not what."

vague

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

yearnings

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

2. "Sometimes he pursued the call into the forest, looking for it as though it were a tangible thing. . . ."

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

3. "He followed, with wild leapings, in a frenzy to overtake."

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

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Part Two:

Look up each of the following words and match it with its definition on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. _____ indefinite | a. prominent |
| 2. _____ vastness | b. an offer or proposal |
| 3. _____ melancholy | c. area of great size |
| 4. _____ obliterated | d. uneasy; disconcerted |
| 5. _____ salient | e. shuffled, unsteady manner |
| 6. _____ commingled | f. mixed together |
| 7. _____ overture | g. completely destroyed |
| 8. _____ shambled | h. not clearly defined |
| 9. _____ palpitant | i. depressed, gloomy, or sad |
| 10. _____ discomfited | j. pulsating, trembling |

Questions:

- ① What do John Thornton and his partners do with the money Buck wins in the sled-pulling bet?
2. Do Thornton and the others ever find what they are looking for? Explain what they find.
- ③ While the men piled up the gold in 50-pound moose-hide sacks, how does Buck spend his days?
- ④ What friend does Buck find in the wild? How does he become this creature's friend?
- ⑤ What is Buck doing when Thornton's camp comes under attack? Why was he doing this?

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Legend:

A legend is a tradition or story handed down from earlier times and, while popularly accepted as true, usually is a mix of fact and fiction.

6. This chapter opens with the mention of a "lost gold mine." Describe the legend and the allure it held.

7. Consider the Yeehats' legend of the Ghost Dog in the final paragraphs of this chapter. List the essential parts of the legend and explain how each is based on truth.

8. Why do you think the Yeehats passed down the legend of the Ghost Dog?

Analysis:

9. London notes that the timber wolf leads Buck to an area of "unpacked earth." To what does this refer earlier in the book? What does this mean to Buck?

10. Why does Buck return to John Thornton after roaming with the wolf?

11. When Buck returns, he does not let John Thornton out of his sight for two days. Compare and contrast Buck's behavior this time with that of when he first met Thornton. What might account for the difference in behavior?

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12. When Buck dreams by the fire, London writes that he has visions of the world of the “short-legged hairy man,” and, “The salient thing of this other world seemed fear.” Yet London also writes, “And closely akin to the visions of the hairy man was the call still sounding in the depths of the forest. . . . It caused him to feel a vague, sweet gladness.” What is the literary term, discussed earlier, for an apparent contradiction such as this? Do you think this is an actual contradiction, or is there some other explanation?

13. Why does Buck kill the moose?

14. Why does Buck kill the Yeehats? How is their killing connected to his killing of the moose?

Dig Deeper:

15. A *dichotomy* is a division or contrast between two things that are opposed or entirely different. For example, in the 1960s a growing dichotomy separated the segregationists and the civil rights activists in the United States. How is Buck suffering from dichotomy in Chapter 7? How does London resolve the dichotomy?
16. John Thornton suffers from his own dichotomy in the story. How might John Thornton be both the least and most civilized man to have owned Buck?