-The Call of the Wild: Lesson Plan-



**Lesson I- *The Call of the Wild’s* Literary Context, Plot and the Role of the Author:**

**-Summary:** This lesson will be divided into three parts, with each section helping students to better understand and evaluate the literary context of the novel, the novel’s events, as well as Jack London’s style and influences.

**-Lesson Objectives:**

i- To reflect on the genre of the novel, the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush, the importance of setting and the role of sled dogs.

ii- To reflect on Jack London as a writer, and how he writes *The Call of the Wild* effectively, ultimately producing a book which is reminiscent of Aesop’s/Aesopic Fables.

iii-To identify the key events of the novel and why they are effective/ important within the narrative and genre.

**-Part 1: Literary Context:**

-We will start the lesson by discussing varying concepts within the book, the adventure genre, the historical context of the 1890s Gold Rush, the setting of Yukon, Canada, the role of sled dogs as well as the relationship/semblance of these dogs to wolves. We will compare London’s novel to 101 Dalmatians, and how dogs can be used to different effect in a range of novels. We will spend time on a short, creative writing task too, where we will describe a snowy, treacherous wintery environment.

**-Part 2: Jack London and Fables:**

-We will learn about the life and experiences of Jack London and what the book means to him. We will learn about what inspired him to write the book, and how the animals become anthropomorphised, as well as highly symbolic animals reminiscent of fables.

-We will then revise fables, linking their morals to the lessons learned within London’s novel. Students will then write a PEE paragraph reflecting on whether animals are better at conveying messages than human characters.

**-Part 3: The Events:**

-We will look at the main events of the novel and what emotions, feelings as well as purposes these events convey. We will debate our thoughts on the plot’s efficacy, as well as whether the ending was inevitable or not. We will then debate on if using humans more in the novel would have made the plot more or less exciting.

**-Homework:**

-Students will write a short piece describing their own sled dog, of around 250 words.

**Lesson 2- *The Call of the Wild’s* Characters and Symbols:**

**-Summary:** This lesson will analyse the novel’s main characters and symbols. Students will analyse each character, their role in the novel, as well as looking at how they described. Students will then draw their own conclusions on the characters based on the analysis in the lesson, and will do the same exercise for symbols.

**-Lesson Objectives:**

i- To form opinions and understand the novel’s main characters as well as their literary roles.

ii-To analyse the descriptive language used to create the characters, and how it is effective.

iii- To perform the same analysis and opinion formation as above, but for the novel’s symbols.

**Part 1: Characters:**

-We will analyse all the main characters in turn, looking at descriptions as well as events to better understand the variety of personalities. We will discuss individual questions personal to specific characters, and students will be encouraged to place themselves in the characters different ‘shoes’. We will also discuss the character’s anthropomorphism in more depth, in what makes them appear human-like specifically. There will also be a writing task, where students will create a human which is like a husky- so, this will be the opposite to anthropomorphism, being zoomorphism. We will also discuss, and write a short paragraph on why dogs are effective creatures to interweave with humans.

**Part 2: Symbols:**

-We will discuss the many symbols within the novel and what they signify. We will also explore the symbolic nature of the landscape in more detail, where we will compare the setting here to the garden in *Tom’s Midnight Garden,* as well as Texas in *Holes.*

-Students will also look at sections within the book, analysing language whilst also identifying and determining more obscure examples of symbolism.

**Homework:** Students will write a short persuasive piece on which breed of dog they think would also be fascinating to anthropomorphise in a book.

**Lesson 3: *The Call of the Wild’s* Themes and Style:**

**-Summary:** This lesson will outline all the novel’s most important themes, where students will assess why each theme is important and why Jack London chose to focus on these ideas. Students will analyse why these themes are important in adventure novels and where else these themes appear in literature. Students will also investigate London’s writing style, assessing it in comparison to other literature and also how it supports the themes explored within the novel.

**Lesson Objectives:**

i-To understand and recognise the novel’s most influential themes, and why they are invaluable within the plot.

ii- To assess the importance of these themes and how they are effectively written about by London.

iii-To explore Jack London’s writing style and to understand how it makes the book so readable.

**Part 1- Identifying and Understanding Themes:**

-Students will identify the novel’s main themes, where each theme will be evaluated in turn regarding importance, as well as how Jack London chooses to construct it. Students will also analyse excerpts which engage with the themes particularly well, exploring the linguistic and structural techniques used. We will also interconnect symbolism with the themes, as well as with the novel’s historical, social and geographical context.

-Students will also discuss which theme they feel is most prevalent within the novel, which theme is the most important to them, as well as which theme could be brought about more by London. Students will discuss which themes could be interesting to explore in the novel which are not present with animals, rather than predominantly human protagonists.

-There will be a short writing task, where students will evaluate the theme of primitivism in the novel.

**Part 2- Jack London’s Style:**

- Students will read several excerpts from the novel, comparing and contrasting the linguistic and structural decisions within each extract, whilst also providing their opinion regarding how the different scenes make them feel/react as a reader. We will aim to go through 5-6 extracts, which use a variety of language and discuss different settings as well as moments of action.

-Students will compare London’s writing to Morris Gleitzman’s in *Once,* where they will write a short piece explaining why the author’s style they prefer.

-Students will finally discuss and summarise their thoughts on London’s style, whether they like the way he writes, and how this book may be written differently in the 21st century.

-We will conclude the lesson by watching and evaluating the recent *The Call of the Wild* film trailer.

**Homework:**

-Students will write a short piece on which scene they think is the best written from selected extracts within this lesson’s PowerPoint.