

Dear Educator,

Ready, set, action! The classic tale — *The Call of the Wild* — is making the leap from the page to the big screen in an exciting adventure that is sure to captivate your students and their families.

This free program from 20th Century Studios and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI) complements your language arts lessons by sparking your students' creativity and helping them plan and write their own thrilling adventure stories inspired by *The Call of the Wild*. In addition, this teacher's guide contains thought-provoking discussion and viewing prompts that will help students draw upon the movie's important themes of courage, survival, and overcoming adversity. These teaching materials are designed to generate excitement and discussion with your students before or after seeing the movie and can be used in conjunction with or independent of the novel.

Please share these resources with other language arts teachers in middle and high school. Although these materials are protected by copyright, you may make as many copies as you need for educational purposes. Then, on February 21, be sure to catch *The Call of the Wild* starring Harrison Ford in a theater near you.

Return the enclosed reply card or comment online at ymiclassroom.com/feedback-call-of-the-wild to let us know your thoughts on this program. We depend on your feedback to continue providing free educational programs that make a real difference in students' lives.

Sincerely,
Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired

For questions, contact us toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.



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Target Audience

Students in middle and high school as a supplement to English Language Arts classes

Program Objectives

- Build students' literacy skills by raising awareness of key elements of the action-packed adventure genre
- Spark students' imaginations and challenge them to plan and write their own suspenseful tales
- Promote critical-thinking skills by encouraging students to make connections between their own lives and themes from *The Call of the Wild*

About *The Call of the Wild*

Adapted from the beloved literary classic, *The Call of the Wild* vividly brings to the screen the story of Buck, a big-hearted dog whose blissful domestic life is turned upside down when he is suddenly uprooted from his California home and transplanted to the exotic wilds of the Canadian Yukon during the Gold Rush of the 1890s. As the newest rookie on a mail delivery dog sled team — and later its leader — Buck experiences the adventure of a lifetime, ultimately finding his true place in the world and becoming his own master.

How to Use This Program

Make copies of the student activity sheet to distribute to your students. Visit ymiclassroom.com/call-of-the-wild for a standards alignment chart and to view the film's trailer.

Activity: Write Your Own Adventure!

Introduce this lesson by telling students that *The Call of the Wild* movie is based on the famous adventure book written by Jack London in 1903. In the story, the main character, a St. Bernard named Buck, is stolen from his warm, safe home in California and uprooted to the frigid Yukon where he is put to work as a mail delivery sled dog. Buck is thrown into a whole new world and must adapt in order to survive. Ask students: *What other adventure stories do you know? What are some key elements that make adventure stories so thrilling?* Answers will vary, but could include that there is risk or danger involved, an unusual setting, something unexpected occurs in the plot, a main character faces obstacles and must display courage, and so on. Then ask: *Why do some books translate well into adventure films?* You can show the movie trailer at ymiclassroom.com/call-of-the-wild to the class to generate enthusiasm and discussion.

Explain to students that they are going to use their imaginations to write their own adventure stories. Distribute and review the activity sheet, which is designed to help students map out their stories. After students complete the assignment, break them into small groups to discuss and share their ideas. They can peer review their

work for feedback as they formulate and revise their stories. Encourage students to think creatively as they write. They may write their tales as narratives, in a blog form, or as a series of suspenseful social media posts.

Discussion and Writing Prompts

Below are additional prompts to engage students:

- Buck needed to be brave when he was unexpectedly transported to a scary, new environment. Think about a time when you were placed in a new or difficult situation and had to be brave. Write a journal entry that reflects your feelings.
- *The Call of the Wild* is set during the Yukon Gold Rush of the 1890s. Tens of thousands of people traveled to the area in hopes of striking it rich. Research this time period and create pamphlets with maps encouraging prospectors to come to the area.
- Sled dogs work together as a team under incredibly harsh conditions. Think about a time you had to work with others to accomplish an important goal. What challenges did you face? What were the pros and cons of working as a group?
- In the trailer, Harrison Ford's character, John Thornton, who befriends Buck, says: "The Yukon is a dangerous place. You never know what's coming." Discuss how this statement captures the essence of adventure stories. How do you think the quote foreshadows what obstacles the characters in the film may face?
- In order to survive, Buck goes from being a newcomer to the leader of the sled dog team. Discuss the qualities that make someone a leader. Brainstorm someone from history, current events, or your own life whom you consider a leader. Write three questions you'd like to ask that person.
- When Buck arrives in the Yukon, he experiences snow for the first time. Write about the first time you experienced something in nature. Emphasize sensory details, describing what you saw, how you felt, or what you smelled or heard.

Post-Viewing Activity

As we read, we visualize the story based on details and descriptions from the author. Ask students: *What do filmmakers have to take into consideration when adapting a book into a film? How do the cinematography and music impact the story? What movies have you seen as adaptations of books that have been successful? What made them successful?*

Resources

- ymiclassroom.com/call-of-the-wild
- family.foxmovies.com/movies/call-of-the-wild



STUDENT ACTIVITY • REPRODUCIBLE MASTER

Write Your Own Adventure!

In the action-packed movie, ***The Call of the Wild***, the main character — a lovable canine named Buck — finds himself on an unexpected journey where he faces danger and obstacles, but eventually emerges as his own master. Based on the literary masterpiece by Jack London, ***The Call of the Wild*** delivers a heart-stopping adventure story that has become a classic.

Adventure is a genre filled with suspense, danger, plot twists, and daring heroes who embark on life-altering journeys. Ready for a writing adventure? Use these prompts from ***The Call of the Wild*** as a guide to plan and craft your own thrilling adventure story. Answer each question on the back of this sheet. Then write your tale in the form of a narrative, blog, or series of suspenseful social media posts.

- 1. What exciting event will begin your story?** Hook your reader in with a dramatic or unusual event that propels the action forward. For example, in ***The Call of the Wild***, Buck is taken from his warm, comfortable home, unaware of what lies ahead.
- 2. Where does your story take place?** The setting tells your reader where and when the story takes place. It is a critical part of how the action unfolds. ***The Call of the Wild*** is set during the Yukon Gold Rush of the 1890s where Buck must learn to survive in the extreme wilderness. Think about the setting for your tale. Will it take place during a specific period in history? In your own neighborhood? In a remote jungle filled with dangerous waterfalls and mudslides? In the far reaches of space? Or will it be a fantasy world that you create?
- 3. Who is your story's hero?** Create interesting characters with a particular focus on the hero. In ***The Call of the Wild***, Buck is the hero who overcomes many obstacles, such as learning to work as part of a dog sled team. Buck then befriends John Thornton, and the two go on to experience the adventure of a lifetime. How will you bring your characters to life? What does your hero look like? Is your hero a human or an animal? What character traits does your hero possess? Has your hero suffered? What villain(s) or danger will your hero face? How will your hero overcome the odds? Does someone help your hero? Also consider the dialogue, point of view the story is told from, and whether you will have a narrator.
- 4. What conflict does your hero face?** The plot is the action or series of events that happen in your story, including a conflict. Plan a suspenseful plot by building in surprising twists or challenges along your hero's journey. Will your character encounter fierce animals or deceptive villains? What obstacles or dangers does your hero have to overcome? In ***The Call of the Wild***, Buck deals with several conflicts, including overcoming being taken from his home and going from being a rookie on the mail sled dog team to its leader. Finally, what climax or turning point will your story take? The climax is when the conflict reaches its highest point — often towards the end.
- 5. What is your story's resolution?** The resolution is your story's conclusion. How will your story wrap up — or resolve — itself? In many adventure stories, the hero undergoes a major transformation. In ***The Call of the Wild***, Buck goes from being a domestic dog listening to the voice of man, to listening to his own voice and answering the call of the wild.
- 6. What's a good title for your story?** Think about why ***The Call of the Wild*** might have gotten this title. Then, don't forget a clever, grabbing title that fits your adventure story!

Think About It Courage and survival are some important themes in ***The Call of the Wild***. What themes are important to your adventure story? Do you have a message that you want to convey to the reader?



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Join Buck on the adventure
of a lifetime as he navigates
the Canadian Yukon during
the Gold Rush of the 1890s.

THE CALL
OF THE
WILD

In theaters
February 21, 2020