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Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Call of the Wild

by Jack London

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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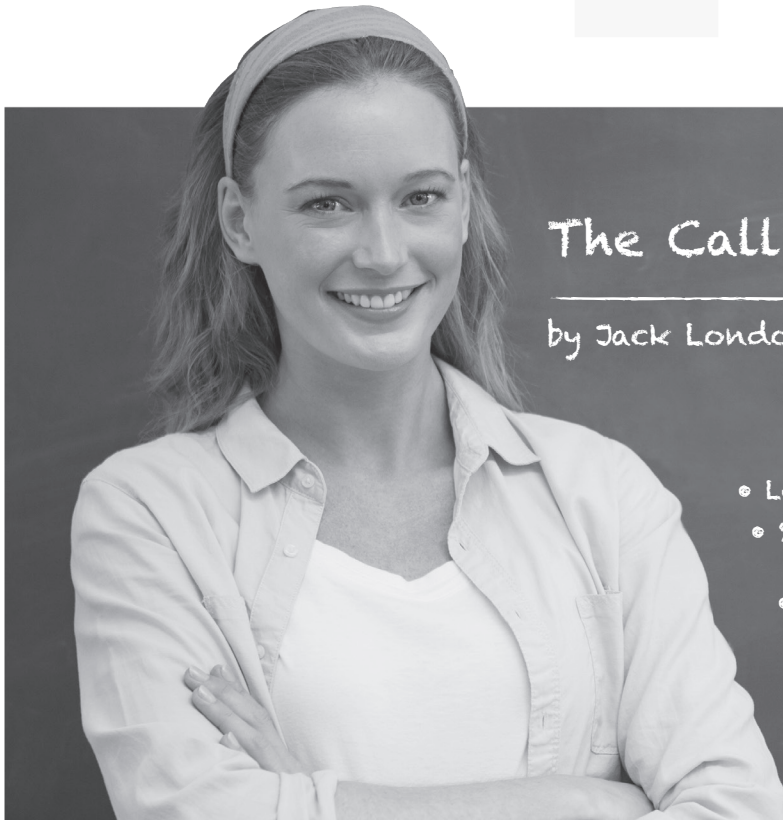
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ISBN: 978-1-58049-007-8

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Item No: 300151

The Call of the Wild

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. write an essay that explains the significance of the title and show why the title represents the story's main theme.
2. explain why the novel is a good example of naturalistic writing.
3. define the following terms and cite examples from the story:
 - personification
 - naturalism
 - symbolism
 - point of view
 - foreshadowing
 - anthropomorphism
 - metaphor
 - hyperbole
 - narrator
 - irony
 - episodic novel
4. draw inferences about plot and characters.
5. list the major incidents in the plot and explain why it is considered episodic.
6. comment on Jack London's style of writing.
7. discuss the themes below that appear in the story:
 - Life in the Yukon is a constant struggle for survival and dominance.
 - In some creatures, like Buck, the primitive lies just below the surface and, given the right conditions, will easily come forth.
 - Life is a struggle against a harsh environment.
 - The call (both a "lure" and a "sound") of wilderness represents adventure, strength, hardship, and Buck himself.
8. understand and find examples of anthropomorphism in general, and as it applies to Buck.

The Call of the Wild

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. There are two basic settings in this story, the Southland and the Northland. Show how a contrast of these two settings illustrates the theme of a return to and preference for the primitive.
2. Trace throughout the novel and cite those comments and incidents that support the following thesis: A major theme in *The Call of the Wild* is that a domesticated creature can be drawn back to its primitive roots.
3. Show how this novel illustrates and promotes Darwin's theory of "the survival of the fittest," and indicate how this theory relates to the literary movement known as "naturalism."
4. Write a page on the symbolism found in this novel. Be sure to mention the four major symbols and what they symbolize.
5. Write a paragraph or two on the use of foreshadowing in this novel.
6. Define the following terms and illustrate them by citing examples from the story:
 - personification
 - naturalism
 - symbolism
 - anthropomorphism
 - foreshadowing
 - inference
 - metaphor
 - hyperbole
 - narrator
 - irony
 - episodic novel
7. Comment on the following ideas:
 - The survival of the fittest is still operating in our society.
 - Within every creature, including man, there are still primitive urges that come to the surface.
 - It is both human and animal nature to seek power and dominance over others.
8. Describe Jack London's style of writing.

The Call of the Wild

Chapter One: Into the Primitive

Vocabulary

boded ill – was a sign of bad things in the future
demesne – an area under one’s control; domain
egotistical – thinking only of one’s self
impending calamity – coming disaster
insular – cut off from, isolated
intimated – hinted, suggested
lacerated – cut, torn
metamorphosed – changed into
morose – sad
obscure – hidden
populous – population, number
primitive – an early stage; simple; crude
progeny – children
recesses – alcoves, hiding places
unwonted – unusual
veranda – a wide porch
weazened – wrinkled with age

1. From whose perspective is part of this chapter told? Why is this view point a little unusual?

2. In what type of narration is the story told?

3. What has created the demand for large, strong dogs?

3. Why might you guess that Spitz is going to be Buck's chief enemy?

4. Who do Perrault and Francois work for? Why is a good dog team so important to them?

5. From this point on, what is the setting for this story?

6. Why does Sol-leks get upset when a dog approaches him on his blind side?

7. Find an example of foreshadowing in this chapter. What does the example do to the reader?

8. What lesson does Buck learn about surviving the cold winter nights?

Chapter Five: The Toil of Trace and Trail

Vocabulary

abide – to remain, stay
amenities – courteous acts of polite behavior
averred – stated positively
cajole – coax
callowness – immaturity
congested – crowded
copious – full, plenty
evinced – showed
formidable – inspiring fear, dread, or alarm
importuned – pleaded, urged
inevitable – not capable of being avoided or prevented
innocuously – harmlessly, innocently
manifestly – completely
perambulating – walking about
Q.E.D. (Latin) – therefore
remonstrance – a strong objection
salient – standing out; attracting attention
slipshod – poorly maintained
slovenly – sloppily
superfluous – unnecessary; beyond what is required
terse – short, brief
voracious – greedy
zeal – eagerness and enthusiasm

1. Identify the literary term in the following quotation:

“The congested mail was taking on Alpine proportions.” (Pg. 46)
