

Read the following story carefully and **make notes in the margin** as you read. Your notes will be part of your score and should include:

- Comments that show that you **understand** the story and your reactions to it.
- Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
- Notes and observations on the **literary elements** (theme, character, plot, setting, narrator, characterization, tone, mood, etc.) and how the author uses them to create an impact.
- Notes and observations on the **literary devices** (figurative language, imagery, point of view, foreshadowing, flashbacks, symbolism, etc.) and how the author uses them to create an impact in the story.

Your **margin notes** are part of your score for this assessment.

Student _____ SSID _____
Teacher _____ Class Period _____
School _____ School District _____

BUCK LEADS THE TEAM

The Call of the Wild, a novel by American author Jack London, takes place mainly in Alaska. This section of the novel tells about a team of sled dogs and their new leader, Buck.

Buck Becomes a Leader

At a bound Buck took up the duties of leadership; and where judgment was required, and quick thinking and quick acting, he showed himself the superior even of Spitz, of whom Francois had never seen an equal.

But it was in giving the law and making his mates live up to it that Buck excelled. Dave and Solleks did not mind the change in leadership. It was none of their business. Their business was to toil and toil mightily, in the traces. So long as that were not interfered with, they did not care what



happened. Billee, the good-natured, could lead for all they cared, so long as he kept order. The rest of the team, however, had grown unruly during the last days of Spitz, and their surprise was great now that Buck proceeded to lick them into shape.

Pike, who pulled at Buck's heels, and who never put an ounce more of his weight against the breast-band than he was compelled to do, was swiftly and repeatedly shaken for loafing; and ere the first day was done he was pulling more than ever before in his life. The first night in camp, Joe, the sour one, was punished roundly — a thing that Spitz had never succeeded in doing. Buck simply smothered him by virtue of

Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:

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superior weight, and cut him up till he ceased snapping and began to whine for mercy. The general tone of the team picked up immediately. It recovered its old-time solidarity, and once more the dogs leaped as one dog in the traces. At the Rink Rapids two native huskies, Teek and Koon, were added; and the celerity with which Buck broke them in took away Francois's breath.

"Nevaire such a dog as dat Buck!" he cried. "No, nevaire! Heem worth one t'ousan' dollair, by Gar! Eh? Wot you say, Perrault?"

And Perrault nodded. He was ahead of the record then, and gaining day by day. The trail was in excellent condition, well packed and hard, and there was no new-fallen snow with which to contend. It was not too cold. The temperature dropped to fifty below zero and remained there the whole trip. The men rode and ran by turn, and the dogs were kept on the jump, with but infrequent stoppages.

The Thirty Mile River was comparatively coated with ice, and they covered in one day going out what had taken them ten days coming in. In one run they made a sixty-mile dash from the foot of Lake Le Barge to the White Horse Rapids. Across Marsh, Tagish, and Bennett (seventy miles of lakes), they flew so fast that the man whose turn it was to run, towed behind the sled at the end of a rope. And on the last night of the second week they topped White Pass and dropped down the sea slope with the lights of Skaguay and of the shipping at their feet.

It was a record run. Each day for fourteen days they had averaged forty miles. For three days Perrault and Francois threw chests up and down the main street of Skaguay and were deluged with invitations to drink, while the team was the constant centre of a worshipful crowd of dog-busters and mushers. Then three or four western bad men aspired to clean out the town, were riddled like pepper-boxes for their pains, and public interest turned to other idols. Next came official orders. Francois called Buck to him, threw his arms around him, wept over him. And that was the last of Francois and Perrault. Like other men, they passed out of Buck's life for good.

A Scotch half-breed took charge of him and his mates, and in company with a dozen other dog-teams he started back over the weary trail to Dawson. It was no light running now, nor record time, but heavy toil each day, with a heavy load behind; for this was the mail train, carrying word from the world to the men who sought gold under the shadow of the Pole.

Buck did not like it, but he bore up well to the work, taking pride in it after the manner of Dave and Solleks, and seeing that his mates, whether they prided in it or not, did their fair share. It was a monotonous life, operating with machine-like regularity. One day was very like another. At a certain time each morning the cooks turned out, fires were built, and breakfast was eaten. Then, while some broke camp, others harnessed the dogs, and they were under way an hour or so before the darkness fell which gave warning of dawn. At night,

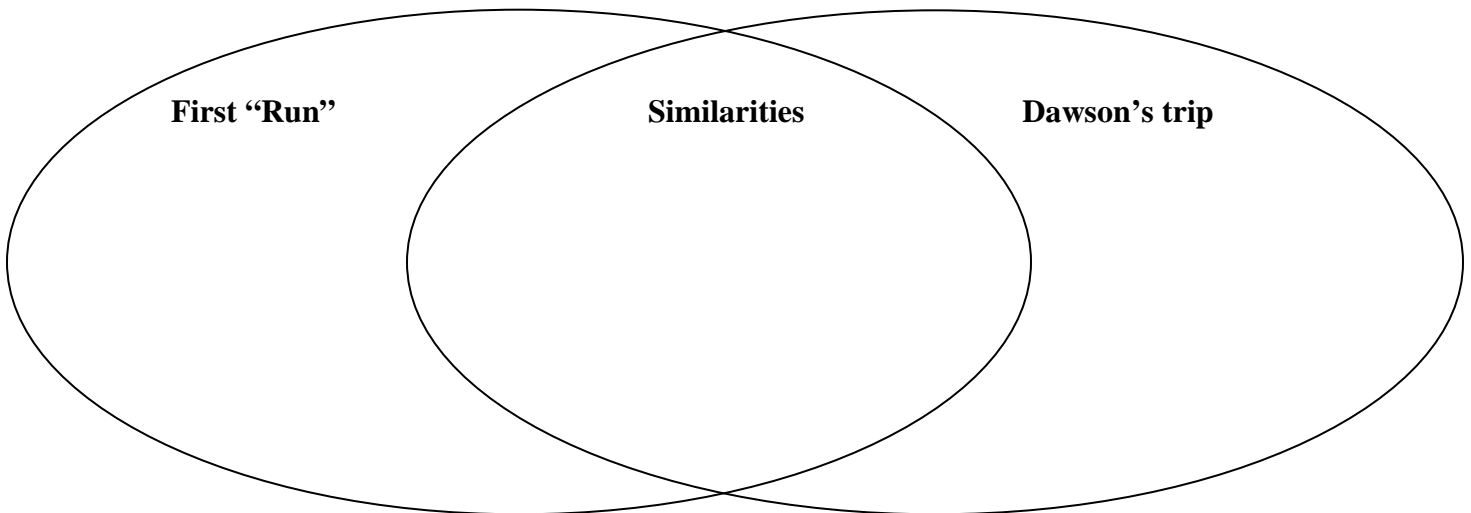
camp was made. Some pitched the flies, others cut firewood and pine boughs for the beds, and still others carried water or ice for the cooks. Also, the dogs were fed. To them, this was the one feature of the day, though it was good to loaf around, after the fish was eaten, for an hour or so with the other dogs, of which there were five score and odd. There were fierce fighters among them, but three battles with the fiercest brought Buck to mastery, so that when he bristled and showed his teeth they got out of his way.

Best of all, perhaps, he loved to lie near the fire, hind legs crouched under him, fore legs stretched out in front, head raised, and eyes blinking dreamily at the flames.

This novel is considered to be in the Public Domain.

*Notes on my thoughts,
reactions and questions as I
read:*

1. This story is basically divided into two sections or episodes—the run with Francois and Perrault, and the journey to Dawson. Use the Venn diagram below to show the **similarities** and **differences** between the two trips.



Sample Reading Performance Assessment
High School – 2009 – *Buck Leads the Team*

P4

2. **Summarize** the story, including the **main idea** and **important details**. You may write or draw your response below.

3. The author uses character names in this story without identifying whether they are dogs or humans. As a result, readers must use clues to figure out which is which. Identify **three dogs** in the story (other than Buck) and use a **quote or example** to show **how you knew** that this was a dog, and not a person.

Dog's Name	Text Support
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Sample Reading Performance Assessment
High School – 2009 – *Buck Leads the Team*

P4

4. On page 2, we learn that “they covered in one day going out what had taken them ten days coming in.” What **information** is given earlier in the selection that **explains** this improvement in efficiency?

5. The author uses many details to describe **Buck’s character and personality**. Using the chart, list **two or three details** and **explain** what they show about Buck.

Examples from the passage	What this shows about Buck
a.	a.
b.	b.
c.	c.

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P4

6. How does the author’s **description of Buck** in the last paragraph **contrast** with his character as it is described in the rest of the passage? You may either write or draw your response in the space below.

7. The author uses **personification** to describe the animals in this selection. **Give three examples of personification** from the story and explain what **effect** each has on the reader’s reaction to the story’s characters, particularly Buck.

Example of Personification	Effect on Reader’s Understanding of Character
a.	a.
b.	b.
c.	c.