

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Call of the Wild, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 3

“London was determined to succeed. In this urge to escape from the working class lay another anchor for London’s individualism; in his actual position in the working class was the foundation for his sympathy for the masses and for socialism. The way to climb the social ladder was, of course, through business, enterprise and individualism; the way to eliminate the cellar of society was through revolutionary socialism” (p. 3).

Writing Prompt

Jack used his experiences to guide him through life. At a fairly young age he realized that he can either be a victim or he can become an individual and create his own circumstances to change his position in life.

In an informative paragraph, explain how Jack used his individualism to grow out of his position and find success. What tools did he rely on? Explain why individualism is a key component to success.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Call of the Wild, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 10

“The novel has three levels, the first and narrative one the story of a dog, Buck, who reverts to type, learns to survive in a wolf-life, and eventually becomes a wolf. The second, or biographical level, reveals what London himself lived and felt in climbing out of the abyss of poverty and deprivation to prestige as a writer and wealth” (p. 10).

Writing Prompt

The above mentions two of the three themes of the novel. Jack London lives a life of poverty with little or no stability growing up. For many of his adult years he works and lives a very transitional life. Once he becomes a published writer he suddenly has status and wealth. Most people would think that going from “rags” to “riches” would be a wonderful life change. Jack London struggled with it and it became a theme of The Call of the Wild.

Think about Jack London’s life and going from “rags” to “riches”. **In an informative paragraph, explain how that sudden change could potentially be mentally and physically difficult for a person. Write one paragraph to explain how sudden change could be mentally difficult. Write a second paragraph to explain how sudden change can be physically difficult. Use information from primary and secondary sources. Think about social pressures that are placed on the rich that Jack would be forced to learn about and adapt to.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

White Fang, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 17

“He still raised a cry for justice, sympathy, service, and unselfishness in transforming society, “He who by understanding, becomes converted to the gospel of service...will serve kindness so that brutality, will perish...And he who is strong will serve the weak that they may become strong” (p. 17).

Writing Prompt

Jack London was a self-proclaimed socialist but as he succeeded he became more of an individualist. The above passage discusses both philosophies. **In an informative paragraph explain Jack’s change in philosophies. Include accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works.**

When answering the question above, consider the following:

- Describe how both philosophies have become ingrained in Jack London’s belief system.
- Why is it important that he wants the strong to teach the weak?
- How does this conflict with his socialist beliefs?
- How is it helpful to humankind to teach the weak to help themselves?
- Do you think this ideal is still personified in America today? Why or why not?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Call of the Wild, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 23

“Buck had accepted the rope with quiet dignity. To be sure, it was an unwonted performance: But he had learned to trust in men that he knew, and to give them credit for a wisdom that outreached his own. But when the ends of the rope were placed in the stranger’s hands he growled menacingly” (p. 23).

Writing Prompt

Think about Buck’s life right now. He has everything he needs and a little of what he wants. He has learned to trust and also to be trusted. What happens when that trust starts to fade?

Write an explanatory paragraph that describes a time in your life that you lost trust in someone or someone lost trust in you. What was the situation? Who did it involve? How did it affect your relationships with others after that? Be detailed and specific.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Call of the Wild, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 29-30

“They were a new kind of men to Buck (of which he was destined to see many more), and while he developed no affection for them, he none the less grew honestly to respect them. He speedily learned that Perrault and Francois were fair men, calm and impartial in administering justice, and too wise in the way of dogs to be fooled by dogs” (p. 29-30).

Writing Prompt

The author describes the relationship between Buck and his new owners. He describes Buck as not liking the men but he respected them. What is the difference between like and respect? Can you have one without the other?

Write an explanatory paragraph that describes the relationship between respect and affection. Be as detailed as possible and include references to the text. You can use your own experiences.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Call of the Wild, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 36

“Buck had been purposely between Dave and Sol-leks so that he might receive instruction. Apt scholar that he was, they were equally apt teachers, never allowing him to linger long in error, and enforcing their teaching with their sharp teeth. Dave was fair and wise” (p. 36).

Writing Prompt

It takes a gift to be a good teacher and to be a good student. Perrault and Francois were gifted in being able to recognize the skills of each member on their team. Think about your role as a student and teachers (good and bad) you have had over the years. What qualities does each need to possess in order to succeed?

Write a 2-3 paragraph essay describing the qualities of being a “good student” and being a “good teacher”. Use your personal experience to relate details of your experiences in the classroom. Communicate your ideas clearly and communicate the significance of those events to the reader.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Call of the Wild, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 40

“The Dominant primordial beast was strong in Buck, and under the fierce conditions of trail life it grew and grew. Yet it was a secret growth. His new-born cunning gave him poise and control. He was busy adjusting himself to the new life to feel at ease, and not only did he not pick fights, but he avoided them whenever possible. A certain deliberateness characterized his attitude. He was not prone to rashness and precipitated action; and in the bitter hatred between him and Spitz he betrayed no impatience, shunning all offensive acts” (p. 40).

Writing Prompt

Buck is described as a mindful and patient dog. He wanted to adapt and to be a strong team member. Re-read the description above and pay careful attention to the descriptions of Buck throughout the chapter. What is Buck's character?

Write a 2-3 informative paragraphs that describes at least two of Buck's character traits on the trail. Support important ideas and viewpoints through references to the text.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Call of the Wild, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 46

"It was inevitable that the clash for leadership should come. Buck wanted it. He wanted it because it was his nature, because he had been gripped tight by that nameless, incomprehensible pride of trail and trace—that pride which holds dogs in the toil to the last grasp, which lures them to die joyfully in the harness, and breaks their hearts if they are cut out of the harness" (p. 46).

Writing Prompt

The author describes the ethics of a good worker and a good work animal. He describes Buck of having learned great pride for doing what he is doing and knows that if he doesn't get to work he will be heartbroken. We all have things we do, that we do with pride. If we lose the opportunity to participate in that activity we would be heartbroken, or a goal that we have set for something in our future.

Write two informative paragraphs describing an activity or goal that you take pride in. Use concrete details that describe your feelings for the activity or goal. Explain why this is important to you with as much detail as possible.

In today's reading the little grey cub learns the laws of nature that one must eat or be eaten. In an informative paragraph, explain this law of nature. Provide an example using the wolves and lynx.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Call of the Wild, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 55

“Highly as the dog-driver had fore valued Buck, with his two devils, he found, while the day was yet young, that he had undervalued. At a bound Buck took up the duties of leadership and where judgment was required, and quick thinking and quick acting, he showed himself superior even to Spitz, of whom Francois had never seen an equal” (p. 55).

Writing Prompt

Buck was not given a chance at leadership and was always in Spitz’s shadow. If he had not stood up for himself he would not have been given the opportunity to lead or show what he was capable of.

In an informative paragraph to explain why it was important for Buck to show his skills to the men. Do you think he would have been given another opportunity or did he need to make one for himself?

Have you ever been in a similar situation where you had to SHOW that you were the right person for the job? In an informative paragraph explain whether or not leaders wait for things to happen to them or if they make things happen for themselves? Explain.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Call of the Wild, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 59

“Each night the dogs were attended to first. They ate before the rivers ate, and no man sought his sleeping-robe till he had seen to the feet of the dogs he drove. Still, their strength went down. Since the beginning of winter they had travelled eighteen hundred miles; and eighteen hundred miles will tell upon life of the toughest” (p. 59).

Writing Prompt

The dogs have been driven hard. They needed a longer rest and were not given one. Pretend you are Buck. Write a letter to your driver. **In two informative paragraphs explain that your team should get a longer break. Provide two reasons to support your claim.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Call of the Wild, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 67

“Buck and his comrades looked upon them with disgust, and though he speedily taught them their places and what not to do, he could not teach them what to do. They did not take kindly to trace and trail. With the exception of the two mongrels, they were bewildered and spirit-broken by the strange savage environment in which they found themselves and by ill treatment they had received. The two mongrels were without spirit at all; bones were the only things breakable about them” (p. 67).

Writing Prompt

Buck and the team although worn out were able to survive the treatment brought on by the family. They were able to withstand the abuse because of their spirit. What is spirit? How would you describe your spirit? Think about historical events in which people were not broken because of their spirits. **Write two explanatory paragraphs describing the human and animal spirit. Why is it so important to survival in harsh conditions?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Call of the Wild, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 74

“Buck refused to move under the rain of heavier blows which now fell upon him. Like his mares, he was barely able to get up, but, unlike them, he had made up his mind not to get up. He had a vague feeling of impending doom. This had been strong upon him when he pulled into the bank, and it had not departed from him” (p. 74).

Writing Prompt

Buck had a “gut feeling” that something bad was going to occur. Although, it was in his nature to work and demonstrate *leadership requires engagement* on the trail he decided not to fight and accept the doom that was going to come to him one way or another. He was fortunate of having John Thornton come to his rescue.

Think about a time that you choose to listen to your “gut” or your “intuition”. Describe the situation and what occurred. What was the outcome? Who was involved?

Write two explanatory paragraphs that describe the situation and gives details about your perspective.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Call of the Wild, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 78

“For a long time after his rescue, Buck did not like John Thornton to get out of his sight. From the moment he left the tent to when he entered it again, Buck would follow at his heels, His transient masters since he had come into the Northland had bred in him a fear that no master could be permanent. He was afraid that Thornton would pass out of his life as Perrault and Francois and the Scotch half-breed had passed out. Even at night he was haunted by this fear” (p. 78).

Writing Prompt

Buck lives in fear that Thornton will also leave him. This is the first time he has had a loving home and someone who cared for him. Anyone that he has respected since he has been in the north has left him to others.

Write two informative paragraphs that explain Buck’s fears that Thornton will leave him. Do you think his fear legitimate? Explain why previous owners left Buck. Were these reasons justified? Does Buck have the right to fear for his situation?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Call of the Wild, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 94

“They stopped by a running stream to drink, and, stopping Buck remembered John Thornton. He sat down. The wolf started on toward the place from where the call surely came, then returned to him, sniffing noses and making actions as though to encourage him. But Buck turned and started slowly to back track. For the better part of an hour the wild brother ran by his side, whining softly. Then he sat down, pointed his nose upwards, and howled. It was a mournful howl, and as Buck held steadily on his way he heard it grow faint and fainter until it was lost in the distance” (p. 94).

Writing Prompt

In this selection Buck is answering the “call of the wild”. He meets a wolf who is willing to mentor him on the ways of the wild. He is enjoying his time when he remembers John Thornton and he is drawn back to the man. Buck is caught between two worlds; the world of the wild and the world of care and compassion.

What does Buck have to lose by leaving John Thornton? What does he have to gain by answering the call? Do you think either choice is bad for him? Write three informative paragraphs explaining Buck’s choices and the consequences of each. Explain which choice Buck should make. Give three reasons from the text and from other sources to support your claims.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Call of the Wild, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 96

“‘Never was there such a dog,’ said John Thornton one day, as the partners watched Buck march out of camp.

‘When he was made, the mold was broke,’ said Pete” (p. 96).

Writing Prompt

Today’s reading focuses on Buck and his ability to be an individual. He was taught by others but also had a deep desire to succeed on his own. Throughout the book he stood for others and was a leader. **In an informative paragraph explain how Buck is an example of an individual. Provide three examples from the text that support Buck’s ability to be an individual.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Call of the Wild, Day 16



Key Paragraph, p. 103

“one wolf, long and lean and gray, advanced cautiously, in a friendly manner, and Buck recognized the wild brother with whom he had run for a night and a day. He was whining softly, and, as Buck whined they touched noses.

Then an old wolf, gaunt and battle-scarred, came forward. Buck writhed his lips in the preliminary snarl, but sniffed noses with him. Whereupon the old wolf sat down, pointed his nose at the moon, and broke into a long wolf howl” (p. 103).

Writing Prompt

Buck has a choice on how to approach the pack of wild dogs. He can be aggressive and attack or he can choose to approach them on dignified terms. He has just lost his trusted friend and is alone in the world. He wants to pursue the “Call of the Wild” but most likely cannot do it on his own.

In an explanatory paragraph describe Buck’s choices. In a second paragraph, explain what Buck needs to do to survive from this day forward with the pack. Use personal experience and other sources to support your thesis. In a final paragraph, describe how can Buck use his talent to better the pack?

